

THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY IN TOBAGO:
1838 TO 1900

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Submitted for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
The London School of Economics
and Political Science
University of London
UK

1995

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ABSTRACT

THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY IN TOBAGO: 1838 TO 1900

This thesis examines the social structure of the Caribbean island of Tobago between 1838, the year of the Emancipation of the slaves, and 1900, the year after Tobago was united to Trinidad to form the Colony of Trinidad and Tobago. One chapter gives the background to this period, by analysing the major social groupings, cleavages and conflicts of the slavery era, particularly of the years just prior to the Emancipation.

The study has two main objectives. Firstly, it describes and analyses the changing class/colour configuration of Tobago, and the way in which gender was constitutive of the structuring of access to land, occupations and social mobility. This is done both on the period before the collapse of the sugar economy in the 1880s and on the restructuring of the society after 1884.

Secondly, this case study in historical sociology is placed within the framework of the theoretical literature on the sociology of development. It seeks to explain the acute economic crisis which Tobago underwent in the 1880s, which led to the collapse of both its sugar economy and its viability as a separate government. Within the matrix of Tobago's dependence in the global capitalist system, the study shows the critical explanatory factors to be the source and deployment of capital, the social structure of the island, and the outcomes of intra- and inter-class struggles.

The analysis is multi-faceted, using a variety of sources to understand the demographic, political, economic and social dimensions of societal structure and change. Since metayage (sharecropping) was the dominant relationship of production after 1848, theories on metayage are examined and related to the Tobago evidence. The Caribbean debate on the 'flight from the estates' after Emancipation is also considered, and new, fruitful lines of analysis are explored. Directions for future research, particularly on Grenada, are given.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks go to my supervisor, Prof. Percy Cohen, whose patience and advice are greatly appreciated. I owe a profound debt to my parents, Lionel and Sislyn Craig, who helped in every possible way; and to John La Rose and Sarah White (London), Sidney (deceased) and Kitty Michaelson (Edinburgh), without whose hospitality in the United Kingdom this work could not have been accomplished. My thanks are also due to the librarians at the many libraries and archives in which I worked. I am particularly grateful to Margaret Rouse-Jones and Sookdeo Bhagwandeem at UWI Library, St Augustine, who took great trouble to get material from overseas. Prof. Lloyd Braithwaite, Vanus James, and Brian Alleyne read the chapters and gave comments and encouragement, for which I am deeply grateful. I specially thank Carl Parris and Selwyn Ryan for a semester in which to write. Thanks are due also to my colleagues, students, relatives and friends who encouraged me in this work. Above all, to Almighty God through Jesus Christ, who has been absolutely faithful, I give high praise and the glory due to His majestic name.

To my parents
Lionel and Sislyn Craig
of Tobago,
with undying gratitude for
their many sacrifices

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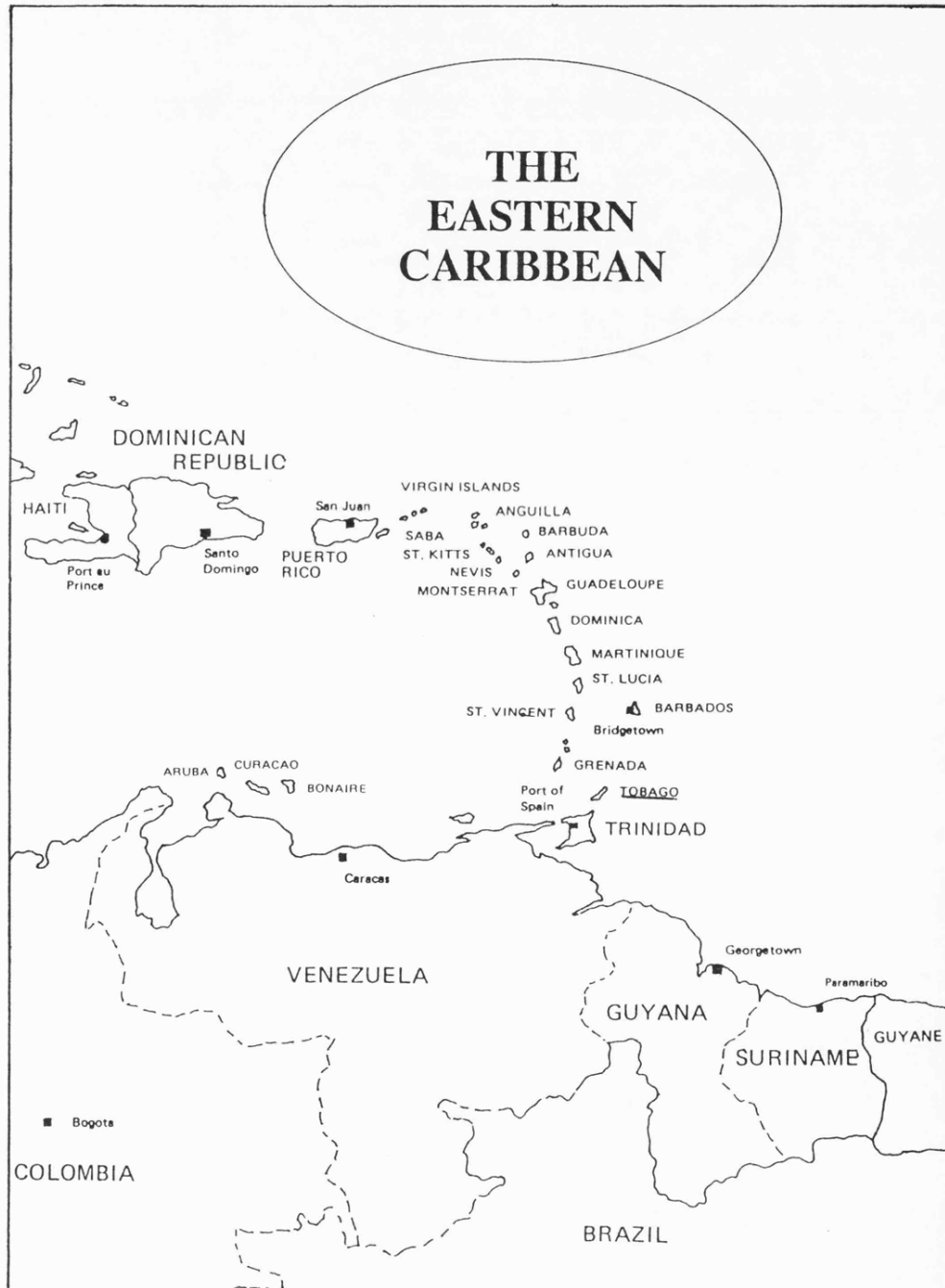
ABBREVIATIONS

acct.	account
Admin.	Administrator
App.	Appendix
A.-G.	Attorney-General
BG	British Guiana
BWI	British West Indies
Chanc. of the Exch.	Chancellor of the Exchequer
CMP	capitalist mode of production
Conf.	Confidential
CSO	Colonial Secretary's Office
cwt	hundredweight (112 lbs)
DMO	District Medical Officer
enc.	enclosing
Enc.	Enclosure
GPO	General Post Office
hhd	hogshead
ISER	Institute of Social and Economic Research
Jud. Inq. Com.	Judicial Inquiry Commission
Leg. Co.	Legislative Council
LMS	London Missionary Society
Man. Dir.	Managing Director

ABBREVIATIONS concluded

<u>Met. Com. Rept.</u>	<u>Metairie Commission Report</u>
MMS	Moravian Missionary Society
MOP	mode of production
Ord.	Ordinance
ORS	Old Representative System
PE	plantation economy
<u>POSG</u>	<u>Port of Spain Gazette</u>
Priv.	Private
PRO	Public Record Office
quot.	quoting, quotation
<u>Rept. from the Royal Com.</u>	<u>Report from the Royal Commission</u>
RMSPCO	Royal Mail Steam Packet Company
Scarboro'	Scarborough (capital of Tobago)
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
Stip. Mag.	Stipendiary Magistrate
TDA	Tobago Defence Association
TMBS	Tobago Mutual Benefit Society
UWI	University of the West Indies
WMS	Wesleyan Missionary Society
<u>WI Royal Com. Rept.</u>	<u>West India Royal Commission Report</u>

FIGURE 1



CHAPTER ONE

IN SEARCH OF A METHOD

What we need, in effect, is a form of structural history that is rarely practiced, which finds in each successive state of the structure under examination both the product of the previous struggles to maintain or to transform this structure, and the principle, via the contradictions, the tensions, and the relations of force which constitute it, of subsequent transformations.

[P. Bourdieu and L. J. D. Wacquant,
An Introduction to Reflexive Sociology,
p. 91]

I.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was birthed from three premisses. First is the conviction, following E. H. Carr, that 'the more sociological history becomes, and the more historical sociology becomes, the better for both' [1961:84]. Second is the paradox that, although theories, explicit or implicit, must guide all attempts at understanding the structures and processes that shaped Caribbean societies over time, the task of historical reconstruction is a major route whereby the creative work of macro-sociological theory construction will advance. The neglect of Tobago in the literature led to our burning desire to write on her history, and to the third conviction, that the Tobago story would shed light on the history and sociology of other Caribbean societies.

This thesis has two broad objectives. Firstly, within the limitations imposed by time, space and the data available, it analyses the changing social structure of Tobago between 1838, the Emancipation of the slaves, and 1900, the year after the island was fully united with Trinidad. Although our focus is from 1838 to 1900, because there is no study on Tobago in the 1830s, Chapter 2 is devoted to the slave society, particularly on the eve of Emancipation.

Tobago is here treated as a case study, an example of a peripheral Caribbean economy which, particularly from the 18th century, was integral to what Immanuel Wallerstein has called 'the European world-economy'. Our second objective is to test an hypothesis to account for the severe economic and social crisis that Tobago experienced, particularly in the decades of the 1880s and 1890s, which led to its annexation to Trinidad. It is cast within the problems and foci of the sociology of development, while seeking to avoid the errors noted in the literature.

Historical reconstruction is not without its perils. The theoretical and methodological concerns of the study are therefore now discussed. The major argument of this chapter is that the main streams of criticism of the modernization, dependency/world system and Marxist approaches to development, as well as the growing literature on historical sociology, all converge on one point of agreement: the need for macro-sociological studies of the trajectory of societies through time, of the kind which is conducted here.

I.2 TOBAGO IN THE CARIBBEAN IN THE WORLD

The production of sugar, largely on the basis of slave labour, to which most of the Caribbean region was devoted from the mid 17th century until well into the 19th century, was integral to European expansion and the development of the modern world economy. Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific (the latter through the transfer of economic plants such as the sugar cane, the breadfruit etc) were linked on the soil of the Americas. The Caribbean played an important role in the developing world economy, as sugar was a valued commodity; it dominated world production for over two hundred years, and was the object of keen competition among the European powers [Tomich 1990:2].

Tobago lies at the southern end of the Caribbean archipelago, to the north-east of Trinidad. It was sighted by Columbus on his third voyage in August 1498, and the Spaniards named it after the abundance of tobacco which the indigenous people smoked by pipe [Boomert 1990].

As the contest between the European powers for supremacy in the region developed in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Amerindians (accounts differ as to whether they should be called Caribs or not [Dauxion-Lavaysse 1813, 2:2]) resisted attempts by rival groups of Spanish, Dutch, English, French and Courlanders to settle Tobago. However, there were settlements by the Dutch and the Courlanders in the 17th century; and Deerr states that during their continuous occupation between 1632 and 1666, the Dutch established sugar estates and 6 well-equipped factories [Deerr 1949, 1:178;

Fowler 1774]. From 1690 Tobago was 'neutral' territory until the Treaty of Paris (1763) when, inhabited by a small number of French turtlers and some 300 Amerindian families, it was ceded to Britain.¹

Thus, Tobago was virtually virgin territory at the time of its cession to Britain, after which it was incorporated into the global economy as a producer of commodities for the world market. Its history after 1763 is shaped by the fact that it was a colony of the foremost imperial power in the era when capitalism was ascendant in Europe.

In the period 1765-1771, the island was surveyed and carved up by the Commissioners for the Sale of Lands into lots for plantations and poor settlers; and reserves for the protection of the rain forests, for towns, fortifications, and other uses of the Crown. In 1770, sugar was first exported under British rule. Tobago was thus a relative latecomer to the sugar plantation economy which, by the 1760s, had passed what historians normally call its Golden Age [Ragatz 1928/1977; Dunn 1973; Pares 1960].

From 1763, Tobago formed part of a single administration, with Grenada, the Grenadines, Dominica and St Vincent. Dominica became a separate colony in 1771, and in 1781, Tobago was conquered by the French until 1793, when it reverted to Britain, but as a separate colony. The year 1802 saw its return to France until 1803, when it was made, again, a

¹ See Archibald [1987], Young [1812], Coke [1810, 2], Nardin [1969]; also the repts. on the population in CO285/2: Drummond to Holburne, 18 Apr. 1751; Tyrrell to Moore, 19 Oct. 1757, in Pinfold to Board of Trade, 7 Jan. 1758.

separate British colony. It remained British thereafter. In 1833, Tobago became, with Grenada, St Vincent and Barbados, part of the Windward Islands, whose seat of government was at Barbados; St Lucia was added to the Windward Islands administration in 1838. Tobago remained part of the Windward Islands until 1889, when it was annexed to Trinidad.

By 1815, Britain was established as the leading imperial power. By 1860, it was the foremost industrial nation, the financial centre of Europe, and the major centre of the world market in important commodities, especially sugar [Chalmin 1983]. Tobago experienced greatest prosperity in the 1790s, when the slaves in Ste Domingue (Haiti), the jewel in France's crown, revolted, decimated sugar production, and destroyed France's competitive edge, which allowed Britain the undisputed leadership in the production and marketing of sugar. In the 1790s, the expression 'as rich as a Tobago planter' became a byword in wealthy London circles. However, competition between France and Britain for control over Tobago made it a precarious place for British investors, and by the early 19th century, Tobago producers were also adversely affected by the rising costs of supplies and slaves.

Tobago's prosperity as a sugar producer was brief. The global forces that catapulted it into importance also contributed to its decline as a sugar colony. Tomich writes that after 1815 the world economy was qualitatively and quantitatively reshaped, and the place of the British West Indies (BWI) in the British empire and in the world economy was redefined.

Britain's position in the world economy put it on the path toward a policy of free trade. To the extent that it came to control commerce outside the bounds of its own empire, Britain became relatively indifferent to formal colonialism as the means of defining the nature and direction of commodity flows and the division of labor between core and periphery.

[Tomich 1990:26]

Thus, as the East India colonies became more important, like the older colonies, Tobago was affected by the decline of the West Indies within the British empire, and by what Gallagher and Robinson [1953] termed 'the imperialism of free trade' which, from the 1840s, dismantled the mercantilist props that sustained the BWI sugar industry.²

Competition in the British market from slave-grown sugar from Cuba and Brazil, and the increased production of bounty-fed European beet sugar combined in the last decades of the 19th century to cause a sharp fall in world prices. The Sugar Depression of the 1880s and 1890s eliminated most Tobago producers from the world market, and inaugurated new social and political relations within the island.

Thus, Tobago's trajectory as a marginal sugar colony for the period of our study cannot be understood apart from the global processes which we have sketched above. Our study analyses, through time, the interplay of metropolitan and global forces and actors, on the one hand, and structures and actors in the local setting, on the other.

² For a useful discussion on free trade policies in the trajectories of Britain and other European powers, see Senghaas [1985]; on British 19th century imperialism, Eldridge [1984].

I.3 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON TOBAGO AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

The Caribbean presents a range of island and mainland territories with a variety of cultural, linguistic, racial and economic differences. Although the entire archipelago, Belize and the Guianas had been incorporated into the global economy, with the Sugar Revolution being the major formative factor (though a few places such as Curaçao were not producers in the plantation economy), this took place in different territories at differing points in time, under varying conditions and with diverse consequences. There was a marked lack of uniformity within the region during the period of slavery and throughout the latter part of the 19th century, according to the options and possibilities available to different classes. We must therefore recognize that unless the range of sub-types, both spatially and over time, are identified and studied, every attempt at generalization is rendered woefully inadequate.

In 1982, reviewing the six available 'images' of Caribbean societies in the sociological literature³, we argued that there was still no sociological theory on the region. We stated that the available conceptions offered useful insights, that Marxism, stripped of its dogmatic and mechanistic connotations, could provide a useful method for analysing class structures,⁴ but that ethnic, cultural and sexual

³ Craig [1982]. This chapter does not repeat the points in that sustained review. See also Sankatsing [1989].

⁴ Cf. Mouzelis, who argues for a 'pragmatic' approach to Marxism, and sees some of its fundamental insights as necessary to 'any serious, non-empiricist attempt to explain how total societies persist and change' [1990:3, 156].

cleavages must be integrated into the analysis, as must the oral tradition. We also argued that the old paradigms had to be transcended, but that the imaginative leap required would be facilitated by (though not automatically inferred from) more social histories on the range of sub-types within the region. Such work should be holistic, multidisciplinary, and simultaneously concerned with the interpenetration of global, regional and local factors. This study is conceived as a modest contribution to this genre of writing.

The second reason for this work is that Tobago, like many of the smaller Caribbean territories, has been particularly neglected in the historical and sociological literature. As far as its sociology is concerned, it is almost virgin territory. Most of the social science writing on Trinidad and Tobago wrongly assimilates Tobago's history and social structure to Trinidad's, or ignores Tobago altogether. The study of its social history in the century since Emancipation is now a matter of urgent academic and social necessity.

Apart from the reports of Commissions of Enquiry, the most easily available historical sources on Tobago in the 19th century are the observations and handbooks produced by resident government officials such as Young [1806; 1807; 1810; 1812], Woodcock [1867/1971] and Hay [1884; 1899]. Of these, only the work of Hay gives information for the period after 1865. The account of Fowler [1774] and the studies of Nardin [1966; 1969] are on the late 18th century. Academic theses apart from Nardin's are those by Ince [1984], Douglin [1987], B. Marshall [1972], W. Marshall [1963], and Rogers [1970];

none goes beyond 1877. All of these dissertations, except Douglin's, consider Tobago as part of the Windward Islands, to which it was constitutionally linked, though they are not based on any formally comparative research design. Douglin studies mainly the constitutional and economic history from 1815 to 1854; and only the two Marshalls discuss the social structure in detail. Maynard [1968] considers the Moravian Church in Tobago as part of the Eastern Caribbean Province.

The remaining analyses of any significance on 19th century Tobago are Niddrie [1961], Carmichael [1961], Williams [1962, Chs. 10, 11] and Ottley [1965/1973]. The first is an important study of settlement and land use patterns; the latter works focus on the broad outlines of its economic and constitutional history. Niddrie [1963] discusses some of the reports of Kaye Dowland, a very meticulous Stipendiary Magistrate, in the period 1835 to 1848.

Two recent studies, on the 1802/3 slave conspiracy [Laurence 1982], and on the 1876 uprising of estate workers [Brereton 1984], as well as Laurence [1983] on the strategies of the Colonial Office and the local dominant class at the end of the 18th and the turn of the 19th centuries, are all useful.⁵

For the early 20th century, the literature is sparse. Besides the annual reports and bulletins of government departments and brief sections in the annual yearbooks of the colony, there are handbooks written to attract settlers to

⁵ Laurence has also written a study of Tobago in 1815 (in press).

Tobago [Imperial Department of Agriculture for the West Indies 1906; Collens 1912a] and the accounts of resident parsons [Hammond 1910; Davies 1926]. There are also periodic reports in the missionary journals of the Moravian Church,⁶ visitors' accounts [Clifford 1905; Bowman and Bowman 1939] and general books such as Alford [1939]. No Tobago newspapers survive for the 20th century until the 1930s, and even the reporting in the Trinidad newspapers on Tobago was negligible. The only academic research is that of Pemberton [1984] on the characteristics of the smallholders, and Isaac [1979]. The significance of the oral tradition for the social structure has been analysed for one village by Elder [1972a], who has several unpublished papers on the subject, and tangentially by Meikle [1955].

Useful though the available literature is, even when we piece it together, there is no clear answer to important sociological questions. What were the main classes and ethnic groupings, and how did they evolve in the 19th century? What were their economic, social, cultural, political strategies, practices and conflicts? What was the sociological significance of internal and external migration? Was the post-Emancipation experience of Tobago comparable to that of other Caribbean colonies? Did a peasantry emerge, and when? What strategies for survival were employed by the various social groupings during and after the crisis of the 1880s? How were they transformed in the process? To these questions,

⁶ The reports by the Methodist missionaries are not preserved after 1885; the Anglican records are even thinner.

the literature offers no consistent analysis, since no careful study of the social configuration throughout the 19th century has been undertaken.

Although share systems were one of many means by which labour was employed and surplus appropriated throughout the BWI after 1838 (share cropping existed in Grenada, St Vincent, St Lucia, Dominica, Montserrat, Nevis, and the Bahamas), Tobago was one of the few places where it became the dominant relationship of production between 1850 and 1900. Only Marshall [1963; 1965] examines its workings in some detail, but his study stops at 1865. Williams discusses it in general outline [1962], as does Taylor [1966], who saw a limited number of sources. Integral to the analysis of this thesis (Ch. 5) will be a careful theoretical and empirical examination of metayage, which was central to the dynamics of class conflict and accommodation in Tobago.

The crisis of the 1880s, in which Tobago's sugar economy collapsed, led to its annexation to Trinidad in 1889 and to formal Union with the latter in 1899. This relationship is today, nearly one hundred years later, a source of considerable political friction between the islands, but the most comprehensive analyses are those of Williams [1962:140-151], Premdas and Williams [1992], and Ryan [1989, Ch. 13], none of which explores the dynamics of class and power that were involved in the decision to unite the colonies. The politics of the twin-island state can only be fully understood if the historical roots of the Union and the subsequent transformation of Tobago are adequately analysed. This thesis

(Chs. 7 and 8) is a contribution to our national understanding of the Union.

Implicit in the questions we have raised above is the view that there is need for a history of the social relations of the major class/colour groupings in Tobago, not as 'events' only (for events and individuals are sometimes necessary to our understanding of the 'long term'), but in what LeRoy Ladurie calls the 'event-structure mode', or the interaction between structures and particular events which have consequences (intended and otherwise) over a *longue durée* [1973/1979:120-131; cf. Braudel 1958/1972]. Such a history must offer a holistic view of the changing social structures and major processes in the society over time. It must do so within a clear explanatory framework with a view to answering the questions that are significant to today. As Lucien Febvre put it:

History is a way of organizing the past so that it does not weigh too heavily on the shoulders of man. ... For history does not present man with a collection of isolated facts. It explains them and so, in order to explain them, it arranges them in series to which it does not attach equal importance. For history has no choice in the matter, it systematically gathers in, classifies and assembles past facts in accordance with its present needs. It consults death in accordance with the needs of life.

[1973:41]

This kind of writing, in spite of the contributions of Best and Levitt [1969],⁷ Fog Olwig [1985] and Henry [1985], is

⁷ Best has, in his annual lecture to the students of Caribbean Sociology at the UWI, St Augustine, begun to develop a useful framework for understanding Caribbean societies through time. The Best/Levitt work examines

rare in the English-speaking Caribbean. Thus, the justification for this work is not simply that it fills needed gaps on Tobago, but that, taking the points of departure indicated above, it hopes to enhance our understanding of the structures and processes that were transformed in the 19th century to leave legacies and constraints on the reality that Caribbean people confront today. In asking questions of the data, we also hope to shed light on certain theoretical issues in the sociology of development [cf. Higman 1985/86].

I.4 THE THEORETICAL IMPASSE IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT

I.4.1 Debates on Dependency and Marxism

Tobago is one of the societies whose 'underdevelopment' has consumed much time, thought and temper in the sociology of development. We do not attempt here a full review of the literature. This has been competently undertaken by several authors [Palma 1978; Bernstein 1979; Roxborough 1979; Goodman and Redclift 1981; Henfrey 1981; Blomstrom and Hettne 1985; Munck 1984; Booth 1985]. Our task is only to point to some of the key issues raised by the dependency and Marxist 'schools',⁸ in order to indicate the path we choose, and why.

The critique of structural/functionalist theories of modernization by writers using the dependency framework was convincingly accomplished in the 1960s and early 1970s. But the dependency 'school' was hardly established before it too

Caribbean economies at three points in time, but has no mechanism for explaining the changes over time.

⁸ We recognize that there are several variants of each approach considered.

was subjected to telling criticism. The most important arguments of their critics are well known: the circularity and over-simplicity of Frank's thesis [1969; 1978]; his preclusion of historical specificity within the 'Third World'; his emphasis on capitalism as a system based on the international circulation of commodities, and not as a mode of production; the failure of these writers to make a genuine theoretical break with the underlying assumptions of the modernization paradigm; the tendency to replicate and invert the conceptual polarities of the modernization school; the over-emphasis on external factors as explanations for underdevelopment; the failure to give sufficient attention to classes as historical actors. And if 'development' is not a process which automatically occurs once the linkages to the metropolis are severed, then dependence alone cannot be the sole explanation for underdevelopment. Some writers also questioned whether it is possible to construct a global theory of underdevelopment [Bernstein 1979; Roxborough 1979; Mouzelis 1980].

The 'world-system' variant of dependency theorizing, based on Wallerstein's magisterial work [1974a; 1980; 1989], has been rightly criticized for its reductionist explanations, which see economic conditions and world market developments as the prime causes of events in the periphery; human agency, local groups and classes, and national states are deprived of efficacy [Skocpol 1977; Stern 1988a; 1988b]. A similar point was made about Amin's circular thesis on peripheral capitalism [1974; 1976] by Smith [1980]. Indeed, Stern argues that local conditions, including the resistance of the oppressed classes,

at times have considerable weight in determining how capitalism was instituted historically in Latin America. Local initiatives, intra-regional differentiation, and cultural resistance in contemporary Guatemala and the Caribbean are stressed by Smith [1985] and Mintz [1977], respectively.

The *dependentistas* did have certain achievements. They laid to rest diffusionist and 'dualist' strategies of development. They successfully demolished all Eurocentric theories which posited a unilinear, teleological evolution of society, whether towards 'modernity', or economic 'take-off' through various stages of growth, or via successive modes of production to socialism. They also demolished the Marxist view of capitalism in the periphery as inherently 'progressive'; and Marx's schema of modes of production, which was largely derived from the European experience, was shown to be inadequate for other regions.⁹ In particular, the construct of an 'Asiatic mode of production' had little value in analysing Asian and other 'Third World' societies.

The major achievement of the dependency school was to offer, not a theory of underdevelopment, but what Cardoso and Faletto [1979] called a framework for analysing concrete situations of dependence. Dependency writers pointed to the historical and imperialist nexus in which the economies and social structure of the periphery are involved, and rightly

⁹ Marx [n.d./1982] recognized this more than many of his disciples. As we show below, there is renewed questioning of Marx's outline in his 1859 Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy as it applies to Europe.

argued that the insertion of peripheral societies in the global capitalist system, and the contemporary dynamics of that system, must constitute the matrix for understanding peripheral social formations. If many of these writers failed to integrate the 'internal' with the 'external' as explanatory factors, or to pose the question of class in terms other than regional or national differences, this is not necessarily given by their perspective, but reflects a failure to move from the economic to the specificity of social cleavages and alliances, and to avoid overarching generalizations [cf. Henfrey 1981:27]. Indeed, the 'school' presented a range of positions on these matters [Blomstrom and Hettne 1985, Ch. 3].

Cardoso and Faletto emphasized, not only transnational relations of dependence, but also the interaction between these and internal factors, all of which influenced the shape and direction of contemporary development. They stressed the natural resources, the formation and practice of social classes, socio-political alliances, the role of the state, and the form in which all these have been constituted and articulated historically, as the key factors which determine and differentiate Latin American societies today. Rejecting Frank's stagnationist view of Latin America, Cardoso also noted what he called 'dependent development' [1972; 1973b], since in Brazil and Mexico, for example, which have undergone considerable industrialization, peripheral capitalism exists, but in dependent forms, with specific consequences for class alliances, political structures and development strategies [cf. Hoogvelt 1982; Evans 1979].

While the emphasis of Cardoso and Faletto on the historical specificity of each situation is a welcome advance on the a-historical theorizing of Frank and many of the Marxists in the debate, their work is descriptive, without any explicit analytical apparatus for explaining the differences between countries [cf. Henfrey 1981]. Such a theory may be implicit, since they make clear explanatory statements that take them beyond a conceptual framework. However, it would need to identify the factors differentiating particular subsets of societies, and would have to be sufficiently open-ended and 'middle range' in its focus to leave room for empirical investigation.¹⁰

In the absence of the type of theory that is needed, the present work will use Cardoso's basic approach, but will confine itself to testing our hypothesis on Tobago by offering the kind of analysis that Skocpol [1985] calls 'analytic historical sociology'. These points are developed in Section I.6 below.

The Marxist pole of the debate has not been more helpful. Too often, they have understood agrarian transitions in the periphery as simply the way one or more pre-capitalist mode(s) of production (MOP(s)) inhibit(s) or advance(s) the development of the capitalist mode of production (CMP) and its reproduction of cheap labour power. Thus, they too reproduce the teleological problematic of the modernization school. The

¹⁰ Mouzelis [1980:370] basically agrees with this, but argues that such a theory should be no more than a 'conceptual framework'. A theory, because it must have some explanatory power, is not a conceptual framework. This is precisely Cardoso's problem.

warning that there are different agrarian systems and different processes of agrarian transition is therefore salutary [Duncan and Rutledge 1977, Ch. 1; Roxborough 1979; Goodman and Redclift 1981].

While Laclau [1971] and Brenner [1977] in the orthodox Marxist tradition [cf. Dobb 1946/1975; Hilton et al. 1978] stressed the importance of understanding capitalism, not simply in its 'circulationist' aspects, but as a mode of production, how to characterize peripheral MOPs has remained problematic. Laclau himself described the MOPs in Latin America as 'only formally capitalist', because the region participates in the general movement of the capitalist system without becoming fully capitalist. Although he spelled out four criteria with which to decide how to characterize a given MOP, ultimately, once the generalized employment of wage labour did not occur, he deemed the MOP 'semi-feudal'. 'Semi-feudal' is a disconcertingly residual category for whatever is not the CMP in the terms with which Marx described this for 19th century western Europe.

In the last fifteen years, with the decline in influence of Althusserian structural Marxism and the collapse of communism in the Soviet bloc, there has been a marked departure from the basic tenets of Marxism by many erstwhile orthodox Marxists. Laclau now argues against the privileged position of the system of production in Marxist discourse, against the expectation of proletarian consciousness, and against the view that class positions are 'the necessary location of historical interests'. Describing his position as

'post-Marxist', he advocates a 'radical and plural democracy' as the alternative for the Left [Laclau and Mouffe 1985:4, 185].

Because of the clear inadequacies of Marx's schema of MOPs, there have been similar radical departures from orthodoxy, even by former champions of historical materialism.¹¹ A far more pragmatic approach is taken by committed Marxists, some of whom [Callinicos 1989b; Burawoy 1989] defend historical materialism as a set of analytical concepts on the ground of its usefulness, and argue that Marxism is a 'scientific research programme', in the sense that Imre Lakatos [1978] used the term, whose 'hard core' can be treated as if immune to empirical refutation, while the 'protective belt' is subject to testing and refutation. Marxism's resilience may yet permit a thousand theoretical flowers to bloom.

In the meantime, the literature on modes of production and their 'articulation', which was often advanced (for example, by Taylor [1979]) as the answer to the weaknesses of dependency analysis, is fraught with inadequacies.

Attempts at identifying modes of production in the periphery have not been helpful. On the one hand, Alavi [1975] and Banaji [1972] advanced for India the concept 'colonial mode of production', with Alavi also hinting at a 'post-colonial mode of production'; but they did not define the construct in the same way and they both now distance themselves from their earlier views. Another attempt [Cardoso

¹¹ For example, see most of the essays in Callinicos [1989a].

1975a] at constructing the colonial MOPs in the Americas was preliminary and severely criticized [Munck 1984].

Further, since differing relations of production may indicate what Banaji [1977] calls 'forms of labour' and other Marxists 'labour processes', but not necessarily modes of production, at what point does a form of labour/labour process become a mode of production? The major difficulty is the level of abstraction and the formalism in the use of these analytical constructs.¹² How to characterize colonial MOPs, where wage labour is not the dominant or only mechanism of surplus appropriation; how to theorize the links between the forces and relations of production, the development of classes and other social groupings and the state; and what should be the appropriate empirical referents or units of analysis, remain unanswered questions. Implicit in this abstract formalism is what E. P. Thompson called the problem of theoretical 'closure', inherent in Althusserian structuralism, wherein the relationships between economy, social classes, and ideological, cultural and political practices are so mechanistically predetermined by the theory, as to leave no open-endedness to the historical process, no scope for human agency, and no necessity for empirical research [Thompson 1978:167, author's emphasis; cf. Mouzelis 1980].

Marx's schema of MOPs and the historical materialism derived from it have long been questioned by European

¹² Callinicos [1989b] argues that it is misplaced concreteness to expect 'mode of production' to have an empirical referent; unless there are bridging concepts which allow for empirical testing, the construct is unhelpful.

Marxists. Levine and Wright [1980], responding to Cohen's [1978] vigorous defence of historical materialism, argue that it is impossible to devise a theory of human history based on the interests of individuals or classes, since many factors mediate the translation of interests into social and political practices, and class interests do not necessarily determine class capacities. As a view of history based on the 'laws of motion' of successive MOPs, historical materialism is seen as both theoretically and politically inadequate. Cohen [1989] later questioned both Marx's anthropology and the validity of historical materialism.

Similarly, Hindess and Hirst [1975], who attempted to rescue MOP analysis from its Althusserian overtones, have abandoned the concept as a primary object of analysis [Cutler et al. 1977, 1:253]. They deny that a MOP can be a totality which has inscribed in its structure necessary effects, and reject the view of classes as 'impelled' to political unity and action because of their interests. They also argue for the specificity of the political sphere and for a non-reductionist view of the state [Cutler et al. 1978, 2:241].

Wolpe [1985] admits that there is need for concepts to make specific analyses of the relationships between capitalist and non-capitalist MOPs, to understand the relationship between the forces and the relations of production within given MOPs, and to study units of production and their reproduction. In other words, as an analytical category, MOP needs to be amplified with precise conceptual tools if it is to be helpful in concrete historical analysis.

Manicas also admits that Marxists have 'tried to make the concept 'mode of production' bear an explanatory weight of which it is incapable'. He argues that the orthodox view of MOPs 'becomes explanatory only via an untenable reductionism and functionalism' and concludes that 'the key variables ... are the capacities and responses by various classes and class fractions in nations within the orbit of these [global] structures'.

In summary, then, we must distinguish between the structural constraints of the world states-system as it is presently constituted and the structural imperatives of monopoly capitalism. Neither are reducible to the other and the causal pertinence, one to the other, will not be uniform through time and space.

He also calls for conjunctural analyses specifying the MOPs observed, with theories giving the causally pertinent structural determinants, strictly specified as to their causal roles and weighted as regards their causal effects [1985:315-321; author's emphasis].

These admissions, especially from Levine and Wright, Thompson, Hindess and Hirst, and Manicas, indicate the theoretical inadequacies of the 'hard core' of Marxism, and the need for macro-sociological studies, avoiding the pitfalls of system teleology and economic reductionism, which give due weight to human agency and to political dynamics. With the basic approach of Manicas, which coincides with Cardoso's, we agree. However, with qualitative data, multiple causation and conjunctural effects, it is impossible to weight factors and variables in the way Manicas requires.

I.4.2 Marxist Debates on the Caribbean

Writers on the Caribbean debated at length the issue of small size [Demas 1965] and dependence, but the dominant conception was that of the 'plantation economy', showing that the mechanisms whereby dependence is constituted and maintained find new forms in each historical epoch [Best and Levitt 1969].¹³ The 'modes of production controversy' [Foster-Carter 1978] also engaged their attention, but the focus was on the relationship between capitalism and slavery, with the implication that the capitalist mode of production (CMP) was instituted in the region only after Emancipation, when 'free' wage labour was possible. On the one hand, there was debate as to whether the CMP could have been instituted in the Americas by European powers that were not themselves capitalist in the 16th century [Laclau 1971; Mintz 1985:58]; for our study of Tobago after 1763, the question does not arise, since in the late 18th century capitalism was ascendant in Britain. On the other hand, is the question whether production by slaves can be seen as capitalist, which we now consider.

It must be remembered that except for the Guyanas, with their vast hinterlands, and the Spanish colonies, which were generally treated as military and strategic outposts by Spain, the Amerindian populations were systematically decimated, whether through disease or military defeat, exploitation and dispersion. From the 17th century, the Sugar Revolution

¹³ See further references in Craig [1982]; Blomstrom and Hettne [1985, Ch. 5].

dismantled most forms of independent petty subsistence and commodity production and implanted the sugar plantation, with production based largely on slave labour in the mature phases of the system. Except in the Guyanese hinterlands, the pre-colonial MOPs did not survive wherever the sugar economy took root, and the major alternative forms were the institutions created by the small pockets of Maroons, where these existed [Price 1973]. It is true that slaves had provision grounds on the plantations and developed extensive markets, but this activity cannot be considered a distinct MOP [cf. Mintz 1978]. In the 'sugar islands', therefore, there was one MOP.

It is widely recognized that to focus on the formal relations of production without understanding the total matrix of conditions and relationships within which production takes place can lead to serious error. Banaji [1977] shows that there were several forms of production within feudalism, and that Dobb's weakness [1946/1975] lay in part in failing to recognize this, which led him to characterize relations that were not serfdom as belonging to MOPs other than feudal. By the same token, the existence of slavery in the New World does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that a slave or pre-capitalist MOP existed before Emancipation. Looked at in their global context, the sugar plantations, combining agriculture and industry on a large scale, with a high level of social and technical organization, were 'a pioneer institution of capitalist development' [Tomich 1990:2; cf. Mintz 1985:48-51]. Tomich puts the central issues well:

The development of colonial slavery in
the New World was predicated on European

expansion and the formation of the modern world economy beginning in the sixteenth century. The world market, the world-scale integration and divisioning of labor, and the level of global productive forces are constitutive of slave relations and shape their social-historical content. ... Conversely, as a form of commodity production, slavery finds its extension and completion in exchange relations. ... Thus, neither the world market nor the relations of production can be treated as isolated phenomena. Rather, these relations and processes of commodity production and exchange should be understood as simultaneously and mutually formative. ... In this perspective, capitalism as a concrete historical phenomenon is not identified simply with production for the market, nor is it confined to the wage form of labor.

[1990:2; author's emphasis]

Slavery is thus seen, following Wallerstein [1974b], as one among many forms in which capitalists organized labour in the periphery, although wage labour emerged as the principal means by which labour was subordinated in the capitalist world economy.¹⁴

Was there a slave MOP in the Americas? Hindess and Hirst [1975] made a case for its existence by assertion, since they admitted that the construct had no empirical referent [cf. Aya 1976]. They themselves have now abandoned the MOP construct, as well as the view that the process of production is prior to and determinant of circulation and distribution [Hindess and Hirst 1977; Cutler et al. 1978, 2:241].

Other Marxists argued for a slave MOP. Post [1978:22-3],

¹⁴ Cf. Beiguelman [1978:77], who argues that slavery was 'the form in which capitalism is realized in the colonial economy'. Padgug [1976] saw the links between New World slavery and European capitalism in the sphere of circulation; but production and circulation are part of the same cycle.

studying Jamaica, said that slavery was a distinct MOP, while Robotham, avoiding the question of what did exist, saw Jamaican slavery as having 'semi-feudal features', because of the slaves' provision grounds [1977:47]. Capitalism for both Post and Robotham was a post-Emancipation development with the emergence of free labour. Cardoso [1975b] sketched the outlines of a 'colonial slave mode of production' in the Americas, but it is a tentative work that does not offer an analysis of the internal contradictions which supposedly led to the demise of slavery. Moreno Fragnals, in his classic work, noted that the Cuban 'sugarocracy' had bourgeois orientations and dealt in capitalist markets; but he could not identify production by slaves with capitalism.¹⁵

Quintero Rivera [1982] is rather more interesting. He argues, following Laclau and Dobb, that Puerto Rico in the 19th century experienced a transition from being a society of dispersed subsistence smallholders to one in which a hacienda economy prevailed. But the internal market was still undeveloped and the circulation of commodities, including the sale of labour power as a commodity, was not widespread. The system of production, under these circumstances peculiar to Puerto Rico, was thus not capitalist. However, Mintz [1977] states that Puerto Rico's developments were a response to external needs and opportunities; it is therefore mistaken to conceptualize Antillean systems as unaffected by the CMP.

All the above writers have to contend with the question

¹⁵ Moreno Fragnals [1964/1976]; cf. critique by Tomich [1991b] and comments by Mintz [1991].

as to whether 'slave' or 'feudal' MOPs were transformed on Emancipation Day into the CMP, if the day before they were non-capitalist régimes [ibid.:264].

Other writers have been compelled by the evidence to see the Caribbean as capitalist from the slave era [Fraser 1981; Sebastien 1978; Banaji 1977]. Genovese, who insists that the slaveholding South of the USA was not a capitalist régime [1967:13-39], distinguishes it from the Caribbean where, especially in the BWI, 'the slaveholders ... or at least the richest and most powerful of them, were in fact English capitalists' and where the régimes 'should, for all practical purposes, be considered capitalist' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese 1983:22-3].

Banaji [1977] contends that the slave plantation was capitalist, but differed from classical capitalist enterprises in its lower intensity of accumulation, in the constant composition of its capital, and its declining levels of labour productivity. Here, the ground of the argument is shifted from the way in which the surplus was appropriated to the efficiency of capital in expanding its own reproduction. Banaji asserts that, since some of the surplus was spent on 'feudally-dominated habits of consumption and display',

the slave plantations were capitalist enterprises of a patriarchal and feudal character producing absolute surplus-value on the basis of slave-labour and a monopoly in land.

[1977:17; author's emphasis]

It is difficult to accept that the consumption patterns of the planters prevented 'the self-expansion of value' [ibid.:17] from becoming a compelling force in the career of the sugar

plantations, and therefore prevented them from being genuinely capitalist. The historical record documents also the constraints of rising costs of supplies and slaves, falling prices for sugar, imperial restrictions, high commissions and charges from British merchants and the resistance of the slaves themselves, all of which made sugar production less profitable at the end of the 18th century, especially in the older colonies, where the soils had become exhausted [Ragatz 1928/1977]. We have to conclude that the plantations were simply capitalist.

Marx himself, referring to the New World plantation colonies, wrote:

In [this] type of colonies - plantations - where commercial speculations figure from the start and production is intended for the world market, the capitalist mode of production exists, although only in a formal sense, since the slavery of Negroes precludes free wage-labour, which is the basis of capitalist production. But the business in which slaves are used is conducted by capitalists.

[Marx 1969b, 2:302-3;
author's emphasis]

He insisted on the nexus between plantation America and the world market, and argued that the planters in the Americas were capitalists, though anomalies in a system based on free labour [Marx 1980:119].

Patterson, arguing against Hindess and Hirst, states that 'no such thing as a slave mode of production exists' [1979:52], and that there was no essential difference between the Caribbean planter and the European capitalist.

The slave variant of capitalism is merely capitalism with its clothes off. This is clearly what Marx had in mind when he re-

ferred to capitalism as wage slavery. ... Capitalism, which is exclusively a product of the modern world, has had two major variants: the 'free' variant characterized by the sale of the worker's labour on the labour market; and the slave variant found in the Americas up to the closing decades of the 19th century, in the Banda Islands south of Ceram in the Dutch East Indies between the late 17th and mid-19th centuries, and in the Indian Ocean slave colonies of the 18th and 19th centuries.

[Ibid.:51-53]

We agree with Patterson. Considering that Tobago was from 1764 established as a producer of commodities for the global market; given that there is no dispute about the dominance of capitalism in Britain in the late 18th century and that the planters were capitalist entrepreneurs, using slave labour to appropriate surplus; given that slavery was one among many labour régimes used within the Caribbean for the same purpose by the same class throughout the 19th century, we treat Tobago as a society dominated by the capitalist MOP from 1763 onwards. To quote Tomich again,

Slave labor is not regarded as capitalist simply because it entails production for the market, or as noncapitalist because it is not the wage form of labor. Rather, slave labor is conceived as part of the organization of social labor on a world scale. ... [Slave relations] constitute a specific form of commodity production that is related to other such forms through the world market and world-scale processes of integration and division of labor.

[1990:5]

The theoretical impasse on 'Third World' development is complicated by ethnic, racial, religious and other cleavages, which are of considerable importance, not to be dismissed as epiphenomena or superstructure, but not easily accommodated

within the standard Marxist categories. Indeed, Mouzelis [1981:536] argued that this constitutes the 'crucial dilemma' for Marxism as a whole, the choices being either to explain such cleavages and structures in a reductionist (economically determined) way, or to analyse them in an *ad hoc* manner, borrowing concepts from a non-Marxist framework. A few Marxist Caribbeanists have felt it possible to combine Marxism with the study of ethnic, racial and religious phenomena [Rodney 1981; Post 1984; Mills 1987]. So far, however, apart from James [1938/1963], a successful portrayal of these factors in a single Marxist study of the processes of macro-sociological change in a given historical conjuncture has not appeared. Mills recently described his earlier [1987] views as verging on class reductionism, and called for a Marxism that would be 'feminist, ethnically sensitive, green and morally informed' [1991:47].

I.4.3 A Way Forward

Is there a way forward? Booth, examining the crisis in development sociology, perceptively notes that it is at the level of meta-theory that both dependency and Marxism in all their varieties have failed. Dependency is flawed on logical, empirical and theoretical grounds; in particular, its reasoning is often circular. The modes of production approach is based on functionalist, and equally circular, arguments about the needs of capitalist reproduction. Booth argues that all development sociology is committed to explanations which show that the structures and processes of the Third World are

'not only explicable but necessary under capitalism' [1985:81], the two variants of which are system teleology, and the 'reading off' of social and political structures from economic conditions.

Mouzelis [1988] considers some practical implications of Booth's argument. He calls for 'a historically oriented macro comparative approach', examining the trajectories of development in different societies, while giving due weight to the political (that is, avoiding the perils of economic reductionism). This approach - comparative research examining societies over the '*longue durée*' - he regards as a way out of the theoretical impasse [cf. Mouzelis 1990; 1991].

All the major critiques of both 'schools' have argued for macro-sociological studies, over the long term, holistic in scope, which do not privilege the economic over other aspects of society, nor social class over other lines of cleavage. They indicate that due weight should be given to state structures and to the specificity of the political. The present work takes precisely that approach. And although it is a case study, as Section I.5 below shows, it views Tobago in comparison with other Caribbean societies.

Firstly, it provides a socio-historical analysis of the changing social structure of Tobago between 1838 and 1900. Tobago is considered as inserted into, and penetrated by, the world capitalist system. Throughout, we discuss the interplay between the character of that system, the interests and actions of metropolitan powers and classes and the interests, capacities and actions of local classes, fractions and strata.

As part of this analysis, we seek to answer one question on Tobago's development. Given the common features of colonial domination and dependence in the BWI in the 19th century, what accounts for the severe crisis of the Tobago sugar economy in the 1880s, *vis-à-vis* that of the more technologically efficient and profitable plantation colonies, such as Trinidad and British Guiana?

I.5 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

I.5.1 Objectives

1. To conduct a socio-historical study of the changing social structure of Tobago in the period 1838-1900. In the absence of any work analysing Tobago on the eve of emancipation, Chapter 2 studies the social structure from 1763 to 1838, with particular emphasis on the 1830s.
2. To test the hypothesis outlined below.

I.5.2 Definitions of Key Concepts and Basic Assumptions

1. Social Structure

The configuration of social groups, classes, strata in a society; their composition, interrelationships and relative social power, as indicated by their access to, and control over, the major economic, cultural/ideological and political institutions.

2. Social Class

Social classes are groupings which form part of structured relations of domination and subordination. This study assumes that classes are structured and generated in the process of production and circulation of commodities.

Production and distribution are part of the same cycle. In Tobago, planters were often merchants and shopkeepers, while huckstering, market vending, trafficking and petty shopkeeping were activities of many labourers and metayers.

Therefore classes are identified by commonalities in

their control over (or separation from) the major means and conditions of production and circulation, such that there was a structured capacity of control (or dispossession) in the hands of definite categories of agents [Cutler et al. 1977, 1:253].

We recognize that class consciousness may fail to occur among groups of people whose class position (degree of control over similar means and conditions of production and distribution) may be similar, and that individuals and groups may identify with classes to which they do not belong. How groups coalesced and acted as they perceived their interests is a matter for investigation.

Social classes are conceived of as being segmented into fractions and strata.

Social strata may exist without belonging to a specific class. In Chapter 7, the 'middle strata', a heterogeneous grouping of people from positions intermediate between those we have identified as the dominant class and the labouring class, are an example of this.

Temporary and shifting alliances may occur between classes, or between fractions and strata from within classes. They may also occur between all or part of the 'middle strata' and all or part of classes.

Since class is a historical concept, sections of classes or whole classes may rise and fall in the process of social mobility over time. Embryonic, emergent and declining classes, fractions and strata must therefore be delineated and understood.

In the Caribbean, race/colour, culture and class patterns overlap significantly, though their relationship is not isomorphic. Following Stuart Hall, we assume that 'It does not help ... to depress some factors of this matrix in favour of others ... since it is precisely the generative specificity of each, plus the over-determined complexity of the whole, which is the problem' [Hall 1977:154].

Thus, social class is given no *a priori* privileged status in this analysis, and throughout, the inter-relationships between class, race/colour, culture and gender are analysed where possible. Their relative importance at any given historical moment is treated as a matter that must be assessed on the basis of available evidence [Thompson 1978:172].

Given the colonial situation of Tobago, the significant historical actors and classes are not confined within its geographical boundaries.

3. The Crisis of the 1880s

The *explanandum* of this study is the definitive collapse of the sugar economy in the 1880s. As Chapters 4, 5, and 7 show, production and exports of sugar declined dramatically, as did imports and revenue. There was little money circulating and transactions were done in kind. This caused a mass exodus of labourers (Ch. 6). The failure of the revenue, even at minimal levels of expenditure, led to the abolition of the Tobago Government and the annexation of Tobago to Trinidad. This was a short-term 'event', explosive, and striking, both to contemporaries and in its socio-political effects on Tobago [Braudel 1958/1972:14]. Thus, no justification is needed for defining it ostensively.

I.5.3 Working Hypothesis

This study argues that the crucial factors which account for Tobago's crisis of production and trade in the 1880s, in which the sugar economy proved to be less resilient than that of neighbouring colonies, were not simply either the dependent status of Tobago, both as a colony and a peripheral economy, or its insertion into the capitalist world system.

Although these are the main alternative hypotheses offered by the literature on development, since they have been shown to be inadequate on their own, we do not examine them. Instead, we amplify them, by taking them as necessary conditions, integral to the analysis, and by advancing additional factors which might have been sufficient to determine the crisis of the 1880s. Therefore we have no alternative hypothesis, nor could we glean one from the Tobago data.

We advance the hypothesis that, within the matrix of Tobago's insertion as a dependent colony into the global capitalist system, the factors which determined the crisis of

the 1880s were, not British capital *per se*, but the source and deployment of capital invested on the island; and secondly, its social structure, in particular the absence of a class or classes able, either to supply capital for the upgrading and restructuring of the sugar industry, or to diversify the economy away from sugar production, or both.

We recognize that what are here identified as causal 'factors' are themselves the products of social action and processes, which are analysed in the study. Such processes are likely to be the results of the action of social classes, fractions, and their alliances. However, because class conflicts are not privileged in our presuppositions, the question is left open at this point.

The rationale for our hypothesis is as follows. If we conceive of the Caribbean colonies in the late 19th century along a continuum distinguishing the most capitalized, technologically advanced and profitable sugar producers from the least in these respects, Tobago would lie at the moribund pole of the spectrum; Cuba, British Guiana and Trinidad at the most advanced end of it.

The two British colonies mentioned, British Guiana (BG) and Trinidad, are distinguished from Tobago in the following respects:

- a. large tracts of virgin, fertile soil available for plantations;¹⁶
- b. large capital investment in the most modern technology for sugar growing and processing, supported

¹⁶ But, as in Tobago, there was oligarchical control over the best lands, achieved via (i) restricted access to Crown lands, (ii) prohibitive prices for land and (iii) restrictions on squatting.

- by state investment in roads and railways;
- c. continuous state-aided immigration schemes, especially of indentured labour for the plantations.

The availability of all the above factors - land, capital and labour - was mediated by the policies of the colonial state, over which the 'planting interests', metropolitan and local, had great influence.

Tobago had 57,408 acres of alienated land, of which at most, only 10,000 acres were under canes and provisions during the period of our study. Large tracts of land were abandoned, and cultivated estates under-utilized from the 1840s (Tables 8, 9). Tobago did not have continuous immigration. The planters' most crucial need was for capital in sufficient quantities to allow them to install the latest technology, to pay wages, and to import labour, where necessary.

Although Tobago differed from Trinidad and BG in the above resource endowments, it was like them in one crucial respect: their sugar industries were largely controlled by British merchants.¹⁷ Why, then, did the domination of Trinidad and BG by British merchants result in technological advance and a sugar industry in which, although some planters succumbed to the Sugar Depression, the industry survived, while in Tobago similar domination resulted in the stagnation of its sugar industry and its demise in the Depression?

The argument is further advanced by considering, within the confines of 19th century thinking and possibilities, what the available options were, if Tobago was to avoid succumbing

¹⁷ See Sebastien [1978] and Adamson [1972] for Trinidad and BG, respectively.

to a Depression, such as that of the 1880s. There were two basic options, which were not mutually exclusive.

a. Option 1

This would entail the estates' breaking out of their chronic indebtedness and encumbrances, so that they could attract large inputs of capital for modernizing sugar production. However, investors were more likely to invest in the newer, larger, more fertile colonies.

b. Option 2

To diversify out of sugar.

Option 1 did not occur. Although many of the Tobago estates were sold and freed of encumbrances in the Encumbered Estates Court after 1862, they remained heavily indebted and controlled, via the system of advances, commissions and consigneeship, by a few British merchant houses. Tobago never attracted large sums of foreign capital and there was no local class capable of making the necessary investment. The reasons for this are fully explored in Chapter 7.

Option 2

The option of diversification away from sugar could have meant two basic possibilities, which were also not mutually exclusive.

Option 2A: the emergence of a class of estate owners, (whether local or foreign-based) or owners of tracts of land over 10 acres¹⁸ in extent, who were not able to compete in sugar or who were not 'interested' in sugar as a commodity;

Option 2B: the emergence of a class of smallholders producing crops other than sugar for subsistence and/or export.

¹⁸ Ch. 4 shows that 10 acres constituted a critical 'threshold' in Tobago; the owners of holdings that size and above were planters, professionals, the more prosperous shopkeepers and merchants; not peasants or labourers.

For Option 2A, the study examines whether and why such groups of estate or land owners did/did not emerge (Chs. 4, 7). It also seeks, within the available data, to know whether the sources of capital tied planters, who may have wished to diversify, to sugar production (Ch. 7).¹⁹

For Option 2B, Chapters 3 and 4 examine whether a peasantry, as defined in Chapter 3, emerged between 1838 and 1884. The composition and differentiation of the agrarian labour force are also understood in the light of the metayage system (Ch. 5) and of the demographic and occupational data available from the censuses (Ch. 6).

The work is multi-faceted, but the insights from Chapters 3 to 7 are summarized in Chapter 7. Our conclusions on these questions for the period 1838-84 are consistent with the data on the restructuring of the society between 1884 and 1900 (Ch. 8), and a full summary of the findings are in Chapter 9.

Given that our observations on Trinidad and BG note the importance of the colonial state in the provision of land, labour and capital, this study examines carefully the role of the state and of the relative power of various classes and other groupings over its policies, particularly on land, immigration and taxation (Chs. 3, 5, 7).

Our hypothesis would be tenable if, in exploring the

¹⁹ Green [1986:155] argues that 'the appeal of alternative staples in the decade after emancipation turns out to be a mirage', and that an inter-island trade in foodstuff and stock could only be premised on a division of labour within the region, with some islands continuing to produce commodities for the world market. Some islands did produce other staples - bananas, arrowroot, pimento, cocoa - in the 19th century, so there was no necessity for Tobago to remain monocultural.

extent to which Options 1, 2A and 2B occurred in Tobago, we find data that are valid and reliable in support of it, and if the contradictory evidence is not overwhelming. It would receive stronger support from a series of strict comparisons with other Caribbean countries.

Trinidad and BG are cases unlike Tobago in their size and initial resource endowments, especially land; they also enjoyed the technological advantage of entering later than Tobago into sugar production. Since they are not strictly comparable to Tobago, we have used these contrasting examples only as points of orientation in searching for explanatory clues.

A more appropriate comparison is that between Tobago and the neighbouring island of Grenada, which are similar in size, topography, resource endowments, stage of transformation into full-blown sugar colonies and political administration. Nevertheless, Grenada, because it no longer grew sugar for export, was the only island expected by the 1897 Royal Commission to escape suffering if sugar completely failed. Besides Grenada, only Jamaica and Trinidad, which had undergone a measure of diversification from sugar, were expected to recover from the Depression without imperial aid.²⁰

If our hypothesis is tenable, we expect to find, for Grenada, that the factors posited for Tobago's crisis were

²⁰ WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, pp. 3, 7, 66-7, 69. Successive Tobago Lt.-Governors and Administrators after 1870 urged the planters to diversify as their Grenadian counterparts had done.

either different, in the case of the source and deployment of capital and the ability of the estates to modernize (Option 1), or present, in the case of the diversifying class or classes which we identify for Options 2A and 2B. (We recognize that differences found may be of degree and not of kind.) We would also need to look for conditions and processes unique to Grenada which may have contributed to, or which would better account for, its greater prosperity in the 1880s and 1890s.

In other words, employing Mill's 'Method of Difference', which, he argued, was a far stronger tool than his 'Method of Agreement' in identifying causal factors [Mill 1843/1965:255-266, 287], we shall consider two cases alike in all relevant respects, in which the outcomes were very different. While this procedure would strengthen our hypothesis if it confirms it, like Mill, we recognize the plural and conjunctural nature of social causation, which may confound even the modest aims of this work [cf. Ragin 1987]. Since we are unable to examine the primary sources for Grenada as for Tobago, the argument is sketched in Chapter 9 as a subject for future research.

I.6 THE CHALLENGE OF HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

I.6.1 The Research Design

We assume that history is not a succession of heroes, of exceptional figures, although great men and women are made by, and can have a decisive impact on, their time. The historical process is open-ended, contingent. It is made and remade by the day-to-day creations, reactions and struggles of ordinary men and women as individuals and as collective actors. 'Men

make their history', Marx wrote, but they do not make it just as they please. They make it under conditions given and encountered from the past. The social historian's task is to unearth and understand this process of acting and of being acted upon in the production and reproduction of institutions and societal structures, which enable, sustain, disable and constrain human action. It is also to understand the intended and unintended consequences of human action, and the often unrealized intentions which inspire it.

This study belongs to the genre of social history that Lloyd [1988:280-4] calls the 'relational-structurist tradition'. By that, he means an approach based on a structural methodology balanced by 'agentialist' explanations of change. Society is seen as a historical structure, whose production, reproduction and change occurs in a continual process of structuring by social actors, particularly social classes. Abrams [1982] and Burke [1980] define the best social history in similar terms. The Genoveses [1983, Ch. 7], criticizing approaches to social history which minimize social class and power relations, advocate the same holistic, structural approach. This is also the tradition appealed to by Cardoso [1973a:22], Manicas, Mouzelis, Ladurie, Braudel and other writers cited above.

Our research design is now considered. Skocpol [1985] argues that there are three basic research designs used in historical sociology, although in practice they may overlap. First, there is the application of a general model to one or more historical instances, for example, Smelser's Social

Change in The Industrial Revolution [1959]. The second strategy, 'interpretive historical sociology', applies concepts, but not general models, to arrive at the culturally embedded intentions of individuals and groups in their historical settings. An example is E. P. Thompson's The Making of the English Working Class [1966]. Within this strategy, comparisons are used to highlight particular features of individual cases, and the researcher will choose cases which maximize the possibility of drawing contrasts.

The third strategy, 'analytic historical sociology', is to search for causal regularities by applying alternative hypotheses to account for a well-defined outcome or pattern in history. Here, the researcher may use only a single case, but is normally led to comparative studies as the most appropriate means to explore the validity of alternative explanations. An example of this is her own work, States and Social Revolutions [1979]. In an earlier paper, Skocpol and Somers [1980] had called this approach 'macro-causal analysis'.

This thesis fits the third design. It analyses the social structure of Tobago, while using the data to test an hypothesis. In one respect, the lack of an alternative hypothesis, in the light of the weaknesses of the background literature, we fall short; but textbook prescriptions are not always met in actual research. We are led to comparing Tobago with Grenada in Chapter 9.

Such historical reconstructions present the problem of understanding, not only discrete events, but social processes and the weight that should be given to each of the complexity

of factors that 'determine' - set limits and exert pressures on - human action and its consequences [Thompson 1978:159]. Comparative methods may, in principle, be helpful, but one cannot fully isolate, control, nor measure the strength of, the variables under study; nor can we ensure that the cases being compared are 'pure' - alike in all but the critical variables under study, or totally unlike in the variables that are presumed to be absent. Ragin [1987:47-8] points to the problem of 'illusory commonalities' between cases: common appearing characteristics may disguise underlying differences, and vice versa. He also notes that this 'case-oriented' type of research works well only when the number of relevant cases and variables is relatively small. Thus, there are obvious pitfalls in such procedures, including the fact that the researcher is limited to relatively simple hypotheses which may not approximate the complexity of the historical conjunctures under study. This fundamental problem applies to both comparative and non-comparative designs.

The researcher using a comparative design may rely heavily on secondary sources, with the danger that the study may reflect particular historiographical gaps, fashions and biases. In the case of Grenada, we suggest, along with careful use of the secondary sources, a return to the primary sources, because the secondary material does not allow us to see clearly the social configuration over time.

To what extent is such research applicable beyond the historical cases given in the study? Skocpol and Somers [1980:195] assert that because such causal arguments are

inductively established, they are not easily generalized. But the analytical process is an inseparable blend of induction and deduction, neither of which precludes probabilistic generalizations to appropriate cases. Skocpol [cf. Ragin 1987], also argues that 'The practice of analytical historical sociology forces a more intimate dialogue with historical evidence than either interpretive historical sociology, or the application of a model to a historical case' [Skocpol 1985:385; author's emphasis]. This implies that more than in the other two designs, the creative insight of the researcher and his/her judgement are decisive.

I.6.2 General Limitations of the Sources

In Chapters 3, 4 and 6, we discuss the limitations of the data used for the analyses therein. Above, we outlined the major pitfalls of the research design. It remains now to make some general remarks on the sources used.

This study draws on virtually all the available written sources on Tobago for 1838 to 1900: censuses, assessment rolls, official despatches and reports, Blue Books, official handbooks, Sessional Papers, official Gazettes, records of the Encumbered Estates Court; newspapers; yearbooks of the colony; missionary records; plantation records; historical works; eyewitness observations; deeds and wills. It also draws on oral material, collected by the author from some of the oldest residents of Tobago, mainly on the period 1900 to 1938, particularly for songs which give insight into the culture and ideology of the labouring class in the 19th century.

Our knowledge of the past is a knowledge of the 'tracks' [Bloch 1963] which people leave. The first issue is that one is dealing with the enslavement and domination of the majority by the minority, and with the legacies of this past. The fundamental problem with most of the written documents is not simply that they cannot always answer the questions we ask, but that the majority of the population did not write the bulk of the written record. Since the primary documents colour and circumscribe secondary works, the problem is acute for all historians, regardless of their theoretical predilections.

Therefore, the written documents bear no intrinsic superiority over other sources; they are themselves the products of a series of *a priori* choices and selections which have entered into both their creation and their preservation [Thompson 1986:97].

Thus, it is vital to observe the normal caveats for using historical documents: establishing their authenticity, along with the context, motives, audience and purpose of the writer; establishing internal consistency and, where possible, external corroboration for the evidence; conducting a meticulous search for all available sources on the subject.

As regards the oral tradition²¹ used here to complement the written one, we note that the oral record is no panacea

²¹ Henige [1982:2] defines two styles of oral historiography - 'oral history', the study of the recent past by means of life histories or personal recollections, and 'oral tradition', recollections of the past that are commonly or universally known in a given culture. See Craig [1978] for her experience of doing oral historical research in Trinidad and Tobago.

for the limitations of the written. Indeed, it is highly fragmentary, both on the period of the lived experience of the respondents, and on the oral tradition which they transmit. For example, two respondents sang songs which they had learnt from older folk, but of whose context and significance they were completely unaware. Were it not for the written record, the meaning of such material would be lost.

'History is no more than the calculation of probabilities' [Vansina 1973:185]. The oral sources, like the written, have come through the seive of a web of perceptions and selections, the researcher's being only the final one. We have treated them as part of the hypothesis to be tested, rather than disregarding them *a priori* [Vansina 1985:196].

To make visible the institutions, practices and perspectives of the ordinary men and women who also made Caribbean history, one is involved in a reading of the texts, with a conscious search for the standpoint of all the historical actors, but without 'reading back' into the past the perceptions of the present, and without arguing from the silence of the record. Here, the dialogue with the evidence and the researcher's discrimination are crucial.

I.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed the literature on Tobago, and on the sociology of development, to shed light on the problems of conceptualization and method with which we are concerned. It outlined our objectives, central concepts, working hypothesis, research design, and the limitations of our procedure.

We argued that the currents critical of four broad areas of writing - modernization, dependency/world system analysis, Marxism and historical sociology - converged in stating the need for more macro-sociological studies, understanding with clarity the interrelation between social structure and human agency, global forces and local processes, between economic and non-economic spheres of social life. Within this genre of writing, which belongs to the classical tradition of sociology, and to the best modern history, we take our stand.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FORMATION OF SOCIETY IN TOBAGO: 1763-1838

II.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the features of Tobago society between 1763, the beginning of British colonization, and 1838, the Emancipation of the slaves. It provides a socio-historical background, which facilitates our understanding of the major issues of the post-Emancipation years. Tobago is located in its global and Caribbean context, before the population and social structure are described in Section II.3. Because the provision grounds and internal markets were vital to the strategies of the labourers, before and after 1838, they are discussed in Section II.4, which is linked to Section II.5 on the dynamics of social conflict in the transitional period of Apprenticeship (1834-1838).

II.2 THE GLOBAL AND CARIBBEAN CONTEXT OF COLONIZATION AND SLAVERY IN TOBAGO

II.2.1 General Features of the Sugar Plantation System

By 1763, the older BWI colonies had reached what historians call the Golden Age of the Sugar Revolution, based on slavery, imperial military protection, and preferential markets under the mercantilist system, which was regulated by a series of Navigation Acts. Their profits, according to Adam

Smith [1789/1937:366], exceeded those of any other cultivation in Europe or America.

In the full-blown plantation colonies, a general tendency was established. Small planters were superseded by large investors; tobacco, cotton, and other crops by sugar; forced Amerindian and indentured European labour by African slaves.

A pattern of trade developed, in which British ships took British manufactures to Africa, and took African slaves and British goods to the West Indies, whose sugar and by-products were sent to British merchant houses. The mercantile system spanned the North and South Atlantic: the BWI could specialize in sugar production because they depended on British North America for lumber, foodstuff etc., in exchange for molasses, sugar and rum.

Sugar plantations required large outlays of capital, and a large, skilled labour force, carefully supervised. Initially, British capital financed these enterprises, but via goods and slaves, not specie. Shortages of coin were common. Sugar, rum and other produce were used as legal tender; and Spanish and Portuguese coins were, in many British colonies including Tobago, the major currency [Mintz 1964a:248-9].

Tobago became a full-fledged plantation economy in the Silver Age of sugar (1763-1776). After that, several factors combined to place the BWI sugar industry, except for the newer colonies with large tracts of fertile land, in prolonged difficulty. From the American Revolution (1776) to the Battle of Waterloo (1815) there was chronic warfare. The American Revolution led to high costs of supplies; costs for food and

lumber trebled [Pares 1960], and slaves died in the British Windwards, including Tobago, because foodstuff was scarce [Marshall 1972; Sheridan 1976]. Increased duties, insurance and freight; attacks from American privateers; and the rigorous enforcement of the Navigation Acts after 1776, combined to keep costs high.

The high prices for sugar and coffee occasioned by the Haitian Revolution temporarily offset the rising costs of production. The abolition of the slave trade in 1807, high costs during the Napoleonic Wars, restrictions on trade with the USA between 1815 and 1830 [Benns 1923/1972], and competition from the East India colonies, Cuba and Brazil, dealt serious blows to the West India planters. By the 1820s, 'bankruptcy was general throughout the British Windward Islands' [Marshall 1972:109].

Relief for the planters came through two measures passed by the British Parliament in 1822;¹ but it was too little and too late. The pressure for emancipation, both from the slaves [Williams 1964; Craton 1987; Beckles 1985] and from the British abolition movement, and the dismantling of the mercantilist system after 1846, removed the major props to the old plantation system.

The characteristic features of the British sugar colonies have been described in the standard texts on the subject [Brathwaite 1971; Burn 1937; Dunn 1973; Goveia 1969; Green 1976; Patterson 1967; Pitman 1917; Ragatz 1928/1977; Sheridan

¹ The Colonial Trade Act and The West India and American Trade Act [Ragatz 1928/1977, Ch. 10].

1974]. These features were all important in Tobago: large estates (often heavily encumbered), monoculture, slavery, rigid social stratification, absenteeism of the largest landowners (although some resided in other West Indian colonies), and labour-intensive methods of production.

We now highlight the relationship between the growing indebtedness of the planters and their absenteeism, insofar as it bears on the recurrent intra-class conflicts among the upper strata of whites, which are described in this thesis.

II.2.2 Planters, Merchants and the Colonial Power Structure

As the BWI sugar economy developed, relationships between the planters and the merchants who supplied the plantations changed in the last decades of the 17th century to a pattern which became institutionalized in the 18th century. Merchants resident in the West Indies declined, except in Jamaica, Barbados, and Martinique [Pares 1960:33]. Local merchants tended to be factors, selling North American produce on commission.

European merchants ceased to be entrepreneurs sending out cargoes and taking back produce on their own account.² Instead, the planter sent his produce to be sold on commission by the merchant as his factor; the factor bought, on commission, plantation stores at the planter's request. Many

² Pares [1960] is unable to explain the differences in the degree to which these conditions varied in the North American, French and British West Indian colonies. See Davies [1952], Davis [1972], Ragatz [1928/1977], and Sheridan [1974], for discussions on the West India trade in the 17th and 18th centuries.

of the British consignees were ship owners. They met the expenses of shipping, customs, and other charges, and often became the planters' bankers and personal representatives. These arrangements allowed the merchants high profits on their West India business.

The colonies were drained of specie through the buying of slaves and North American supplies, since the Americans bought most of their tropical produce more cheaply from the French colonies [Ragatz 1928/1977:89; Pitman 1917:138].³ Coupled with the exceptional dependence of the planters on their merchant factors, lack of specie meant that there was little money in the hands of most planters; and it vitiated the creation of a West Indian loan market. Ragatz called it 'a barter economy, which bred wastefulness and extravagance' [1928/1977:101-102].

Near the end of the 18th century, the English courts 'appear to have ruled that a factor who had effects of the planters in his hands could pay himself what they owed him without their special order, but could not pay a debt to anybody else without it' [Pares 1960:48; Beachey 1957]. Thus, the merchants enjoyed both their commission and security of mortgage. By 1815, 'the greater part' of the West India properties were in the hands of British merchants [Ragatz

³ To prevent this illicit trade and to assert British military mastery over the French, the Molasses Act (1733) and the Sugar Trade Act (1764) were passed by the UK Parliament, with the support of the West India lobby. But the Acts ironically contributed to the rebellion of the American colonies, and threw the BWI sugar economy into greater peril [Williams 1964, Ch. 6; Pitman 1917, Chs. 11-14].

1931:7]. In 1838, much of the £20 million compensation paid by the British Government to the planters went directly and indirectly to the merchants.

Increasing ownership of the BWI plantations by British merchants was only one aspect of the widespread absenteeism. Absenteeism had begun in the 17th century with the system of proprietary patents, whereby Europeans could purchase tenure of colonial offices, to which they sent deputies [Hall 1964; Murray 1965]. Legacies and annuities also creamed off the region's wealth and many properties were inherited by people who knew nothing of the Caribbean. Even planters resident in the West Indies normally spent long periods in Europe, attending to their business or their health.

Thus, many estates were under the care of attorneys (agents with the power of attorney). Having no vested interest except in their commissions and stipends, they commonly ill-treated and brutalized the slaves,⁴ and disregarded costs to the owners. Some supplied the estates under their charge with goods and services, including the labour of jobbing slaves, at exorbitant prices, so accumulating the capital to become planters themselves.

Absenteeism also affected the working of the Old Representative System (ORS) which, before 1838, was the usual form of government in the BWI, except for St Lucia, British

⁴ For Tobago, see Rept. of the Committee of Council and Assembly ..., 1799. Before slave evidence was admitted in 1823, it was the practice of cruel managers to send all whites and free persons off the estates and to ill-treat the slaves with impunity. CO318/59: First Rept. of the Com. of Enquiry into the Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice in the WI, Tobago, 1825.

Guiana and Trinidad, which were Crown Colonies. Under the ORS, there was a nominated Legislative Council, which advised the Governor, and which also served as an upper house to the lower chamber, the House of Assembly, elected from among the local white proprietors. Slaves could not vote and free coloureds were conceded the franchise only in the 1830s [Wesley 1934; Cox 1984]. The Assemblies had the power of taxation and the exclusive right to initiate money bills.

At the top was the Governor (or Lt.-Gov. where several islands were administered by a Governor-in-Chief), who, in theory, had wide executive powers. As the sovereign's representative, he could summon and address the Assembly, prorogue and dissolve it; he could veto legislation, make permanent appointments to certain posts and temporary ones to those which were the Crown's prerogative; he could raise a militia, and was President of the Court of Appeal for civil cases, having also the power to pardon.

But the Governor's power was circumscribed. To certain executive acts, the assent of the Legislative Council was necessary; all colonial laws were subject to review by the Colonial Office, and needed royal assent. Moreover, the Assemblies used their power over finance to frustrate public business by refusing to vote supplies, by voting them late, and by adjourning *sine die*.⁵ By 1800, the colonists ruled themselves [Murray 1965].

In practice, therefore, colonial Governors were hemmed in

⁵ The power to adjourn was an executive prerogative which was usurped by the Tobago Assembly from the 1820s [Douglin 1987].

by the lack of independent ministry, patronage and funds. The limited patronage at their disposal made them dependent on the few on whom they could rely. The power to suspend officials, to veto legislation and to dissolve the legislatures was for extreme situations and Governors were constrained by the small number of whites with education and property, who were also the judges and magistrates, although they generally had no legal training. Tobago was a particularly backward example of this.⁶

The leading attorneys dominated public life in Tobago. In 1828, there were only 3 proprietors, of whom one was Christopher Irvine, the Speaker of the Assembly, who, as attorney for several estates, had considerable influence over managers, overseers and merchants. For years, Irvine led the Assembly in hostility to the Governors.⁷ In the 1830s and 1840s, Alexander Gairdner, the leading attorney, exercised similar influence.

Thus, a peculiar combination of factors guaranteed monopoly over West Indian trade to metropolitan merchants; formal control, protection of strategic interests, revenues and duties to the metropolitan state; and oligarchical self-government to the colonists. Inordinate political power was exercised by attorneys and managers by the 1820s.

⁶ CO318/59: First Rept. of the Com. of Enquiry into the Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice in the WI, 1825.

⁷ CO285/35: Blackwell to Murray, 25 Sept. 1828; CO285/30: Robinson to Bathurst, 18 Feb. 1825. Irvine and T. Chadband were attorneys of three-quarters of Tobago estates in 1829 [McTear 1831]. Cf. Ragatz [1931].

II.2.3 The Tobago Economy and Its Social Implications

Between 1765-1771, Tobago was surveyed by the Commissioners for the Sale of Lands in the Ceded Islands; 57,408 acres were alienated to private owners. By early 1768, 77 individuals, mainly Scotsmen, had bought land, but only 20 resided locally. Of the remaining 57, four resided in Britain, the others in the BWI [Marshall 1972:120]. Sugar was first exported by Gedney Clarke jun., the son of a Barbados slave merchant,⁸ in 1769 via Barbados; and direct shipments from Tobago began in 1770.

From 1765, the natural vegetation was destroyed for estate cultivation. The terms of Tobago's insertion into the global economy placed a distorted emphasis on the production of a few primary exports. Its cocoa, cinnamon, nutmegs, pimentos, and even its tobacco, after which it was named, swiftly became insignificant.

Initially, cotton was the major crop; and Tobago became famous in the 1790s for its superior, fine cotton which sold at 20 guineas per lb in Glasgow [Woodcock 1867/1971:188]. Indigo and sugar cane were also grown (Tables 1, 2).

The French occupation (1781-93) was initially a time of 'stagnation' [Nardin 1966:53], owing to the commercial chaos occasioned by the change of régime; but the high prices of sugar during the Haitian Revolution brought temporary

⁸ The Clarkes went bankrupt in 1774, Clarke sen. owing nearly £50,000 to the London merchant house of Lascelles, while his son, a partner in Lascelles, owed £25,000 [Pares 1961:203, 223]. Clarke jun. was one of the largest proprietors in the Ceded Islands, owning 2192 acres in Tobago [Sheridan 1974:449].

prosperity. In the 1790s, the expression 'as rich as a Tobago planter' became a byword in wealthy London circles. However, the French recapture of Tobago in 1802-3 made it a risky place for British investors, and the trade disputes between Britain and the USA down to 1830 brought distress to many planters [Douglin 1987].

Monoculture, under-utilization of land, and economic decline marked the early 19th century. In 1812, 20,000 acres were unexplored, and two-thirds of the eastern (windward) parishes abandoned [Young 1812]. The maximum export was 8,890 tons of sugar in 1799; in 1834, it was 3,951 tons [Deerr 1949, 1:179, 202].

Distorted cultivation begat a skewed population distribution. The first capital was Georgetown, situated at Barbados Bay (Studley Park), with relatively easy access to the windward parishes; but, as the centre of economic activity shifted to the south-west, which was most suited to sugar, the capital was moved westwards to Scarborough (formerly Port Louis) in 1769, to provide shops and warehouses nearer to the estates.

TABLE 1

Tobago, Population and Produce: 1771-1775

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>WHITE PERSONS</u>		<u>S L A V E S</u>					<u>P R O D U C E</u>		
		Men	Women	Children	Total	Sugar	Rum	Cotton	Coffee	Indigo
1771	284	3064	1447	517	5028	965	411	-	-	-
1772	317	3444	1885	540	5868*	2792	653	-	-	-
1773	431	4269	2291	626	7192*	3038	920	-	-	-
1774	367	4376	2569	690	7635	5656	1712	96,500	-	3600
1775	391	4634	3059	942	8643*	4550	3247	258,031	650	4623#

MILLS, 1775

Water Mills	9
Wind Mills	23
Cattle Mills	52
{ On about 80	84
{ Estates	—

NOTES: 1. * As in original.

** Not clear on microfilm.

2. Quantities of produce: Sugar (hhd=13 cwt); Rum (Puncheon=120 gals); Cotton (lbs); Coffee (cwt); Indigo (lbs).

Source: C0285/13: Young to Castlereagh, 25 Apr. 1808, 'A Statistical Rept. of the Island of Tobago', Table 1.

TABLE 2

Land Use in Tobago: 1782-1790 (Acres)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sugar Cane</u>	<u>Cotton</u>	<u>Indigo</u>	<u>Coffee</u>	<u>Cocoa</u>	<u>Total Export Crops</u>	<u>Food Crops</u>	<u>TOTAL UNDER CROPS</u>	<u>Pasture</u>	<u>Woods</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1782	-	-	-	-	-	16,131	3,804	19,935	4,071	15,693	39,699
1785	4,241	12,491	30	-	-	16,778½*	3,877	20,655	5,526	29,870	56,052
1786	3,458	15,699	47	2½	½	19,207	3,769	22,976	5,882	26,026	54,884
1787	2,941	16,320	51	5	-	19,317	3,841	23,158	5,141	24,419	52,734*
1788	2,747½	16,874	85	15¼	2½	19,724¾	4,180	23,904¾	5,464½	11,365¼	40,734½
1790	4,878¾	14,436	-	134¼	2½	19,451	4,842	24,293	5,356	11,497	41,146

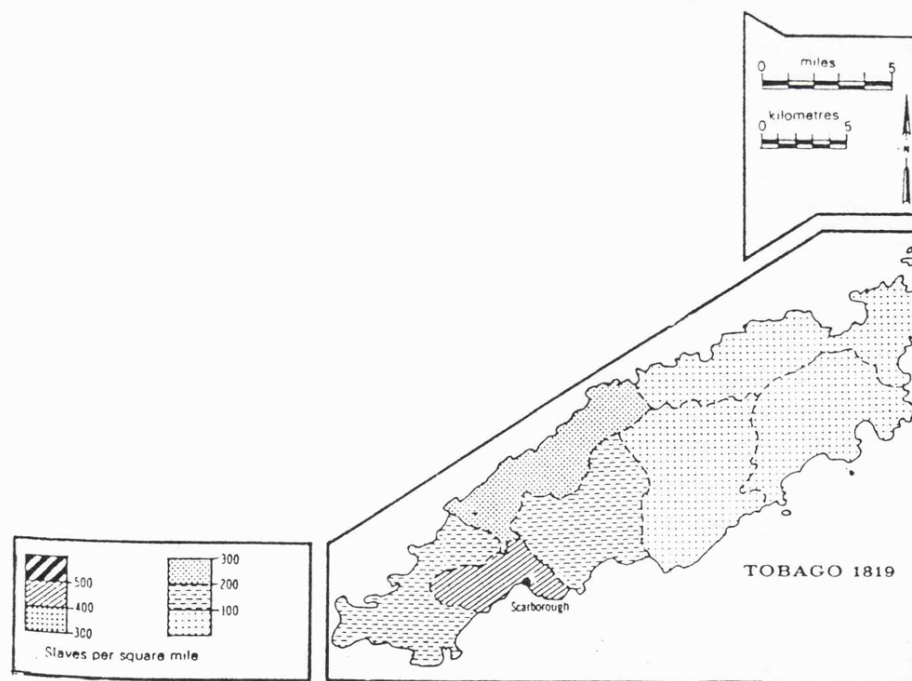
NOTE: * Total and sub-total as in the original.

Source: Adapted from Nardin [1966:52], Table 7.

The abandonment of large acreages in the Windward District, and low population density there, produced a distinction between the Windward and Leeward parts of the island ('Top Side' and 'Low Side' in the local vernacular), which remained basic in the formation and evolution of its society (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2

Slave Population Density in Tobago: 1819



Source: Higman [1984a:89].

II.3 THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF TOBAGO: 1763-1838

II.3.1 Demographic Patterns

The demographic configuration of the BWI was largely determined by the exigencies of the sugar economy. Planters preferred able-bodied males for agricultural labour; age and sex ratios were consequently disproportionate among slaves. Table 1 indicates the decision to improve the slave sex ratios from approximately 2 males to every female in 1771, to 3 males to 2 females in 1775.

Since single males were often recruited as managers and overseers, concubinage with black or coloured women became the norm for white men, and sex ratios for the whites were also unequal. For the whites, the pattern persisted in extreme form down to the 1830s (Tables 6, 7), whereas for the slaves, abolition of the slave trade in 1807 tended to lead to more evenly balanced sex ratios. The slave sex ratios in 1819 and 1832 were 97.14 and 86.4 males per 100 females, respectively, indicating that females exceeded males by those dates [Higman 1984a:116].

The relatively short period between colonization and the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 meant that the majority of the slaves over 30 in Tobago were African-born in 1819, the first year of slave registration (Table 3). In 1819, the African-born constituted 65.5% of the slaves aged 35-39, and over 90% of each cohort aged 50 and over. This high proportion of African-born must have had profound effects on child rearing and cultural transmission, although the diverse origins of the slaves obliged them to orientate themselves to

their new milieu, as they selected from their past to 'remodel' and create institutions in their present [Mintz and Price 1992].

According to Higman, all the British Caribbean slave populations, except that of Barbados, failed to reproduce themselves between 1807 and 1834, largely because of harsh labour régimes, poor diet and, consequently, low birth rates [cf. Morissey 1989]. In 1819, Tobago slaves had the lowest rate of natural increase in the BWI (-32.5 per 1000) and the highest crude death rates, with 'extreme mortality levels in almost all age groups among both males and females.' Between 1807 and 1834, its slave population fell by 38.7%, from 18,845 to 11,545 [Higman 1984a:319, 417-8, Ch. 9]. His data also suggest that slave mortality peaked at certain seasons. (Cf. Table 4).

TABLE 3

Creole and African-Born Slaves by Age and Sex: 1819

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>A F R I C A N S</u>			<u>C R E O L E S</u>			<u>TOTAL SLAVE POP'N</u>	<u>% African</u>	<u>% Creole</u>
	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>			
0- 4	-	-	-	714	793	1507	1507	-	100
5- 9	-	-	-	802	790	1592	1592	-	100
10-14	1	-	1	743	715	1458	1459	.07	99.9
15-19	12	5	17	579	584	1163	1180	1.4	98.5
20-24	60	63	123	438	472	910	1033	11.9	88.1
25-29	263	227	490	394	471	865	1355	36.2	63.8
30-34	471	384	855	312	377	689	1544	55.4	44.6
35-39	576	476	1052	253	301	554	1606	65.5	34.5
40-44	550	488	1038	127	174	301	1339	77.5	22.5
45-49	383	371	754	56	69	125	879	85.8	14.2
50-54	291	325	616	23	42	65	681	90.4	9.5
55-59	193	246	439	12	14	26	465	94.4	5.6
60-64	206	230	436	10	13	23	459	95.0	5.0
65-69	80	98	178	5	10	15	193	92.2	7.8
70+	65	88	153	2	6	8	161	95.0	5.0
Unknown	1	1	2	2	-	2	4	50.0	50.0
<u>TOTAL</u>	3152	3002	6154	4472	4831	9303	15457	39.8	60.2

Source: Adapted from Higman [1984a:467], Table S4.1, 'Age by Colony'.

TABLE 4

Slave Population in Tobago: 1819-1832

Year	<u>No. of Slaves Registered</u>			<u>Increase by Birth</u>		<u>Decrease by Death</u>		<u>Decrease by Manumission</u>	
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1819	7633	7837	15470						
1820	7381	7679	15063	141	163	416	384	1	5
1821	7107	7474	14521	178	155	370	306	1	2
1822	6952	7363	14315	159	158	367	303	10	12
1823	6812	7263	14074	151	167	232	211	5	16
1824	6558	7098	13656	166	157	371	290	9	14
1825	6532	7151	13683	154	157	213	191	4	2
1826	6391	7034	13428	168	160	362	328	7	10
1827	6138	6861	12999	170	163	213	185	3	7
1828	6088	6807	12895	178	191	289	249	4	7
1829	5966	6757	12723	178	196	283	248	2	6
1830	5872	6614	12556	165	155	288	220	4	12
1831	5769	6601	12370	170	171	274	241	4	11
1832	5603	6488	12091	145	161	298	253	13	21

NOTE: 'The large proportion of deaths to births throughout the whole ... period is very remarkable' [Martin 1843:37].

Source: Martin [1843:37].

TABLE 5

Estimated Slave, Freedman, and White Populations,
Windward Islands: 1810 and 1830

<u>COLONY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE SLAVE</u>		<u>PERCENTAGE FREEDMAN</u>		<u>PERCENTAGE WHITE</u>		<u>TOTAL POPULATION</u>	
	1810	1830	1810	1830	1810	1830	1810	1830
DOMINICA	83.7	77.4	10.6	18.9	5.7	3.7	22700	19000
ST LUCIA	84.8	72.8	9.2	21.7	6.0	5.5	21800	18400
ST VINCENT	91.8	82.5	4.4	12.5	3.8	5.0	29850	28000
GRENADA	92.5	84.1	4.9	13.4	2.6	2.5	32450	28400
TOBAGO	91.8	88.7	4.1	8.1	4.1	3.2	19600	14150

Source: Taken from Higman [1984a:77], Table 4.2.

TABLE 6

Population of Tobago: 1825-1829

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>P O P U L A T I O N</u>			<u>B I R T H S</u>			<u>D E A T H S</u>		
	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>W H I T E S</u>									
1825	270	52	322	2	2	4	16	-	16
1826	273	59	332	1	2	3	20	2	22
1827	276	59	335	-	1	1	17	-	17
1828	269	56	325	-	-	-	19	-	19
1829	264	57	321	1	1	2	22	1	23
<u>F R E E C O L O U R E D S A N D B L A C K S</u>									
1825	412	602	1014	17	32	49	9	5	14
1826	431	639	1070	31	27	58	8	7	15
1827	458	661	1119	24	15	39	13	11	24
1828	470	666	1136	27	33	60	9	12	21
1829	477	686	1163	10	11	21	11	14	25
<u>S L A V E S</u>									
1825	6446	7053	13499	152	159	311	209	196	405
1826	6385	7006	13391	163	155	318	370	317	687
1827	6172	6839	13011	176	159	335	211	190	401
1828	6137	6811	12948	175	196	371	293	244	537
1829	6001	6747	12748	*	*	*	*	*	*

NOTE: * Not given.

Source: CO285/36: 'Return of the Population ...', Enc. in Gairdner to Murray, 28 Dec. 1829.

TABLE 7

Population, Marriages, Births and Deaths: 1830

<u>PARISH</u>	<u>WHITES</u>		<u>FREE BLACKS</u>		<u>S L A V E S</u>		<u>T O T A L</u>		<u>Births</u>	<u>Marriages</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>			
St David	47	9	47	73	1401	1565	1495	1647	91	-	122
St Patrick	35	4	8	20	1144	1326	1187	1350	72	-	116
St George	29	7	30	31	717	734	776	772	41	-	62
St Mary	18	1	0	4	418	520	436	525	30	-	40
St Paul	20	0	12	13	526	560	558	573	28	-	42
St John	13	1	1	4	397	442	411	447	20	-	24
St Andrew	103	35	379	542	721	864	1203	1441	30	-	46
Slaves <u>not</u> attached to plantations					556	670	556	670			
									Plant'n Slaves	312	452
										27	24
									Whites	3	27
									Free		
									Coloured	26	21
<u>TOTAL</u>	265	57	477	687	5881*	6681	6622	7425	368	2	524

NOTE: * As in original.

Source: C0290/14: Blue Bk., 1830.

Explanations for the remarkable failure of Caribbean slave populations to grow by natural increase have been many. Curtin [1969] argued that natural growth was a function of the proportion of Creole slaves in the population. The greater the proportion of African-born, the lower the rate of natural increase, since the African-born would have been predominantly male. James McTear, a physician on 39 Tobago estates between 1825-30, made similar observations. McTear felt that ill health and disproportionate sex ratios among imported slaves had effects through succeeding generations, since the African-born were affected by the onerous conditions of the early period of settlement. Although he provided no evidence, he noted that wherever Creoles predominated, there was natural increase, and the estates with higher proportions of African-born slaves had decreases, because the African slaves tended to be ageing [McTear 1831].⁹

Kiple [1984, Chs. 8, 9] emphasizes, not so much fertility, as infant and child mortality. He argues that high proportions of stillbirths and of infants with low birth weights, plus the high incidence of tetanus, locked jaw, and neonatal tetany, resulting from poor nutrition, converted many

⁹ McTear adduced other contributory factors, such as promiscuity, prolonged lactation etc. He observed that decreases among slaves were also due to undocumented sales; new owners would resist registering them to avoid the poll tax of £1 per head; they would thus be deemed free by report and by omission from the registry. McTear's point was corroborated to some degree by W. R. K. Douglas, owner of Woodlands and Buccoo estates. Douglas showed the increased population of Woodlands, which had imported no slaves since 1798, unlike that of Buccoo, which had imported up to 1807. Rept. from the Select Committee ..., 1832, pp. 79-81.

births into deaths. All these factors may have been important in Tobago, high infant mortality continuing throughout the 19th century.¹⁰

The white population also experienced extraordinary death rates. Kiple [1984, Ch. 10] highlights the differential mortality rates of the European-born whites and the blacks in the West Indies, and the importance of immunological factors. Europeans succumbed to yellow fever and malaria, while Creole whites developed immunity against them. Tobago had the highest white mortality rate in the Eastern Caribbean. From 1817 to 1836, the death rate per thousand per annum among Tobago troops was 153 for whites, 34 for blacks [cf. Buckley 1979].

High mortality rates were only one of the reasons for the decline of the whites. The contest between France and Britain, which imperilled production and commerce, and discouraged settlement, was another. Yet another was the high cost of supplies caused by the disrupted trade with the USA.

The abolition of the slave trade in 1807 was also significant. Many whites, attracted to the BWI as overseers, bookkeepers etc., often used the buying and hiring of slaves as an avenue to fortune. After 1807, there were frequent slave auctions, because such speculation had been given up as hopeless. Small planters were willing to sell their slaves, because of the higher values (in 1805, able-bodied field

¹⁰ Bush [1990] rejects most of these explanations and stresses the women's role in controlling reproduction through contraception, abortion and infanticide, but her evidence is not convincing [cf. Brereton 1990].

labourers cost £60-£70; in 1811-12, £100).¹¹ McTear [1831] stated that the 'middle class' of whites who had previously owned jobbing slaves was 'nearly extinct, and these negroes are now principally possessed by coloured families'.

While slaves and whites suffered heavy numerical decline, the free people of colour increased in numbers and in their proportion of the population (Tables 6, 7). Between 1808 and 1833, 525 manumissions took place [Higman 1984a:691]. Manumission affected the sex ratios among the freedpeople, because black women who were 'housekeepers' to planters wanting to have free children, were often freed, since their children derived their status from their mothers. The ratio of females to males manumitted between 1808 and 1833 was 2:1. By 1830, there were 687 free coloured women and 477 men, a ratio of approximately 3:2.

In sum, between 1808 and 1830 there were dramatic population changes, typical of the BWI colonies. In 1808, there were 439 whites; in 1811, there were 583¹²; their numbers fell to 322 in 1830, a decrease after 1811 of 45%. The slaves declined by 26% from 17,009 in 1808 to 12,562 in 1830. And the free people of colour, 253 in 1808¹³, increased by 360% to 1164 in 1830 (Table 8).

¹¹ CO285/18: Young to Bathurst, 1 Oct. 1811, 'Rept. on the Heads of Inquiry ...'.

¹² CO285/16: Young to Liverpool, 12 Oct. 1811, 'Rept. on Matters of Enquiry ...', Table 1. A revised copy of the same rept. dd. 2 Nov. 1811 gives 575.

¹³ CO285/13: Young to Castlereagh, 25 Apr. 1808, 'A Statistical Rept. of the Island of Tobago', Table 12. Table 2 gives the figures for whites and slaves.

II.3.2 Class, Colour and Gender Relationships

A pattern of class, colour and gender relationships, that was typical of the British sugar colonies, developed in Tobago. The whites, free coloured and enslaved were the basic status groups. The principal class cleavage was that between planters and slaves, which was mainly, though not exclusively (because a few coloureds owned estates in the early 19th century), between white and black. The planters used their political power to reinforce their economic domination and to impose legal disabilities on freedpeople and slaves. None of these groupings was homogeneous; and often the mores went counter to the racially ascribed norms.

There were nice gradations of colour and status. In 1809, Isaac Purkis, the London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary, reported:

The different classes of which the inhabitants are composed are as follows - Black and White are the radicals - the derivatives are 1st between a white man and black woman a Mulattoe - 2d between a white man and a Mulattoe - a Mestee[;] 3d between a white man and a Mestee - a quadroon - these differ in honour as they differ in shades of colour ... They are very tenacious of their different shades of respectability and will use any means to appear a class higher ... The distinctions of colour are almost the only distinction that is observed¹⁴

An anonymous British seaman recalled that in 1802, 'the bitterest mouth-missive inflicted on any one suspected of the slightest taint of Africanism is, "Ah, he has cousins on the

¹⁴ LMS: Folder 2, Jacket C, Purkis to Bogue, 1 Nov. 1809. The child of a mulatto and a white man was a quadroon, while a mustee was the child of a quadroon woman and a white man. On this point, Purkis was inaccurate.

coast"' ['A Recollection ...' 1838:175]. In the same letter, Purkis felt that the wisest planters wanted to relax the social distinctions, but deferred to the opinions of white women ('from jealousy'), poor whites 'and halfwitted Creoles'.¹⁵

II.3.2.1 The Whites

At the top of the social hierarchy were the whites. In the 1820s, the first social rung consisted of the Governor, the officers at the garrison, the members of the legislature, and the few professionals. Next were the remaining planters and below them the white overseers, petty shopkeepers, clerks etc. [McTear 1826].

There was a process of upward mobility among the whites. By 1811, 'Two Thirds' of the planters had risen from the position of overseers, which they or their fathers had held.¹⁶ By the 1830s, there were few resident planters and a preponderance of attorneys, managers and overseers, many of them colonists of long standing, with their own ambitions and interests, which often conflicted with those of the proprietors whom they represented, and with the positions of the Governors and the Colonial Office.

In spite of their small numbers, the upper strata of whites were divided, although these secondary cleavages never

¹⁵ Heuman [1981] notes for Jamaica that the increase of resident white women after 1838 meant greater social exclusion of the coloureds.

¹⁶ CO285/18: Young to Bathurst, 1 Oct. 1811.

overrode the primary conflict between themselves and the enslaved. There were recurrent conflicts between the Governor and some of his officials, on the one hand, and the leading factions of the Assembly, on the other, which led to the crippling of public business. Superimposed on this was the division between English and Scottish, with its accompanying religious differences - Anglicans v. Scottish Presbyterians.

Within the upper strata of whites there were also conflicts between local merchants and planters. The planters were at the mercy of both the local traders in North American supplies and their British consignees. Sir William Young described how the local merchants increased the debt burdens of the planters. Because of the scarcity of specie, goods were sold by the merchants, 'in proportion for cash at 10, for the Substituted medium [rum] at 15.'

If the planters did not have enough rum in hand, they paid by 'Rum at credit to be delivered' at even higher interest. 'I have known Flour the Barrel sold for Cash at 12 Dollars, for Rum to be delivered at 20 Dollars the Barrel!' According to Young, virtually every planter became ensnared in this system of procuring supplies;

& the prices of Articles paid actually
in Tobago may be taken at one third more
than ... at Cash Price¹⁷

The lack of specie and the high cost of imported goods

¹⁷ CO285/13: Young to Castlereagh, 25 Apr. 1808, enc.
'Statistical Rept. of the Island of Tobago'; author's
emphases. Although Young had inherited flourishing
estates in Antigua, St Vincent and Tobago, he was deeply
indebted to Joseph Robley, the Tobago planter, shipowner
& merchant [Murray 1965, Ch. 2; Marshall 1972:218-9].

were recurrent issues before and after 1838. High costs were partly due to the fact that most of Tobago's imports were transhipped from Barbados. Another contributory factor was the lack of a single legal currency. Further, shortages of coin were created by the merchants, who withdrew currency from circulation to pay for imports or to speculate.¹⁸ In 1835, even Lt.-Gov. Darling was 'frequently' indebted for small articles, because of the lack of specie.¹⁹

In addition to these cleavages within the upper strata of whites, there were social barriers between the poorer and wealthier whites. The franchise laws, dating from 1794, debarred from voting and from the Assembly those whites who did not fulfil certain property requirements.²⁰ But the existence of slavery united all whites in avoiding menial labour, and bound rich and poor whites by common interests and aspirations, since it offered the possibility of upward mobility to the poor whites.

The fear of black revolt and coloured political power was the most powerful factor uniting the whites. This was illustrated when the Act to remove the disabilities of the

¹⁸ CO285/34: Brasnell to Goderich, 17 July 1827; cf. CO285/47: Stip. Mag. Child's rept. in MacGregor to Glenelg, 9 July 1838. The Agent for Tobago warned that in the BWI there was no defined standard of value, a dire shortage of coin and British currency, and need for a legal coin as circulating medium for paying wages. CO285/47: Letters of P. M. Stewart to Glenelg & Chanc. of the Exch., 21 May 1838.

¹⁹ CO285/42: Smith to Glenelg, 25 Nov. 1835, enc. Darling to Smith, 7 Sept. 1835.

²⁰ CO287/2: Act No. 1, An Ordinance for Regulating the Elections for the General Assembly of Tobago and Its Dependencies, 1794.

coloureds was passed in 1831.²¹ Gov. Blackwell observed that the franchise 'must have consequently fallen into the hands of Coloured people entirely.' The Assembly therefore, in the same Act, reduced the voters' and candidates' qualifications and provided for managers, overseers and professionals to become Assemblymen, which had existed *de facto* for many years. Blackwell stated:

... it may not therefore surprise Yr Lordship that in extending the Elective franchise to those of the white [sic], in order to act as a check upon the over numerous coloured Class, it should fall upon persons ... probably paying no part of the Public money which they have to vote away.²²

In 1838, the qualifications for voters and candidates were further lowered to include certain lessees of estates, again widening the white constituency.²³

In spite of these attempts to close ranks against the coloureds in the 1830s, the ambivalent gender relationships typical of the slave colonies prevailed. McTear stated:

The coloured ladies ... are a most unfortunate race. A white man is scouted by all society if he marries one of them, but if he keeps one of them as a mistress, or housekeeper as it is termed here, he is still deemed an upright, honourable, decent man.

[McTear 1826:70; author's emphasis]

In Darling's administration (1833-45), however, white men,

²¹ CO287/7: Act No. 260, An Act for the Relief of Certain Classes of His Majesty's Subjects within This Govt. ..., 1831.

²² CO285/38: Blackwell to Howick, 14 Apr. 1831.

²³ CO285/47: MacGregor to Glenelg, 28 Nov. 1838, enc. Act No. 318, An Act to Qualify Certain Lessees to Serve in the House of Assembly

even the most prominent, were marrying the most accomplished coloured women. One noteworthy example was James Henry Keens, Police Magistrate, and leading merchant and planter; he 'endured obloquy' for his marriage to Frances Collier, the daughter of James M. Collier, a former Solicitor General, who had educated her in England [Horsford 1856:363]. Darling noted 'several instances' of white men marrying their mistresses by 1842.²⁴ The rigid racial barriers, long breached in private, were slowly being transformed in public.

II.3.2.2 The Free Coloureds and Blacks

As in most BWI colonies, the free coloureds and blacks were heterogeneous. They were largely urban; 156 out of 350 (45%) lived in Scarborough and Plymouth in 1811.²⁵ Some were descended from families which had enjoyed two or more generations of freedom by the 1830s; others were freed during Apprenticeship. They varied in colour, social honour and wealth. They varied also in the intimacy with which they related to whites and to slaves, the free blacks being closer to the slaves than the coloureds.

In 1811, there were 350 free coloureds (92 men, 153 women, 105 children). Of the men, none was an official, professional or merchant. There was only one coloured planter; 10 of the 230 overseers and 4 of the 70 clerks were coloured. The majority of the coloured men (48 or 52%) were

²⁴ CO285/51: Grey to Stanley, 3 Dec. 1842, enc. Darling's 1842 Blue Bk. Rept.

²⁵ CO285/16: Young to Liverpool, 2 Nov. 1811, 'Revised Rept. on Matters of Enquiry ...', Table 1.

artisans, and another 18 (19.6%) were tailors, sadlers, fishermen, bakers etc.; 66 or 72% were concentrated in the lower occupational grades.²⁶

There are no statistics on the economic activity of the free women. Young noted:

... a full third of the Retail Trade
... is carried on by Mulatto Hucksters,
mostly women, - Having white men (for
their sleeping Partners) who order out
their assortment of Goods. - their smart
servant black Girls, visit in Turn every
plantation, - with varieties suited to
allure purchasers, white or Black.²⁷

The freedpeople suffered several legal disabilities. They were disenfranchised and ineligible for public office; their evidence was not accepted in court against that of whites; they formed separate companies in the militia, but were precluded from holding commissions.

By the 1830s, most of the owners of slaves hired out as jobbers or tradespersons were free coloured; free coloureds were seldom field labourers and often worked in skilled trades, or as clerks, teachers, bookkeepers, overseers, shopkeepers, mariners and hucksters; a few, like Robert Crooks (b. 1810) who inherited Belmont estate in 1826 on the death of his father, were planters.²⁸

Although the coloured planters had the same class interests as the white, racial considerations led whites to refuse to work for them. In 1819, Gov. Robinson reported that

²⁶ CO285/16: Young to Liverpool, 2 Nov. 1811, 'Revised Rept. on Matters of Enquiry ...', Table 2.

²⁷ CO285/18: Young to Bathurst, 1 Oct. 1811.

²⁸ CO285/61: Crooks to Grey, 31 Jan. 1849.

'White Men would not remain with Mulattoe Planters'. An Act was passed to allow the coloured planters serving in the militia to keep their own relatives as overseers, so relieving them from the penalties for a deficiency of whites on their estates.²⁹

In 1823, the Tobago coloureds contributed to the vigorous representations made by the freedpeople in the BWI for equality with the whites; 89 of them signed a memorial, arguing that they composed 'about 3/4ths of the free population' and paid an equal proportion of taxes as the whites, without equal benefits. They claimed substantial investments:

And out of about One Hundred and Twenty houses, the number in the principal Town of the Island ... and its suburbs, full three fourths are belonging to free persons of Colour: There are also a great number of Slaves belonging to us and several valuable Estates.

They stated that coloureds were employed in responsible private positions - as clerks to the senior officials - since they had been 'educated in some of the best Seminaries & Academies in Britain.'³⁰ The legal disabilities were removed in 1831.

Marriage was as rare for the coloureds as for the whites. The first one recorded after 1808 was in 1812 and only 9

²⁹ CO285/24: Robinson to Goulborn, 6 Apr. 1819, enc. An Act to Increase the Effective Strength of the Militia.

³⁰ CO318/76: Free People of Colour, Disabilities and Grievances, Tobago Papers, 1823.

marriages occurred by 1821.³¹ Coloured men, rejected by the whites, pursued 'licentious', 'promiscuous' relationships with female slaves [McTear 1826:71]. The wealthier coloured women were educated at boarding schools in Barbados and were accomplished in music, dancing and fashionable dressing. But contemporary white observers regarded all coloureds, with few exceptions, as promiscuous and dissolute.

The predominant orientation among the coloureds was to be socially and politically accepted by the whites. Many were slave owners; 'derision, hostility and antipathy' marked their relationship with slaves [Marshall 1974:24]. They were committed to the defence of the system, within which they aspired to wealth and honour. In 1823, the memorial of the coloureds stated:

We are not appointed to fill any, not even the lowest Public Situation, the Consequence of which is, that the Slave Population do not pay all of us that respect which persons who have to assist in protecting the Colony from the most serious of Dangers, that of internal tumults, demand.³²

Little is known about the free blacks, but there is more information on those who bought their freedom during the Apprenticeship. In March 1838 (Windward District), of thirty-nine Apprentices who had purchased their discharge since 1

³¹ CO285/27: Robinson to Bathurst, 30 Jan. 1822, enc. Return of Marriages among Free Blacks & Coloureds from 1 Jan. 1808.

³² CO318/76: Free People of Colour, Disabilities and Grievances, Tobago Papers, 1823. The wealthier Tobago coloureds never had the economic power of the coloureds in Barbados, many of whom were prosperous merchants [Sturge and Harvey 1838], in Jamaica [Heuman 1981], St Kitts or Grenada [Cox 1984].

August 1834, thirty-four were females, the majority of whom had been domestics.³³ Most of the field labourers buying their discharge were female; in almost every case, they had borrowed money for their freedom and were bound to work for the lenders until the sum was repaid.³⁴ Some of the estate Head Men, though still apprenticed, purchased their wives' freedom.³⁵

The free blacks maintained ties of kinship, friendship and economic partnership with the enslaved or apprenticed. For example, McPherson, attorney of Concordia estate, found around 'every House' 'a number of Hogs; some Negroes possessed four to six pigs, which ... were taken in to be fattened for free People, not connected with the Estate'.³⁶ The free women hucksters also had 'generally' a reputation for receiving stolen goods.³⁷

The free people of colour formed, in their many gradations, a buffer between the whites and the slaves. Whites and coloureds mingled in informal and intimate social

³³ CO285/47: Darling to MacGregor, 24 Mar. 1838, enc. Child's rept.

³⁴ CO285/47: MacGregor to Glenelg, 9 July 1838; Sub-Enc., Child, 31 May 1838. CO285/45: MacGregor to Glenelg, 31 Aug. 1837, Sub-Enc., Child, June 1837.

³⁵ Lt.-Gov.'s Letters, 1836-8: Darling to MacGregor, 25 Jan. 1838.

³⁶ CO285/46: MacGregor to Glenelg, 3 May 1838, enc. Darling to MacGregor, 19 Apr. 1838.

³⁷ CO285/46: MacGregor to Glenelg, 10 Apr. 1838, enc. Sol.-Gen. Sanderson to Darling, 20 Dec. 1837; cf. Handler on Barbados [1974:125-6]. Genovese, citing the Caribbean and Brazilian literature, states that stealing was 'ubiquitous' among slaves [1976:602].

intercourse. There was considerable social intercourse between free people and slaves, particularly in the towns. In 1823, the Slave Court and Slave Act forbade free people to allow any slaves but their own to dance in their houses or on their premises.³⁸ The 'violence to the society's implicit premises' [Hall 1980:30] at night was part of the cultural interchange between white, coloured and black. Enslaved and free also met in the Nonconformist chapels.

There were limited educational opportunities for free children. In 1823, there were 3 schools in Scarborough, each with about 20 students; there was also a Methodist school at Plymouth, run by 2 coloured women.³⁹ In 1828, the Church of England, at the planters' request, started a Free School in Scarborough for coloured children, the teachers being Thomas and Harriet Homeward, a coloured couple. From 1829, the Assembly maintained it, and C. J. Latrobe, in 1838, described it as 'one of the most effective schools of the class in these islands'. Both male and female graduates entered the skilled trades and domestic service.⁴⁰

II.3.2.3 The Slaves

At the base of the social pyramid were the slaves. Residence (town/plantation), skill, occupation, gender,

³⁸ CO285/28: Robinson to Bathurst, 28 Sept. 1823, enc. Tobago Slave Court and Slave Act.

³⁹ CO285/28: Robinson to Bathurst, 29 Sept. 1823.

⁴⁰ CO318/138: C. J. Latrobe, Rept. on Negro Education in the Windward & Leeward Islands, 14 Apr. 1838. Ad. by the Homewards in Tobago Chronicle and Royal Gazette, 7 Nov. 1839, p. 4.

colour, religion and origin (African/Creole), were factors differentiating the slave population. There were also, because of the large numbers of Africans, significant linguistic differences, noted by some of the missionaries.⁴¹ However, the common condition of slavery overrode these differences, and often it was the most 'trusted' - drivers, rangers, watchmen and domestics - who were the most insurrectionary.

Gender-related occupational and skill differences were important in the life history of the slaves. Jobbing slaves often did the most laborious tasks such as 'holing' cane fields and were among the most ill-treated; down to the 1830s, they were the most likely to be sold. Field slaves, especially those in the first or 'great' gang, most of whom were women in the 1830s,⁴² also performed the most onerous tasks.

Drivers, boilermen, cattlemen, and master 'mechanics' (artisans) were the most prized in the planters' hierarchy [Pitman 1926]. The most skilled females were seamstresses, nurses, and cooks. The herbal and medicinal knowledge of the nurses and midwives, though undervalued by the planters, was important for the survival of the slaves [Dadzie 1990]. McTear describes how chigoes affected slaves, who sometimes needed amputations to prevent the disease from spreading; the women,

⁴¹ Montgomery, Periodical Accts. 1 (1790):68. LMS: Folder 3, Jacket B, Purkis to Hardcastle, 14 May 1810. The Methodist missionaries also commented on the poor grasp of English in the 1820s.

⁴² Table 10 shows that women outnumbered men among the praedial slaves in 1838; Darling in 1836 stated that this prevailed generally. CO285/44: Smith to Glenelg, 9 May 1836, enc. Darling to Smith, 19 Apr. 1836.

however, who were 'very expert' at removing the whole nests, had to remove one from his finger [1826:122]. Long after slavery, illiterate midwives served the blacks, without training from the doctors (Ch. 6). The skilled male slaves accumulated more cash during slavery, and they were among the first to purchase freeholds after 1838 (Ch. 3); men were thus at an advantage, since their skills were the most valued [Mair 1987].

Place of birth was a significant differentiating factor. McTear observed marked differences between Africans and Creoles in their religious beliefs, marital mores and in their response to illness.

The Koromantyn negroes are much the worst Patients of any - They appear to retain the remembrance of their native land unfaded by years of slavery and exile - They think that death will again restore them to the land of their birth, and they covet the condition of those who die. ... Very few Africans have been baptized in this or the other islands, although the Creoles mostly are[.] The former think that if they are baptized, they can never return to their own country after death, but go to the place assigned for the Buckras, who would still hold them in slavery.

[McTear 1826:148-9]

Further, he stated that the unbaptized Africans, while rejecting Christianity, allowed their children to be baptized, as did some of the unbaptized adult Creoles [1831; 1826:200; cf. Walker 1818:123]. John Smedley, the Methodist missionary, noting these beliefs, felt that the Africans had 'some notion [of] the ... transmigration of souls.'⁴³

One of the practices which the missionaries sought to

⁴³ WMS: Box 117, File 3, Smedley's journal, 7 Nov. 1822.

eradicate was polygamy, which they perceived to be widespread, down to the 1830s.⁴⁴ However, according to McTear, 'The union of one man with one woman permanently, is the most common connection ... polygamy still exists among some of the Africans, especially among the Eboes, but very few cases are to be found among the Creoles' [1831].

Within the slave communities, there was an authority structure which was independent of the planters and the leadership roles fostered by the dominant system. Belief in the power of the obeah men, who were skilled in herbalism, in 'protection' against evil, divination and various magical rites, was widespread, but again, the leaders were usually African-born men and women [McTear 1831; Goveia 1969].

European superstitions were also practised by the slaves, indicating syncretism in this domain. In 1843, Magistrate Dowland, who had arrived in 1835, observed that 'Turning the Bible and Key', a practice of 'Wise Men' in England, to discover thieves, was coming into disuse.⁴⁵

Religion was clearly important in the process of cultural resistance, adaptation and creation by the slaves. Ince [1984], Douglin [1987], Marshall [1972], and Maynard [1968] documented the activities of the missions in detail. Here we outline briefly the socio-political factors which affected the

⁴⁴ WMS: Box 117, No. 7, Nelson and Powell to Secs. 5 May 1824; Box 119, No. 197, Extracts from the Journal of John Nelson, 30 Dec. 1823. For the Moravians, J. Light, Periodical Accts. 13 (1834-6):293.

⁴⁵ CO285/52: Grey to Stanley, 7 Dec. 1843, enc. Dowland's rept.

response of the slaves to the missionaries.⁴⁶

The missionaries compromised with the planters by staying clear of the subject of slavery, and by emphasizing the Biblical teachings on submission to authority. This was a major hindrance to their work, as they were regarded with suspicion. Resistance to the missionaries was therefore cultural and political resistance. Smedley observed that whenever the slaves held a grievance against the planters, they 'avenge[d] themselves by refusing to attend Church Service.'⁴⁷

A fundamental obstacle to reaching the slaves was the Sunday market; after its abolition in August 1823, slaves could worship on Sundays without being materially disadvantaged. Within a fortnight of its abolition, the churches in Scarborough were overflowing with people.⁴⁸

Also important were the work régimes of the slaves and the lack of church buildings. In the crop season, slaves worked from 5.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. or later, often without intermission. On many estates the missionaries were refused permission to preach during crop. Often, the preaching would

⁴⁶ The dates of the missions were as follows. Moravians: Apr. 1790-June 1791, Jan. 1799-1802, 1827 onwards; LMS: 1808-1813; Methodists: 1818 onwards; Church of England: 1815 onwards.

⁴⁷ WMS: Box 119, No. 13, Extract from Smedley's Diary, 15 July 1823. In Jamaica, the independence of the Baptist and Wesleyan missions contributed to their success among the slaves [Reckord 1968].

⁴⁸ CO285/28: Robinson to Bathurst, 29 Sept. 1823; cf. Robinson to Bathurst, 30 Oct. 1823, which states that 4 more churches and 2 chapels would be equally well attended.

take place after 8.30 p.m., in the managers' halls, and sometimes in the boiling houses of the estates, there being few independent places of worship.

Without systematic teaching, there were few converts. In 1810, Purkis predicted that 20 years of the same procedure would produce few results.⁴⁹ Eighteen years later, the Methodist missionaries questioned the usefulness of

... Preaching to a few, fatigued, sleepy
Negroes in Managers' houses at from $\frac{1}{2}$ past
8 or 9 o'clock on week Evenings, from
which, on all the Estates we have ever
visited in the Island, but 30 Slave members
of Society have been obtained⁵⁰

With the increased liberty of the slaves after 1834, and the attraction of the schools, the Moravian and Methodist missionaries reported an 'ardent' 'spirit of enquiry and desire for religious instruction.'⁵¹

Except for the rudimentary teaching of the missionaries, education was virtually unavailable to slaves before the 1830s. From 1834, there was a concerted effort by the churches to conduct and build schools. By April 1838, there were 12 day, 3 evening and 110 Sunday schools; 10 of the 16 teachers

⁴⁹ LMS: Folder 3, Jacket B, Purkis to Hardcastle, 14 May 1810.

⁵⁰ WMS: Box 127, No. 43, Cheeswright to Morley, 3 Oct. 1828; author's emphases. The Methodists organized their converts into 'societies'.

⁵¹ WMS: Box 135, File Oct.-Dec. 1834, No. 32, Vigis to Secs., 31 Oct. 1834 & *ibid.*, No. 76, 30 Dec. 1834. The Moravians testified to a 'concourse' of hearers in the chapels & Sunday schools. Periodical Accts. 14 (1836-9):67, 69, 502.

(6 males, 4 females) were coloured.⁵² The Mico Charity opened 2 schools between 1838 and 1842, when their mission ceased.⁵³

If there were increasing opportunities for acculturation through churching and schooling in the 1820s and 1830s, especially among the Creole slaves, there was also concerted resistance to slavery. Throughout the slave era, marronage was frequent, and slaves who had so liberated themselves often escaped to nearby territories.

The first slave revolt occurred in 1770, and it was followed by rebellions in 1771, 1773 and 1774. At Christmas 1801, another uprising was planned on 16 leeward estates, led by 'drivers, tradesmen or other "principal people"'. Their military preparation was great. The rebels were organized into companies and trained under appointed officers; they met under cover of working their provision grounds and at funeral wakes. Although a few free coloureds participated, their aim was to end slavery by exterminating the whites and free coloureds [Laurence 1982:5-7].⁵⁴

Although there were no major revolts or conspiracies after 1801, resistance to slavery permeated the life of the slaves: escape, work stoppages, feigning illness or stupidity, sabotage, poisoning, suicide, stealing, cultural resistance,

⁵² CO318/138: Rept. from C. J. Latrobe on Negro Education in the Windward and Leeward Islands, 14 Apr. 1838.

⁵³ Rhodes House Lib.: MSS Brit. Emp. S.20. E1/10, Anti-Slavery Papers, Tobago Letters, 1838-42.

⁵⁴ Cf. MMS: Diary of the Negro Congregation at Tobago, July 1800-Apr. 1802, entry for 25 Dec. 1801, which said it was 'confirmed' that the intention was to murder all whites, mulattoes and free blacks.

all were forms of self- and group assertion. As Genovese states, accommodation and resistance were two forms of a single process, by which slaves accepted what could not be avoided, while fighting for their moral and physical survival [1976]. The provision ground/internal marketing complex is an apt example of this, and was crucial to the strategies of the enslaved both before and after 1838.

II.4 THE PROVISION GROUNDS AND THE INTERNAL MARKET

By the 1790s, a flourishing Sunday market existed in Scarborough. Gilbert Francklyn, a planter, testified in 1790 that three-quarters of the poultry and pork consumed by the planters were bought from their slaves and that 'almost all the small current coin of the Island is in the possession of the Negroes' [Lambert 1790/1975:86, 95-6].

By 1807, the income from their produce had become so important to the slaves that, in militant protests, they defied the highest authorities to secure justice at the markets. The protests occurred at a time of scarcity of North American supplies, because of trade restrictions.

Since slave evidence was not admissible in the courts before 1823, many slaves were defrauded and robbed by whites and mulattoes. As a result, after Gov. Young's arrival in April 1807,

Negroe slaves in gangs of from 40 to 60,
and many armed with cutlasses, came to me,
- appearing to insist upon, - rather than
to beg, - a redress of their Grievances ...
How Earnest and dangerous these People were
in their proceedings, will appear from the
statement, that on one occasion, myself
being 25 miles to windward inspecting the

Batteries at Queensbay etc, 60 Slaves from an Estate in St. Patrick's Parish 10 miles distant took possession of Mt William in my absence, and remained there, three days, whilst a deputation of eight stout, and Armd Negroe Men, followed me to the distant Estate I was on Visit to.⁵⁵

Several armed gangs from many estates kept up the marches until October 1807, when the Assembly passed the Police Act to prevent 'such lawless and tumultuous vagrancy'. The Act contained clauses intended to protect the slaves' interests.⁵⁶

Provision lands were trebled in 1807; slaves were allowed as much ground they desired and, during the half-year out of crop, they were granted every Thursday free, as well as Sundays. In 1811, the slaves enjoyed a complete monopoly over the local market for pigs, poultry, cows, fruit and vegetables.⁵⁷ From September 1823, Thursday was market day, instead of Sunday.

As elsewhere in the region, the provision ground/internal marketing complex was central to a many-faceted process of accumulation and inheritance among the slaves. Slaves bequeathed their property by oral wills, which were made with 'much decorum' [McTear 1831]. The income from the produce, and from the proceeds of employment in skilled trades, was used,

⁵⁵ CO285/18: Young to Bathurst, 1 Oct. 1811. Mt William, 1½ mls north of Scarborough, was the Governor's official residence.

⁵⁶ CO285/18: Young to Bathurst, 1 Oct. 1811. 'An Act for the preventing Slaves absenting themselves in Numbers from the Plantations' was also passed, forbidding even 2 slaves from being together out of the district road to the market, without a ticket of leave. CO285/2: Young to Castlereagh, 6 Nov., 16 Nov. 1807.

⁵⁷ CO285/18: Young to Bathurst, 1 Oct. 1811 & CO285/12: Young to Castlereagh, 27 Aug., 10 Oct. 1807.

not only for consumption, but was also invested in various ways. Sometimes, savings were used to purchase the freedom of the slave or that of his/her relatives, but manumission was not always chosen by slaves who could afford it. Some chose to invest in hiring, and even buying, other slaves whom they hired out, as jobbers, so employing the same strategy that the whites and coloureds used in the process of accumulation.⁵⁸

McTear cited the case of Kitty, an old woman on Concordia estate, who bought her daughter's freedom, and owned three or four slaves whom she hired out to labour on Concordia and other estates. For reasons not given, she remained enslaved, as did her sons, who were tradesmen, who could afford to buy their freedom [1831].

McTear also explained that the slaves invested their money by hiring free labourers or paying a hire for their own labour, to huckster imported goods. Thus, in the 1820s, the slaves had muscled into the huckstering and retail trade in foreign goods which, in the towns, was largely controlled by free coloured women.

It is not uncommon for negroes who have money to hire others to huckster for them, or to pay a hire for themselves for that purpose. They go about estates with baskets of printed goods, handkerchief [sic], sewed dresses etc. or with pork, beef or other salt provisions and bread, and make a profitable trade of it - So prevalent is this custom, that there is scarcely an Estate where some of these hucksters will not be found during the hours of noon, sitting under some shady

⁵⁸ For similar occurrences in Martinique, see Tomich [1976:220-1]; for St Vincent and Trinidad, Carmichael [1833/1969, 1:283; 2:231]; for Jamaica, Barclay [1826:271-3].

tamarind among the dwellings of the negroes
disposing of their merchandise - upon
which people there is neither restraint
nor tax of any kind, altho' the merchant
has to pay £30 per annum for a license.
[Ibid.; emphasis added]

It is likely that females slaves were active in advancing the
huckstering trade, which was dominated by women after 1838.

These data show that the rigidities of slave society were
softened and breached in the practices and strategies of its
members. The provision ground/internal market complex was the
principal socio-economic leverage of the slaves; it was
important for kinship, inheritance, religion, burial
practices, cuisine and culture building; and it laid the
foundations for the growth of the peasantry after 1838 [Mintz
and Hall 1960; Mintz 1978]. The activities of this 'proto-
peasantry' bedevil every attempt to view slavery as a mode of
production. The informal activity of the slaves was bound to
sugar production in ways that were 'simultaneously dependent
and antagonistic' [Tomich 1991a:69]. Mintz thus correctly
argues that the 'peasant breach' in the system of slavery
forces us to reconsider our conception of 'resistance' to
slavery [1978].

The Tobago evidence supports Craton's hypothesis that the
late slave rebellions were inspired by the desire of the
'proto-peasants' to be free 'to enjoy the life of peasants.'⁵⁹
Young, writing privately, revealed that the protesting slaves
knew about the British abolition movement; they complained of

⁵⁹ Craton [1979; 1980; 1982] uses the examples of Jamaica,
1831-2, Demerara, 1823, Barbados, 1816, and Tobago, 1807.
The quotation is from [1980:1].

'Over work', under the impression 'that I was come from the Palaver of the Great Country - authorizd ... to exonerate Them from Labor for their masters, three days in each week, - which They were to work, - or not as They pleasd, for Themselves.' This idea was 'very generally entertaind' by the slaves.⁶⁰

The freedom to produce and to control the income derived therefrom was central to the political, economic and social aspirations of the slaves. This was particularly clear from 1807, when the abolition of the slave trade coincided with a shortage of imported provisions, which enhanced the bargaining power of the slaves relative to that of the planters. It is also clear, from the demands of the slaves, that the provision ground/internal marketing complex shaped their conception of what Emancipation should entail. We do not know whether there were other demands and perceptions among the slaves, or whether and how these may have changed by the 1830s. By then, the slaves had used their monopoly over the production and marketing of local goods to make significant inroads into the retailing of imported goods.

II.5 APPRENTICESHIP AND EMANCIPATION: THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

Between 1800 and 1838, the West Indian legislatures lost some of their autonomy through being forced to accept the abolition of the slave trade, amelioration and Emancipation. The Windward Islands were consolidated in 1833 and local legislatures were not allowed to offer purses or stipends to

⁶⁰ CO285/18: Young to Bathurst, 1 Oct. 1811, author's emphases; CO285/2: Young to Castlereagh, 16 Nov. 1807.

the Lt.-Governor and the Governor-in-Chief, to ensure the independence of the executive.

The central class conflict was between planters and enslaved. The debates surrounding Apprenticeship and Emancipation are important for the development of class relationships after 1838, and they are now examined.

Apprenticeship, which began with the legal termination of slavery on 1 August 1834, was an unsatisfactory half-way house to the slaves, who wanted freedom. It was used to lay down 'the social and economic machinery that would perpetuate the established order after 1840' [Green 1976:130]. Since the system was regulated by colonial legislatures, its sanctions were 'largely in the hands of the class against whose power it was directed' [Burn 1937:163]. Therefore, the Stipendiary Magistrates (Stip. Mags.), who were to supervise the regulation of labour on the estates, the Governors and the Colonial Office were very important in the balance of political forces.⁶¹

From 1 August 1834, all children under 6 were freed and entrusted to the care of their mothers. Those born after that date were free, as well as slaves who had at any time been in the UK with the consent of their masters. Apprentices above age 6 were classified as praedial attached, praedial unattached, or non-praedial, depending on whether they lived on estates and on the type of work they had been doing for the 12 months preceding the passing of the Abolition Act. Praedial

⁶¹ For the constraints on the independence of the Stip. Mags., see Burn [1937]; Green [1976].

slaves were to serve until August 1840, while all others would be free in 1838. Out of crop, every field apprentice was to have free time equal to 14 working days deducted from the 45-hr work week. Houses and other allowances were to continue.⁶²

Between 1834 and 1838, labour relations were the arena of a series of conflicts, as the planters and apprentices consolidated their opposed positions.

First, the planters defined the customary allowances to the labourers as 'indulgences'. Women who had borne 6 or more children and had been exempt from labour, were required to serve. On some estates, medical attention to the free children was withdrawn, to induce the mothers to work extra days for these services. Most women refused to do so and the proprietors eventually instructed the managers to offer the service without cost, unconditionally.⁶³

Secondly, the mothers refused to allow their free children to work. Many mothers so feared the re-enslavement of their children, that they let them suffer for lack of medical attention, rather than accept anything which could put them under future obligations. Some women sent their children off the estates and refused even to present them to the Magistrates for inspection. Without the labour of the free children, the estates had to use adults for the lighter tasks. Material inducements from the planters failed to persuade the

⁶² CO285/41: Darling to Spring Rice, 22 Aug. 1834, enc. Darling's Proclamation, 25 July 1834; Green [1976].

⁶³ CO285/42: Smith to Glenelg, 25 Nov. 1835, enc. Darling to Smith, 30 Oct. 1835; CO285/46: MacGregor to Glenelg, 23 May 1838, enc. Darling to MacGregor, 18 Apr. 1838.

mothers, and only one woman offered to indenture her child, because he was 'incorrigibly bad'.⁶⁴

The third issue was the liberty of the apprentices to dispose of their own time. In most districts, they commanded wages varying from 1s to 1s 4d to 2s per day for field labour, and 2s to 3s per day for skilled tradesmen.⁶⁵ Often, they worked for wages reluctantly, or in June and July, 'the hungry time', when their crops were not yet ready.⁶⁶ Even Darling had difficulty getting apprentices to do 'the lightest work' on his grounds, 'no party having come a second time to work for Sixteen Pence and two Glasses of Rum a day'.⁶⁷

In 1834, the Assembly, seeking to make the apprentices more dependent on the estates, passed a Market Act to fix at a low rate the prices of bread and fresh commodities.⁶⁸ The labourers simply withheld supplies until the law was rescinded [Capadose 1845, 2:233]. An anonymous complaint stated:

... the people have forsook [sic] the market & the town of Scarboro starves, no not even milk to be got for Breakfast.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ CO285/47: Darling to MacGregor, 25 Jan. 1838. The same attitude was displayed by the Jamaican mothers, who allowed only 9 children to work for the estates [Mair 1987:10-11]; in four of the Windwards, including Tobago, only 6 children were apprenticed [Marshall 1985:211].

⁶⁵ CO285/45 & CO285/47: Stip. Mag. Repts. for 1837, 1838, respectively.

⁶⁶ CO285/45: MacGregor to Glenelg, 31 Aug. 1837, enc. Stip. Mags. Child and Dowland, June 1837.

⁶⁷ CO285/47: Darling to MacGregor, 25 Jan. 1838. Lt.-Gov.'s Letters, 1836-38: Darling to MacGregor, 15 Aug. 1836; author's emphasis.

⁶⁸ CO285/44: Darling to Glenelg, 17 Sept. 1836.

⁶⁹ CO285/43: 'An Emancipator' to Aberdeen, 22 Feb. 1835.

Another area of conflict was cane stealing. As Apprenticeship drew to a close, hundreds of people were punished by whipping for destroying and stealing canes; in January 1838, of 422 recent punishments, 166 were for stealing canes. Managers testified under oath to basketfuls, mule loads and cart loads of canes removed. Men and women, including watchmen and rangers, were involved.⁷⁰

Even though the termination of slavery was inevitable, it took considerable pressure from the UK, and much politicking and personal influence from the Governor-in-Chief, for the local legislatures to agree to emancipate on August 1st, 1838, rather than in 1840, as had been originally intended [Marshall 1971].

In Tobago, Apprenticeship ended in 1838, only because the legislature had no choice, once the other Windward Islands had capitulated to British pressure. The Legislative Council unanimously refused to introduce the measure, and stated their displeasure at having to agree to emancipation in 1838:

... we must ... candidly admit, that the Board assented to the measure with much reluctance, considering it a case of great hardship and injury to the proprietary of this Colony ...

The Assembly declared that the Emancipation Bill was a measure 'of necessity' to which they acceded only because they anticipated 'that most illegal and unconstitutional Act, for amending the Abolition Act, forced upon the colony by the

⁷⁰ CO285/46: MacGregor to Glenelg, 3 May 1838, enc.
Darling to MacGregor, 19 Apr. 1838.

British Parliament'.⁷¹

Central to the resistance to early Emancipation was the fact that the leading attorneys and managers had recently invested in estates and hoped to profit before slavery ended. Particularly important were the mechanics and tradesmen, whose skills were valuable. Since non-*praedials* were expected to be freed in 1838 and *praedials* in 1840, the 1834 Tobago Classification Act considered domestics and mechanics to be *praedials*, contrary to the intention of the Imperial Act for the Abolition of Slavery.⁷²

In May 1838, the legislature sent Darling a joint address, disagreeing with the interpretations of the British officials on classification, and predicting 'ruin and bloodshed' after August. By June, however, after the neighbouring islands had reluctantly agreed to emancipate, the legislature capitulated. Darling explained their concerns:

... Mr Gairdner and others, having since the 1st of August 1834 purchased Estates in this Island, at very low prices, on the speculation of realizing the purchase Money by the labour of the Apprentices by the Year 1840. ... [They] will not therefore relinquish the opportunity of making the utmost farthing while they are possessed by legal authority, of the services

⁷¹ CO285/46: MacGregor to Glenelg, 31 July 1838, Enc. 3, Leg. Co. to Darling, 11 July 1838; Enc. 4, Assembly to Darling, 11 July 1838. The Imperial Act to Amend the Act for the Abolition of Slavery in the Brit. Colonies was passed on 11 Apr. 1838.

⁷² CO285/46: MacGregor to Glenelg, 22 June 1838, & Encs. There were 395 Head Tradesmen and 272 Inferior Tradesmen, 7.3% of the 9078 effective apprentices in July 1838 [Martin 1843:38].

of their Apprentices.⁷³

The planters prepared to meet the new epoch with laws to entrench their position. A police force and public prisons were established. Sundry Acts were passed, regulating punishment by hard labour; appointing rural constables; preventing the clandestine departure of labourers, artisans etc.; suppressing vagrancy, and regulating the wage contract. All these measures were disallowed, because of their severity and discriminatory tendency.⁷⁴

Once the planters were defeated on the issue of early Emancipation, they tried to secure the attachment of the freedpeople to regular estate labour for low wages, using the houses and garden grounds as the leverage in bargaining. From May 1838, we see a series of strategic moves by both opposed parties, which laid the bases for the struggles to come.

In May 1838, Magistrate Child observed in the Windward District:

... at no former period have I seen the Apprentices so intent on repairing & building habitations on their respective plantations. It would seem as if The heads of families (Apprentices) entertained no intention of leaving their present employers ... otherwise they would not bestow so much time & labor on render-

⁷³ CO285/46: MacGregor to Glenelg, 11 June 1838, enc. Darling to MacGregor, 19 May 1838. In St Vincent, Stip. Mag. Colthurst noted that the desire of the attorneys and managers to become owners or lessees of their employers' estates was the strongest reason for their conflicts with the Stip. Mags. [Marshall 1977:224].

⁷⁴ CO285/46: MacGregor to Glenelg, 10 Apr. 1838; 4 Sept. 1838; 19 Sept. 1838; Glenelg to MacGregor, 23 June 1838, 27 Nov. 1838, 1 Jan. 1839, 21 Jan. 1839; Stephen's minute, 23 May 1838.

ing comfortable the cottages which must
so soon be relinquished.⁷⁵

Marshall [1985:215-6] argues that these preparations revealed a resolve by the apprentices to distinguish between plantation residence and plantation labour; 'occupation' of the houses and grounds was to replace 'occupancy'. The planters, however, sought to establish an intimate link between labour, residence and provision grounds, via the system of located labour. Glenelg commented on the Tobago Emancipation Act that the planters saw the labourers, not even as tenants at will, but as 'mere trespasser[s], who might be dispossessed by the order of a magistrate, without any notice to quit, or other formality.'⁷⁶

Wednesday 1st August 1838 was a day of thanksgiving and celebration. The Churches were crowded with freedpeople, and no further work was done that week. On 7th August, Darling wrote of the Leeward District:

The negroes ... will neither work for the estates nor give up their houses; in other quarters they say they will work their provision grounds for a month to come, and insist upon maintaining possession in spite of the managers.⁷⁷

The offer for field work ranged from 3d to 8d per day, with houses, medical attention and grounds free. On 18th August, Darling wrote:

Great repugnance was for some time shewn

⁷⁵ CO285/47: MacGregor to Glenelg, 9 July 1838, enc. Child, May 1838.

⁷⁶ CO285/46: Glenelg to MacGregor, 15 Oct. 1838.

⁷⁷ CO285/46: MacGregor to Glenelg, 23 Aug. 1838, enc. Darling to MacGregor, 7 Aug. 1838, & Encs.

by many of the Negroes to return to work, for the wages, that the Managers can afford ... [T]here was as well organized a combination from one end of the Island to the other, to strike for Wages, as ever took place in England, but conducted with more secrecy nor would the Labourers for some time listen to the Stipendiary Magistrates ... The Certainty however that they would be ejected from their dwellings, and deprived of their Provision Grounds if they refused to work for the Estate, brought to light the great estimation in which they held their Lands; the Pecuniary Nature of which I find to be far greater than I have imagined.⁷⁸

For months the strikes continued. In December 1838, labourers on five leeward estates agreed to accept rates ranging from 5d to 8d per day for ordinary labour, with houses and provision grounds secured.⁷⁹ The leeward labourers may have been the first to capitulate because, the district being the driest, with a dense population, they could not sustain themselves for long periods on their produce alone. Throughout Tobago, the houses and provision grounds became the major inducement to labour for the estates.

II.6 CONCLUSION

The composition of Tobago society, particularly in the 1830s, and the central class conflict between planters and would-be planters, on the one hand, and enslaved, on the other, were described. The interests of the leading whites, their alliances and conflicts with absentee merchants and

⁷⁸ CO285/46: MacGregor to Glenelg, 4 Sept. 1838, enc.
Darling to Macgregor, 18 Aug. 1838, & Encs.

⁷⁹ CO285/47: MacGregor to Glenelg, 21 Dec. 1838, Sub-Enc.,
McIntosh to Darling, 11 Dec. 1838.

planters, and the role of the imperial state were discussed. Whites, free coloureds and blacks, and slaves were the three major status groups, and the secondary lines of cleavage and differentiation within each group were analysed. Gender relations were included; but class, race/colour, legal status and gender overlapped and mutually reinforced each other, since slavery was not simply a system of property relations, but a complex of social and political symbols and institutions, which formed the basis of the social order.

Race and colour, mediated by gender, determined the system of honour and degradation and often overrode all other considerations. Yet two contradictory tendencies were simultaneously at work. On the one hand, the mores of the whites and the coloureds, and the cross cutting ties between enslaved and free, combined to soften the distinctions of colour and legal status, as interculturalisation inevitably occurred [Brathwaite 1974]. The paucity of white women and the increase of the free coloureds contributed to this. On the other hand, this erosion of barriers made the leading whites strive to preserve their social and political hegemony. The slaves perceived the coloureds, most of whom identified with the whites, as the class allies of the planters. A folk song, dating from August 1838, states:

Fus' of August come at las'
All dem mulatto have to eat long grass
Fus' of August come at las'
All dem mulatto have to ketch dem ass
All dem black Neger have to ride white horse.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Mrs Dorcas Henry, (1916-), Interview with author, 9 July 1992, and Mr George Leacock (1916-), Conversation with author, 3 Feb. 1994.

Important though race and colour were, it was the struggle in the sphere of production between planters and labourers that provided the contours within which new alignments took place after 1838. The contending classes entered the new era trailing vestiges of the old. Emancipation meant, not unconditional freedom, but such degrees of freedom as the labourers could continue to wrest, as their conflict with the planters took new shape. Central to the transition from slavery was the provision ground/internal marketing complex, through which the enslaved asserted their humanity, enterprise, dignity and desire to accumulate. In the attachment to the provision grounds and the markets, we discern the desire for a new order struggling to free itself from the integuments of the old.

CHAPTER THREE

SMALLHOLDERS AND THE DIVERSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURE IN TOBAGO: 1838-1855

III.1 THE PROBLEM STATED

III.1.1 Introduction

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the agrarian structure and the emergence and development of smallholders between the Emancipation of 1838 and the economic collapse of the 1880s. In keeping with our hypothesis, our aim is to discover whether any class of estate owners, of landowners with more than 10 acres, or of smallholders with less than 10 acres, emerged with the capacity to upgrade the sugar industry or to diversify away from sugar. This chapter considers the smallholders up to 1855; Chapter 4 considers the agrarian structure by the 1880s.

Chapter 2 demonstrated that the provision ground/internal marketing complex established customary rights, expectations and living standards which the ex-slaves wished to consolidate in the era of legal freedom [Foner 1983:19]. Where a peasantry emerged after 1838, it was 'reconstituted' out of the experience of the 'proto-peasants' of the slave plantations [Mintz 1974a:146-157].

We now focus on access to land, whether by acquisition or by other forms of tenure, because, in an agrarian society such

as Tobago, the land was, for the overwhelming majority of ex-slaves and their descendants, the place of work, the object of labour, a means of production [Trouillot 1988:6], a symbol of social status, and an avenue to full citizenship, since the franchise was always based on the possession of property. Access to land was also a key factor in determining the relations of production.

Furthermore, land ownership was of immense symbolic importance in the culture created by the ex-slaves. This is reflected in the practice of burying the dead on their own property, rather than in public burial grounds and Church yards, which persisted down to the 1880s.¹ It is seen, too, in the custom, common in Tobago and in other parts of the Caribbean, of burying a child's umbilical cord on the land of its parents and planting a tree to mark the place. These practices symbolized the linking of the continuity of the family line with the high value placed on the land [cf. Besson 1988]. The strategic importance of land ownership is also reflected in the customary tenure and transmission of 'family land', which evolved, in most parts of the region, in the post-Emancipation years, as a means of securing land in the hands of the descendants of the ex-slaves in the long term, and with which family life was intimately connected [Besson 1979; 1984; Besson and Momsen 1987; Clarke 1957]. Secure land tenure, therefore, had economic, political, symbolic and cultural significance, far beyond what is apparent in the

¹ The Medical Ordinance, 1882, forbade 'promiscuous burial'.
CO321/59: Robinson to Kimberley & Encs., 19 Oct. 1882.

small size of the holdings.

III.1.2 The Debates in the Literature

There are two major debates in the literature on smallholders in the Caribbean, which are pertinent to this study. The first is on the conceptualization and definition of the 'peasantry', in the light of the ambiguity of the concept [S. Silverman 1979; Saul and Woods 1976], and the multiplicity of occupations in which Caribbean smallholders were always engaged [Comitas 1973]. Some writers, Le Franc [1981], for example, have therefore chosen to avoid the term, because of its indiscriminate and imprecise application. This issue, labyrinthine in its scope, has been well summarized by Mintz [1973], and will only be briefly discussed here.

One school of thought stresses that the peasantry is a social grouping for which the household is a unit of production and consumption of subsistence goods; its involvement in a market economy is therefore expected to be minimal. This is the viewpoint of Fraser [1981] who follows the approaches of Shanin [1976] and Chayanov [1966], and argues that, outside of Haiti, no peasantry emerged in the Caribbean, because of the pervasiveness of the CMP and the involvement of all rural groups in the market economy. It would be difficult for Fraser to respond to the objection that the Haitian peasants were also integrally involved in capitalist markets, both local and foreign [cf. Mintz 1964b].

On the other hand, are writers like Marshall [1968], Lewis [1936], Mintz [1974a, 1979, 1983], Farley [1953/54],

Paget [1964], Hall [1959/1990], Handler [1971], and Trouillot [1988], who all recognize the necessary and widespread involvement of the Caribbean peasantry in wage labour, and in internal and external markets. The Caribbean, from the inception of the sugar economy, depended on external sources for clothing, breadstuff, salt provisions, machinery, hardware and ironmongery; and Caribbean peasantries have always had a basic need for cash (or quasi-barter, where specie was scarce) to procure these items. Indeed, Mintz argues that these 'deep and ancient involvements' in local and international markets are a feature which makes all Caribbean peasantries 'somewhat contrastive with peasants elsewhere' [1983:10].

By implication, much of the Caribbean literature, especially Trouillot [1988], touches tangentially on the debates on the distinctions between 'primitive', 'peasant' and 'simple commodity' production [cf. Bernstein 1977; 1988; Chevalier 1983], on household production [Friedmann 1980; Bennholdt-Thomsen 1982], and on the 'modes of production controversy' [Foster-Carter 1978; Fraser 1981; Robotham 1977]. Anthropologists now commonly regard peasants as integrally involved in the capitalist economy, producing both their own subsistence and commodities for sale in internal and external markets [cf. Dalton 1967; 1969]. Peasant production is regarded by a wide range of theorists as either part of, or as 'articulated' with, the CMP [Foner 1983:35]. Bernstein, after summarizing the attempts of modern Marxists to reconcile the existence of peasants and other petty producers of commodities with mature capitalism, argues that peasants must be

understood as being petty commodity producers. As such, they are capitalists employing themselves, and they form an integral part of the CMP as a petty bourgeoisie, in the literal sense of the term [1988:265-269].

In keeping with the premisses of Chapter 1, we consider that, in Tobago, the smallholders, the planter class and its representatives formed part of a single, capitalist, economic system. They were involved in complex, often antagonistic, but symbiotic, relationships, as each broad grouping struggled to maximize control over, and optimize the use of, land, labour power and capital, in its own interests. Therefore, in our view, it is impossible to distinguish for Tobago a non- or pre-capitalist 'peasant mode of production' from the CMP, as Post [1978] did for Jamaica.

The wisest way out of the definitional impasse is to abandon the search for universal definitions of the 'essence' of 'peasant' economy, society, or modes of production, and to assume a plurality of agrarian systems, within each of which peasants would be defined [Roxborough 1979:95; Dalton 1974]. As Mintz has cogently argued, with such definitions, typologies, 'marked by both parsimony and adequacy', could be developed 'to facilitate controlled comparisons of peasantries in time and space' [1973:102; cf. Padilla 1960].

We agree with Hobsbawm [1973; cf. Mintz 1974b; Wolf 1966] on the need to distinguish between various forms of family-based agrarian production, and also to differentiate between rural proletarians, commercial farmers and peasants. In his classic study of Jamaica between 1838 and 1865, Hall

[1959/1990:158] identifies three broad agrarian categories: 'small farmers', who owned and worked freeholds without giving labour to the estates; 'peasants', who combined occasional wage labour with the working of their freeholds; and 'labourers', who rented provision grounds and cottages, while continuing to serve as estate labourers. Hall's categorization of peasants is tied to the ownership of freeholds. We accept his outline of the rural groups but, while the data on freeholds will be carefully assessed, the multiplicity of tenures in which the Tobago ex-slaves participated requires a focus on access to land, if the smallholding sector is adequately to be understood.

A distinctive recent contribution to the conceptual discussion comes from Trouillot's study of Dominica, in which he delineates 'the peasant labor process' as 'an institutionalized process through which a household performs agricultural labor on a unit over which it exerts a form of control that excludes similar groups, with instruments of work which it also controls in an exclusive manner and which generally represent less of an input than the labor itself' [1988:4]. Trouillot argues that not all smallholders who produce commodities are engaged in a peasant labour process. The latter is distinguished by (a) the importance of the domestic group, which is both a unit of production and of consumption; (b) rudimentary technology, which gives priority to living labour over dead labour; (c) the consequent salience of kinship, clientelistic, and other personal ties; and (d) the centrality of the land [ibid.:5-6, 12].

This construct, together with our focus on access to land, allows us to understand the category that Hall called 'peasants', in the context of the involvement of many ex-slaves in a multiplicity of tenures. It allows us to identify a 'peasant labour process', in which crops were grown by domestic units for both subsistence and the market, local and foreign, using rudimentary technology, but where freehold tenure was one among many, even for the same individual, and where the relations of production in which an individual participated might be equally varied.

Our task, then, is to ascertain whether 'small farmers' and 'peasants', with or without freehold title to land, emerged in Tobago by 1855, and what their economic and political significance might have been.

The second major Caribbean debate concerns whether and why a 'flight' of the majority of the ex-slaves from the estates occurred in the decades after 1838. In 1978, Hall, reconsidering his own views on the labour history of the early years after 1838, identified two main explanations for the withdrawal of many ex-slaves from the plantations. One view is represented by Farley [1953/54; cf. Riviere 1972], who stresses the desire for liberty and land, the so-called 'pull' factors; the contrary view is represented by Paget [1964], who argues that the ex-slaves were willing to continue to occupy their old homes and provision grounds, but were 'pushed' by the strategies of the planters into seeking land and livelihood off the estates. Hall himself, using certain Stipendiary Magistrates' reports and the admittedly limited

evidence presented to the British Parliament's 1842 Select Committee, argues that the strategies of the planters, in exacting high rents for houses and grounds, and in permitting occupation of these only if daily labour was given, should be given most weight in any explanation of the exodus of labour.

In this, Hall has been followed by Marshall [1979a; 1979b], who doubts that the mere availability of land provoked an exodus from the estates in the Windward Islands in the early post-Emancipation years. Marshall highlights the complexity of the process of 'negotiation', rather than the attitudes ascribed to planters and ex-slaves by the protagonists in the debate [1979a:244-245].

In response to Hall and Marshall, Trouillot [1984a] questions the assumption that there was homogeneity of experience and belief among the ex-slaves, or that this involved a commitment to wage labour. Instead, he calls for a greater understanding of the varying socio-economic conditions of which the plantations formed part. He also stresses the importance of the 'peasant labor process', which had been established on the slave provision grounds, and which led to a preference for flexible work régimes, and independence in the allocation of time and other resources. Trouillot's [1988] data for Dominica between 1838 and 1842 suggest a preference for sharecropping and labour-rent, rather than for wage labour, among freedpeople on a sample of 41 estates.

Higman, confining himself to the issues as defined in the literature, demonstrates, in his case study of a Jamaican estate between 1838 and 1845, a process of negotiation between

the planters and the former slaves, which involved a rapid series of shifts in an unstable transitional situation, whose outcomes were often unforeseen and not pre-determined [1990:17]. Thus, like Wilmot [1986], he lends support to the 'push' explanations.

Another aspect is explored in the debate between Green [1984; 1986] and Bolland [1981; 1984]. Green maintains that, ultimately, it was population density and the availability of land which determined the emergence of the peasantry. Bolland, basing his inferences on Belize, a territory of extremely low population density, stresses instead the exercise of political domination by a planter class that, by the truck system and various forms of direct and indirect coercion, so limited the available options, that a peasantry could not emerge.

Some of the positions in the 'flight from the estates' debate are not new. Marshall [1991:3-4] observes that the 'pull' interpretations, whether in the population density variant or in the variant stressing the disinclination to labour for others in open-resource situations, were inspired by earlier observers, particularly Merivale [1861], Wakefield [1849], Nieboer [1910/1971] and Domar [1970].²

So far, only Marshall [1991], among the historians, has seriously questioned the terms within which the debate has been conducted. He calls for greater precision and clarity

² These writers sought to explain various forms of servitude, but Merivale and Wakefield were particularly concerned with colonization. See also Curtin [1977], Patterson [1977] and Engerman [1977].

about several matters: the nature of the labour problem; the size of an adequate labour force; the demands of the ex-slaves; the reasons for their apparent militancy; and the relative weight, and possible interrelationship, of 'push' and 'pull' factors. Land availability should also be seen, not simply as the man/land ratio, but in terms of the land available for alienation, the motivations of the sellers, and the operations of the market in land.

Marshall is correct. The search for explanations within the restricted boundaries of the debate must now be abandoned. The reconstruction of the post-Emancipation experience requires a multi-faceted approach. One has to understand several distinct, parallel, but interrelated processes:

1. the movement to villages, hamlets and other settlements for residence and cultivation on land that may have been owned, rented, or squatted upon;
2. acquisition of freeholds;
3. access to land on the basis of non-freehold tenure;
4. withdrawal from regular, steady, wage labour on the estates;
5. the ability to survive in agriculture independently of the estates;
6. the ability to survive in non-agricultural employment independently of the estates;
7. emigration to agricultural or non-agricultural pursuits;
8. regional variations within each territory.

All of these need to be considered over time. Regional variations were, in turn, conditioned by the availability of land for sale to the freedmen, and by geographical factors, particularly the proximity to markets.

This chapter discusses (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5) in the light of (8). The data on number (6) are fragmentary. The **seventh** factor, emigration, was negligible up to 1855, but became significant thereafter.

The central question which this chapter addresses is paradoxical. From 1838 to 1893, not more than 10,000 acres of the 57,408 alienated were cultivated (Table 8). Tobago had a low population density (114 persons per square mile at Census 1844), large tracts of idle and uncultivated land, even on occupied estates (Table 9), and a 'secession' from estate residence and from located labour, by the freed slaves, on the one hand; but there was very little squatting, and minimal acquisition of freeholds, on the other hand. The reasons for this are herein analysed.

TABLE 8
Estimates of Cultivated Acreage, Tobago:
1838-1893

<u>Year</u>	<u>Acres in Sugar</u>	<u>Acres in Provision</u>	<u>Total Acreage under Culti- vation</u>	<u>% Alienated Lands</u>
1841	-	-	6486*	11.3
1842	-	-	5413½	9.4
1844	-	-	5462½	9.5
1852	4183	3700	7883	13.7
1853	4000	3800	7800	13.6
1856**	2700	5100	7800	13.6
1857	2800	-	-	-
1858	3000	-	-	-
1859	3000	-	-	-
1871	5232	2301	7533	13.1
1884	-	-	10000	17.4
1885	-	-	8000	13.9
1887#	1500	1500	8000	13.9
1888	-	-	8000	13.9
1893	-	-	6500	8.9

NOTES:

1. * Excludes pasture land.

2. ** Calculated from the figures in Sewell [1862/1968:92]. The 1856 Blue Bk. also gives 2700 acres as the acreage in canes.

3. # In 1887, there were 4000 acres under coconuts, 500 in pasture and 50 in cocoa.

Sources: CO290: Blue Bks. for 1841-88, except 1856; CO300/104: 1893 Blue Bk.

TABLE 9

Ownership and Acreage of Sugar Estates by Parish: 1855

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Total No. of Estates</u>	<u>No. of Sugar Estates</u>	<u>Acreage of Sugar Estates</u>	<u>Acres in Sugar</u>	<u>Acres in Sugar %</u>	<u>No. Absentee Owners</u>
1	7	2	1626	78	4.8	2
2	7	6	3020	358	11.8	4
3	9	7*	4137	305	7.4	6
4	18	15*	6737	601	8.9	9
5	10	8	4892	317	6.5	6
6	9	6	2774	345	12.4	5
7	11	11	4754	706	14.8	9
<u>TOTAL</u>	71	55	27940	2710	9.7	41

NOTES:

1. Parishes numbered 1 to 7 are, respectively, St John, St Paul, St Mary, St David, St George, St Andrew and St Patrick.

2. * One estate was leased in St Mary and 3 in St David.

3. There were 43 sugar estates owned by 25 absentees, and 12 owned by 13 residents.

Source: CO285/73: Hincks to Labouchere, 7 July 1856, enc. Blue Bk. Rept., 1855, and Apps. Compiled from App.

III.2 LAND AND LABOUR IN TOBAGO: 1838-1855

III.2.1 The Context of the Struggles

After 1838, as obtained throughout the BWI, the managers/attorneys/planters (hereafter referred to as planters) employed a panoply of weapons to control the options available to the labourers. The planters did not always act in concert. Many, whose estates had good provision lands, sought to 'grasp' labour from neighbouring estates, by offering 1s per day for field labour (the regular wage was 8d per day) for 40 days work per year, with the 40 days often at the end of the year. This practice of attracting 'strangers' helped to raise wages; it unsettled families; and it led some workers to seek short-term employment on several estates, with a commitment to none. Lt.-Gov. Darling complained of varying systems and hours of work, which made it difficult for the Stipendiary Magistrates to settle disputes. The results were often counter to the planters' interests, and tended to encourage task, rather than day, work.³ In spite of these intra-class conflicts, the planters used their legislative power to the utmost to secure their advantage.

The Assembly, having the power over taxation and supplies, often tied controversial legislation to the Supply Bill, to force the Colonial Office not to withhold dissent, if only to save the supplies (Ch. 7). The planters' strategies must be understood within this context.

³ CO285/48: MacGregor to Normanby, 15 Aug. 1839, enc. Darling to Assembly, 30 July 1839; CO285/50: MacGregor to Russell, 18 May 1841, Dowland's rept.; CO285/52: Grey to Stanley, 7 Dec. 1843, De Gourville's rept. Marshall [1979b].

The franchise was kept deliberately restricted. In 1840, Darling asked the legislature to widen it. Both houses rudely declined, the Assembly declaring of the freed slaves that 'their rise in the Social Scale, will be better marked by their reaching up to the qualification, than by bringing it down to them.'⁴ By 1854, only 43 freeholders qualified to vote, many of them not ex-slaves. To keep wages down and labour continuous, the planters pressed for immigration, to be paid for as far as possible from the labourers' taxes.⁵ The burden of taxation was borne by the labouring class (Ch. 7).

As happened elsewhere in the Caribbean, punitive laws were passed. The framework for the laws on the access of the freedmen to land was set by an 1836 Order-in-Council, devised during the tenure of Glenelg as Secretary of State, which advocated high prices for Crown lands, to prevent the ex-slaves from having any alternative but to labour on estates to produce exportable staples.⁶ Act No. 330 of 1839, which extended the provisions of an earlier Act (No. 324), to punish 'lawless intruders' on land, provided for the summary eviction of tenants holding over after the expiration of their tenancy. Tobago's Solicitor General Wattley supported it. R. Boucher Clarke, the Barbados Solicitor General, said it subjected the labourers resident on estates to 'caprice', and 'would operate very oppressively and unjustly' on them. The Act was

⁴ CO285/49: MacGregor to Russell & Enc., 30 Sept. 1840.

⁵ CO285/49: MacGregor to Russell & Enc., 29 Sept. 1840.

⁶ PP. 1836, Vol. XLVIII, Circular Despatch, Glenelg to Governors of the West India Colonies, 30 June 1836, pp. 58-60.

disallowed.⁷ However, the Magistrates and the Colonial Office never succeeded in modifying the implied contracts and the conditional tenancy of the located labour system [Marshall 1979b:20].

In this context, the power of the Colonial Office to act as a 'third force' [Green 1986], though important, was circumscribed. The land question was largely an internal struggle for power between the planters and the freedmen.

A crucial factor in the negotiation between the planters and labourers over wages and access to land was the high cost of imported goods (Ch. 2) and local food. Rev. John Horsford, head of the Methodist Circuit from 1850-52, stated that imported goods were dearer than elsewhere,

and the labouring population - prompted
by the necessity under which the merchants
are inevitably placed to dispose of their
stock at a higher rate than elsewhere,
... - bring their provisions to the market
in Scarborough at an exorbitant price.
[Horsford 1856:361]

A newspaper editorial in 1839⁸ stated that yams were 1s per lb, or 4 times the price of English potatoes, while the average wage was 8d per day. Ten years later, Chief Justice Sanderson argued that the high cost of imports caused the labouring class, to 'supply just enough to keep prices up to the prices of imported food.'⁹

⁷ CO285/48: MacGregor to Russell & Enc., 14 Nov. 1839;
CO285/49: MacGregor to Russell & Enc., 15 July 1840;
CO285/66: Colebrooke to Newcastle & Enc., 30 July 1853.

⁸ The Tobago Gazette and West Indian News, 12 Aug. 1839.

⁹ CO285/60: Colebrooke to Grey, 27 Mar. 1849, enc. Sanderson to a Committee of the Leg. Co., 9 Feb. 1849.

Also relevant to the process of negotiation between planters and labourers was the establishment of shops by managers and owners on or near estates, so encouraging the truck system. Darling wrote in 1842 that this was 'very generally adopted', so causing part of the labourer's wage to return 'to the Source from which it flowed.'¹⁰

The labourers would have taken into account their expectations and standards of the years preceding 1838, their conception of freedom, and the realities of the new situation. They would have considered the real wage, given the high taxes, licenses, and prices of local and imported goods [cf. Hall 1959/1990:157-9]; they would have assessed the advantages of being producers, in the light of their needs for cash at different times of the year.

III.2.2 The Movement to Villages and the Acquisition of Freeholds

In the early years after Emancipation, there was some exodus by labourers from the plantations into villages, some acquisition of freeholds, and some permanent withdrawal from estate labour. The first progressed; the second was not as extensive as it first appeared; and most freeholders did not enjoy complete independence of the estates. There were also variations in the options available to labourers in the districts - Windward, Middle, and Leeward - into which the island was divided. The first two of these processes are here

¹⁰ CO285/51: Grey to Stanley, 3 Dec. 1842, enc. Darling's 1842 Blue Bk. Rept.; cf. The Tobago Gazette and West Indian News, 24 Dec. 1839, p. 2.

examined.

Table 10 shows that, in the first 5 years of freedom, 2348 out of 7141 effective labourers (32.8%) no longer remained on the estates' pay lists. Some were women who looked after their homes and their provision grounds. Others found employment as hucksters, fishermen, etc. Many were children. Darling wrote of the 'total inutility' of a law preventing children under 16 from working on the estates, 'when so general and decided an aversion to apprenticing their children ... has been shown by the negroes'.¹¹ In the 1840s, some of the older boys were allowed to accept estate labour, usually to tend the stock and the carts. Therefore, if we assume with Marshall [1979b] that one-third of the labourers defected, many would have been children; for the majority of the remainder, it is doubtful that independent landowning was a feasible option.

¹¹ CO285/48: MacGregor to Normanby, 8 May 1839, enc.
Darling to MacGregor, 19 Apr. 1839.

TABLE 10

Labourers on Estates: 1838-1843

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
No. of Praedial Apprentices 31 July 1838	3677	4304	7981
%	46%	54%	100%
No. of Labourers on Estates' Pay Lists 30 June 1843	2718	2075	4793
%	57%	43%	100%
Decrease	959	2229	3188
% Decrease	26%	48%	40%

NOTE:

Non-effectives in 1838 were approx. 840. Therefore, decrease in effective labour was 2348. No breakdown of the effectives by sex is given.

Source: C0285/52: Grey to Stanley, 7 Dec. 1843, enc.
Stipendiary Magistrates' Repts.

III.2.2.1 Windward District: 1838-1855

Although the Windward District always had the lowest population density and the largest acreage of abandoned land, it had no independent villages before 1855. In 1843, Stipendiary Magistrate De Gourville reported that there were 6 freeholders and 27 renters, 'and from every information I have been enabled to procure, their settlements are well cultivated, while, at the same time, they offer fully the same labour to the Estates as those located on them. ... There are

neither villages nor Hamlets in this District.'¹² On one estate, Delaford, which had been abandoned since the 1820s, the labourers from adjacent plantations were permitted by the planters to squat, but all continued to offer their labour to the adjacent estates.¹³

One effective deterrent to those wishing to buy land was said by De Gourville to be

the frequent illegal Sales of land, by persons who either had [?] no legal title to the same, or authority to dispose of it, and many labourers after having paid as high as £20 Sterling per acre, have been left without land or Money, while others again have only been able to obtain redress by incurring further expenses.¹⁴

The Windward District experienced heavy population loss to the Middle and Leeward Districts in the first 15 years after Emancipation (Table 11). This was so, firstly, because little land was available for purchase, although provision grounds for located labour with conditional tenancy were generously granted; and, secondly, because poor communications with the local market hindered the trade in provisions:

There is a great scarcity of labour in the Windward District, many of the Labourers, with their families having left that Quarter, and settled nearer to ... Scarborough, where, in general, they chiefly occupy themselves in growing provisions for the Scarborough market.¹⁵

¹² CO285/52: Grey to Stanley, 7 Dec. 1843; De Gourville.

¹³ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1850, Consolidated Tables.

¹⁴ CO285/53: Grey to Stanley, 23 Aug. 1844, enc. Stip. Mag. Repts.; cf. CO290/4: 30 June 1848, Pringle.

¹⁵ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1850, Consol. Tables.

TABLE 11

Population by District/Parish: 1844-1871

<u>Year</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
1844	Windward	1227	1364	2591	20
	Middle	2439	2955	5394	41
	Leeward	2486	2737	5223	39.5
	Total	6152	7056	13208	100
1851	Windward	1205	1144	2349	16
	Middle	2866	3287	6153	43
	Leeward	2878	2998	5876	41
	Total	6949	7429	14378	100
1861	Windward	1358	1321	2679	17
	Middle	2995	3398	6393	42
	Leeward	3080	3258	6338	41
	Total	7433	7977	15410	100
1871	Windward	1559	1572	3131	18
	Middle	2835	3079	5914	35
	Leeward	3868	4141	8009	47
	Total	8262	8792	17054	100
1881	Windward	2041	1987	4028	22
	Middle	2853	3219	6072	34
	Leeward	3800	4151	7951	44
	Total	8694	9357	18051	100

Sources: Tobago Censuses for given years.

The huckstering trade, conducted largely by itinerant women, brought foreign goods and redistributed, to the urban consumer, the produce of those who remained at Windward. In 1842, De Gourville reported:

The internal traffic consists principally of cotton, and the lighter kind of British manufactured goods, and which is effected through the medium of licensed Hucksters, who are satisfied in default of money to receive in payment from the Labourers their ground provisions, pigs, poultry eggs and dried fish, and which they carry to town and sell in the Market.¹⁶

The Windward District suffered an acute labour shortage, which is why 186 of the 292 liberated Africans who arrived in 1851, were sent there. In addition, between 1845-52, it received 255 Barbadian migrants. Some of the latter returned to Barbados, and unknown numbers joined the exodus to the south-west. In December 1852, only 191 migrant labourers were at work on windward estates.¹⁷ Ironically, the presence of immigrants accelerated the withdrawal of native labour from the estates, in order to grow provisions to feed the Barbadians.¹⁸ Thus, migrant labour produced no increase in the labour supply available to the estates. Its introduction was, in the words of Stipendiary Magistrate Hall Pringle, 'pursuing a shadow'.¹⁹

In 1852, the Magistrates reported that there were still

¹⁶ CO285/51: Grey to Stanley, 28 Dec. 1842, enc. Stip. Mag. Repts., De Gourville.

¹⁷ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1852; Pringle, Table A.

¹⁸ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1853.

¹⁹ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Rept., 30 June 1847.

no villages at Windward; instead, there had been 'a decrease in such settlers' since 1842. There were scattered houses,

... for the most part built on land rented from the Sugar Estates, the House being built by the renter with the privelege [sic] of removing his materials at the termination of the lease or otherwise disposing of it, but this seldom occurs.

Pringle counted 20 small freeholds, while there were 892 labourers, 601 males and 291 females.²⁰

After the 1847 hurricane, a list was made by the Stipendiary Magistrates of all the sugar estates and the damage incurred.²¹ Thirteen of the 18 sugar estates listed in 1847 for the Windward District were sold in the Encumbered Estates Court, along with Goat Island and Little Tobago (two offshore islands), and a few blocks of timber land. We calculated, from studying the plans, particulars, affidavits and other documents submitted to the Court, the acreage sold to labourers between 1838 and 1885, when the estates of the biggest planters (the McCall/Gillespie partnership and Thomas Reid and Co.) were sold. From the 17 large parcels of land, 14,717 acres of which were sold by the Court, only 107 acres were identified as having been sold to labourers, with one additional smallholder, (acreage not given), claiming title to a part of Campbelton Estate (Table 18).

The majority of the freedpeople remaining at Windward were tenants. Some rented house lots and garden grounds;

²⁰ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1852, Consol. Tables, Child; 31 Dec. 1852, Table A, Pringle.

²¹ CO285/57: Reid to Grey, 23 Oct. 1847, & Encs., Consolidated Return of Stip. Mags. and Supt. of Police Rept.

others were located labourers under conditional tenancy; yet others were tenants at will. By 1852, 208 of the 892 estate workers were also metayers, cultivating 200 acres of estate cane lands. The Stipendiary Magistrates commented that most forms of tenancy in the Windward District were 'based upon the most unjust principles, the tenant having no security or certainty of possession.' The tenants were also 'rapidly withdrawing themselves from agricultural labour for hire', because of their access to provision and metayer grounds.²²

III.2.2.2 Leeward and Middle Districts: 1838-1855

In the more populous and better cultivated Leeward and Middle Districts, there was great eagerness among the freed people to acquire land. However, many of the plots bought in the first flush of freedom were lands of poor quality, without good access, and sometimes without title, because the buyers could not afford the cost of the survey and the registration fees. In that period, there was no professional surveyor in Tobago, and plots were arbitrarily measured.

Several new villages appeared in the Leeward District in the early 1840s - Signal Hill, Patience Hill, Hopeton, Milford Village, and Montgomery 'Moravian Establishment', followed by Bethel, Bethlehem, Black Rock and other settlements.

By 1844, the largest number of lots sold was on Prospect Estate, where, according to Dowland,

²² CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1849, Le Plastrier; 30 June 1848, 30 June 1849, 30 June 1852, 31 Dec. 1852, Pringle. The quotations are, respectively, from the second and third of Pringle's repts.

the Proprietor commenced his Sales early in the day at £20 an Acre and by which, I believe, he raised a Sum Equal to what he had paid originally for the whole Estate, which is an extensive one with a Steam Engine upon it.

An old woman, called Bonny, bought an acre at Prospect for which her costs were:

Land	£20.	0.	0
Surveyor	1.	12.	0
Drawing deeds	2.	1.	8
Register	2.	5.	0
<u>TOTAL</u>	£25.	18.	8

Dowland described her plot as follows:

It is indifferent hilly land, far from water, and has a bad sufference [sic] road to it. Bonny is now assisting in cleaning the liquor at the Sugar Mill at Prospect, at 6d a day.²³

By 1845, Prospect Estate had sold 81 acres to labourers; yet, there were only 17 freeholders with title.²⁴ Down to the 1880s, it remained unrivalled in the high acreage it sold as a means of attracting labour (and adding to its profits) (Table 18).

A similar picture is drawn in the reports for the Middle District. Land was quickly bought 'with avidity at the rate of £20 an acre', but it was 'frequently of very inferior soil'.²⁵ The districts near to Scarborough, which had been settled mainly by free coloureds and blacks during slavery -

²³ CO285/53: Grey to Stanley, 23 Aug. 1844, Dowland. Cf. CO285/52: Grey to Stanley, 7 Dec. 1843, Dowland. Both despatches enclose Stip. Mag. Repts.

²⁴ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 Sept. 1845, Dowland.

²⁵ CO285/51: Grey to Stanley, 3 Dec. 1842, enc. Darling's 1842 Blue Bk. Rept. The quot. is Darling's. Grey to Stanley, 28 Dec. 1842, enc. Stip. Mag. Repts., Child.

Calder Hall, Rockly Vale, Monkey Town (today Morne Quiton) - became heavily populated. New villages - Mason Hall, Elsinore (also spelt 'Elsineur'; later part of Mt St George) - were opened up in 1841; Mt Grace, Cinnamon Hill, St Cecilia, Hooghly Bush (near Moriah; also called 'Ugly Bush'), and Parlatuvier began to develop in 1842. Mason Hall and Mt St George/Elsinore were built around the Methodist chapels, and Moriah developed on lands bought from Indian Walk estate, near the large Moravian Church which was built in 1842. Whether the missionaries took any initiative in acquiring these lands for the people, as happened in the 'Church-focussed' villages of Jamaica and elsewhere, is not clear from the available data [cf. Mintz 1987].

The first accurate enumeration of the population in villages was done after the 1847 hurricane. The village movement advanced rapidly in the Middle and Leeward Districts (Table 12). The Stipendiary Magistrates accounted for this contrast with the Windward District as follows:

In the Middle and Leeward Districts the Encrease [in the village population] has been very great, in consequence chiefly of their contiguity to the Markets of Scarborough and Plymouth. In these two Districts the tendency of the Peasantry is to settle themselves in Villages - each Cottage having in general a plot of land attached to it. On many of these lots, there are several Cottages built on sufferance.²⁶

The redistribution of the population into village settlements, based on many types of land tenure, was, therefore, heavily influenced by a desire for land and markets.

²⁶ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Reports, 30 June 1852, Consol. Tables.

Stipendiary Magistrate Child observed that 'Not one half' of these land transfers were legally registered. By 1843, both Dowland and Child reported that the rush to acquire freeholds had abated, many having realized that 'every possible advantage is taken of their ignorance'.²⁷ (Tables 13 to 15).

Many of the freeholders were obliged to continue working for the estates. The average size of holding, apart from the small lots sold in Plymouth Town, was one acre, or just under. Such small plots could not usually support whole families, especially as, in some cases, the original lot was subdivided and rented to other labourers. Subdivision by relatives following the death of the original purchasers was also frequent. In 1845, Child reported that most of the renters in his district rented from small freeholders. 'To obtain a livelihood therefore the Small Free-holders and renters must still afford to the community a large proportion of their labour'.²⁸

Not everyone could afford to buy land. Dowland in the Leeward District observed in 1845 that the cost of an acre 'was too much money for the generality to raise. Those parties who have settled themselves as independent freeholders are for the most part Carpenters, Masons, House Servants, Grooms etc. and they generally continue to earn their

²⁷ CO285/52: Grey to Stanley, 7 Dec. 1843, enc. Stip. Mag. Repts., Child & Dowland. The second quot. is Dowland's.

²⁸ Ibid., Child. CO285/54: Grey to Stanley, 21 July 1845, enc. Stip. Mag. Repts., Child.

livelihood by working on the Plantations in their Neighbourhood.' Again, in 1847, he reported that the villagers were 'principally Artisans (and their families) who are employed on the adjoining Estates.'²⁹

The first year in which freeholds were assessed for land taxes - and the last year of the Magistrates' reports - was 1853, when the number of freeholds assessed was 966, but only the gross figure for the island is given.³⁰ It seems that the majority of the freeholds were in the Middle District, which extended northwards from Scarborough and its suburbs to the coast at Parlatuvier. This district is wetter and hillier than the Leeward, and had more lands which were marginal to sugar production. In 1852, the magistrates estimated 1020 freeholds, usually one acre or less - 20 at Windward, 700 in the Middle District, and 300 in the Leeward.³¹ If there were 966 freeholds, assuming few cases in which one owner had several plots, then freeholders constituted only 12% of the 1851 adult population (aged over 20) of 7982.

When we compare the 1847 list of sugar estates with the records of sales in the Encumbered Estates Court for the Middle District (Table 18), we find, interestingly, that, of the 21 estates listed for 1847, only 5 came before the Court.

²⁹ CO285/54: Grey to Stanley, 21 July 1845, Dowland;
CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1847, Dowland.

³⁰ The Stip. Mags.' figure is here given. The 1853 Blue Bk. gives 866 freeholds, but the data on freeholds in the Blue Bks. seem implausible. For 1854 and 1855 the figures are 694 and 710, respectively. CO290/37, /38, /39: Blue Bks. for 1853, 1854 and 1855.

³¹ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June, 31 Dec. 1852; 30 June 1851, Consolidated Tables.

The Middle District had, numerically and proportionately, the largest population in villages (Table 12), and it was estimated to have the largest number of freeholds. It is possible that more of its estates may have been leased or bought by resident proprietors after the 1840s. This is an area for further research, especially since, in 1843, Stipendiary Magistrate Child wrote of 'upwards of 3000 acres of fertile land offered for Sale or Lease in lots of one acre or upwards', while only 960 acres were cultivated in the district. Child also explained that many of the estates, 'hampered by debt', were 'falling into the hands of residents at very low prices.'³²

³² CO285/52: Grey to Stanley, 7 Dec. 1843, Stip. Mag. Repts., Child; cf. Niddrie [1965:272].

TABLE 12

Village Population in Tobago: 1847-1853

<u>District</u>	<u>Population of District</u>	<u>No. in Villages Built Since 1838</u>	<u>% Population</u>
<u>1847</u> (31 Dec.)			
Windward	2314	*	-
Middle	5558	1736	31.2%
Leeward	5336	575	10.8%
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>13208</u>	<u>2311</u>	<u>17.5%</u>
<u>1853</u> (30 June)			
Windward	2349	300	12.8%
Middle	6153	4000	65.0%
Leeward	5876	2372	40.4%
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>14378</u>	<u>6672</u>	<u>46.4%</u>

NOTES:

1. The district population figures are from the censuses of 1844 and 1851, respectively.

2. * No discernible settlements; only scattered houses.

3. The figures for the village population exclude the residents of suburbs of Scarborough.

Sources: C0290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1847 and 30 June 1853; Censuses, 1844, 1851.

TABLE 13

Freeholders in Leeward District: 1 Sept. 1843

<u>Place</u>	<u>No. of Allot- ments</u>	<u>Land Sold</u>	<u>No. of Families</u>	<u>No. of Inhabi- tants</u>
Milford*	5	4 acres	5	23
Grafton*	5	5½ "	5	8
Signal Hill*	18	21 "	18	64
Plymouth	28	29 town lots	28	106
Prospect Hill	50	42 acres	50	no houses

NOTE:

* 'The purchasers of these small plots of Land are mostly employed directly or indirectly, on estates, as Coopers, Carpenters, Masons etc.'

Source: CO285/52: Grey to Stanley, 7 Dec. 1843, Stip. Mag. Dowland; author's emphasis.

TABLE 14

Freeholders in Middle District: 1 Aug. 1843

<u>Place</u>	<u>No. of Allotments</u>	<u>Land Sold (Acres)</u>
Mt St George	50	52
Wesleyan Land	16	17
Elsinore	5	5
Mason Hall	16	21
Belmont*	11	11
Calder Hall	65	70
Rockley Vale	29	29
Mt Grace	19	17
Ugly Bush	7	7
<u>TOTAL</u>	218	229

NOTE:

* Leased for 20 years.

Source: As for Table 13; Stip. Mag. Child.

TABLE 15

Freeholders in Tobago: Aug. 1838-Aug. 1843

<u>District</u>	<u>Freeholds</u>		<u>Long Leases</u>	
	<u>No. of Lots</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>No. of Lots</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Windward	6	6	27	27
Middle	207	218	11	11
Leeward	106	106	—	—
<u>TOTAL</u>	319	330	38	38

Source: As for Table 13; summary report.

In the Leeward District, 14 of the 32 sugar estates (according to the 1847 list), along with Pigeon Point, then a coconut estate, passed through the Court. These 15 properties, at the time of their sale, comprised 5586 acres. By 1885, their owners had sold 180 acres to labourers (Table 18).

Where the records on land transactions with labourers are more detailed, there is a consistent picture of small-sized holdings. A schedule of the lands sold to labourers, for Grafton, Old Grange, New Grange, Buccoo, Hampden (Leeward), and Kendal Place (Windward) is given for the years 1840-64. At Grafton, 47 labourers bought (35 of them doing so in 1843). With 6 exceptions, each buying 1 acre, the labourers bought 2 roods ($\frac{1}{2}$ acre) or less. There were 10 buyers at Old Grange, 18 at New Grange, 22 at Buccoo, and 4 at Kendal Place. The modal size of holding was $\frac{1}{2}$ acre on the first 3 properties, $\frac{1}{4}$ acre for Buccoo, and 1 acre for Kendal Place. All but three labourers bought their land in the 1840s.³³

III.2.2.3 Summary on the Village Movement and the Acquisition of Freeholds

The data show that there was a rapid movement into houses built off the estates, particularly in the Middle and Leeward Districts. In the Windward District, the movement into homes off the estates was more limited by 1855, but most workers built their homes on rented land on the estates. The acquisition of homes is thus distinct from, though related to, the movement into independent settlements. Island-wide, 712

³³ CO441,5/9: Re Leith ex parte Davidson, Schedules K, L, M, filed 12 Dec. 1864.

houses of freeholders and renters were returned in 1843; by 1847, the number had doubled to 1445.³⁴

In 1855, Dowland, then Acting Colonial Secretary, distinguished between the movements into homes and into villages:

... I should say that the majority of the Laborers are living in houses erected by themselves since the period of Emancipation but they are not clustered into Villages built since that period. Within the last three years the increase of new houses has been very trifling on account of the scarcity of money and difficulty of finding employment.³⁵

Considerable effort was invested in homes and freeholds. Child, reporting on the Leeward District for 1855, remarked:

The fact that a great majority of the negro population - whether plantation labourers or otherwise - have ... acquired residences of their own ... may be taken as *prima facie* evidence that they are industrious and saving³⁶

While the island-wide movement into independent homes was very advanced by 1855, the growth of villages was most pronounced in the Middle and Leeward Districts. The acquisition of freeholds was slower but, again, was most apparent in the Middle and Leeward Districts. Access to land, however, was widespread throughout the island. Holdings, whether rented or bought, were generally less than 5 acres.

For Tobago as a whole, another source which permits an

³⁴ CO285/58: Reid to Grey, 26 Mar. 1848, enc. Memorial of House of Assembly, 21 Mar. 1848.

³⁵ CO290/39: Blue Bk., 1855.

³⁶ CO285/73: Hincks to Labouchere, 7 July 1856, enc. 1855 Blue Bk. Rept.; Child, Memo. on Leeward District, 16 June 1856.

understanding of land tenure in the mid 1850s is the 1856 Valuation Roll, on which all properties (including buildings) were assessed. The figures here are an over-estimate of the number of freeholds, since land and buildings occupied by tenants were not distinguished; but they give a good picture of the unequal distribution of property in 1856. Eighty-one per cent of the properties were assessed at less than £5 per annum; 90% at less than £10 per annum; and fully 56% were valued at less than £3 per annum, £1 being taken as the rateable value for one acre of land (Table 16).

TABLE 16

Distribution of Assessed Property in Tobago: 1856

<u>Assessed Value of All Properties £</u>	<u>No. of Properties</u>	<u>Per Cent of Properties</u>
< 1}	10}	.4}
1 < 2}	610}	24.0}
2 < 3} 0 < 5	821} 2072	32.1} 81.2
3 < 4}	425}	16.6}
4 < 5}	206}	8.1}
5 < 10	214	8.4
10 < 15	72	2.8
15 < 20	27	1.0
20 < 30	52	2.0
30 < 40	27	1.0
40 < 50	12	.5
50 < 100	29	1.1
100+	45	1.8
<u>TOTAL</u>	2550	99.8%

Source: C0285/75: Hincks to Lytton, 24 July 1858, enc. 1857 Blue Bk. Rept.; calculated from Appendix.

III.2.3 The Relations of Production: 1838-1848

The Stipendiary Magistrates' Reports for 1838 to 1848 reveal a complex range of relationships between labourers and planters, though precise figures on the number of persons in each category are not available. Sugar estates so dominated the economy that the statistics on 'labourers at work for hire' refer exclusively to estate labour. Wages and access to land were closely connected.

First, there was the located labour system, by which workers occupied a house and provision grounds of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre or as much land as the worker wished, usually with medical attention, as payment in kind. The money wage of a first class labourer under this system varied from estate to estate, and over time; but, on average, it was 8d per day, for 5 days' work per week. Second class labourers earned 6d to 8d per day; and third class, 3d to 6d. Such tenancy was based on an annual or 'general' hiring; the contracts were often implied - that is, assumed to be in force unless otherwise stated. Annual contracting for labour usually means that there is no mid-season reservoir of unemployed workers on whom planters can draw [Shlomowitz 1984:4]. Therefore, especially on an island of low population density, the threat of dismissal was much reduced, while fines, charges against labour, the truck system, punitive taxes and other forms of direct and indirect pressure assumed more importance.

Secondly, there were, particularly in the Leeward and Windward Districts in the early post-Emancipation years, tenants with obligation - people attracted by good provision

lands, who rented 1 acre for 40s per annum, the rent to be paid in kind by 40 days' labour (labour-rent), usually at the end of the year. The planters hoped to secure the continuous service of the workers during the entire year.

Thirdly, there were tenants without any obligation to labour for the estates. They rented land under lease, usually written, often for 2 to 3 years.

Fourthly, there was an increasing number of residents of villages, hamlets and other settlements, with freeholds or rented lands, who offered their labour power to the estates for wages ranging from 8d or 9d to 1s 2d per day. To these part-time wage labourers, estate land was available for rent from 24s to 32s per acre per annum.

Fifthly, there were 'Freeholders and renters, and their numbers are increasing, cultivating small patches of canes which are made into sugar on stipulated terms at the works of some neighbouring Estate.' Child reported that, in the Middle District, the sugar was shared between grower and manufacturer.³⁷ This arrangement was different from metayage contracts. It involved a clear division of labour between the cultivation of the canes and the manufacture of the sugar. It also involved a clear separation of ownership of land and machinery, for the growers were producing on lands no longer part of the estates on which the sugar was made.

In the Windward District, there were also many tenants at will, occupying estate lands on sufferance.

³⁷ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1848, Consol. Tables & Child, for Middle Dist.

From the late 1840s onwards, metayage (sharecropping) 'contracts', often unwritten, were prevalent. The terms of these contracts varied from estate to estate, but all were for the production and manufacture of sugar on estate lands, using estate carts, mills, machinery and curing houses, with half the sugar going to the metayer. Most metayers were themselves employers of labour, for which payment was in cash or in kind.

The eighth category is those who permanently withdrew from the estate labour force. The Magistrates observed that married women were likely to be numerous in this group, usually working in partnership with their spouses as 'Domestic, Gardener, and Marketeer'.³⁸ However, we should not suppose that a high proportion of women among those withdrawing meant that most females left field labour.³⁹ In general, it was clear that 'the growing of Market Vegetables, burning Charcoal, and planting Canes on their own account is considered more pleasant, independent, and profitable than consecutive Cane Cultivation on a plantation.'⁴⁰ Thus, there was a marked preference for the independence and rewards of the peasant labour process.

Many freedmen were at once metayers, renters, day labourers, freeholders and cane farmers. Correspondingly, many planters were, at once, landlords receiving rent in cash or in

³⁸ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1850, Dowland.

³⁹ In 1851, Sir William Colebrooke, the Gov.-in-Chief, wished that more women had withdrawn from field labour, because of the widespread neglect of young children. PP. 1851, Vol. XXXIV, Annual Repts. for 1850, Colebrooke to Grey, 27 Aug. 1851, p. 56.

⁴⁰ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1849, Consol. Tables.

kind, employers of labourers who were paid in cash or in kind, and parties to metayage and other crop-sharing contracts.

Thus, there was no agro-proletariat, dependent on wages and completely devoid of access to land, in Tobago. The nominal wages (usually 8d per day) which, from the 1840s, were lower than those paid elsewhere in the Windward Islands, must be understood within this context of widespread access to land, indirect coercion and remuneration in kind. Planters, frequently unable to find cash, resorted to giving rum and other ardent spirits as part-payment for labour, and this persisted even after 1848, when it was abolished by law. A considerable part of this rum was re-sold by the labourers.⁴¹

Lt.-Gov. Graeme frankly reported in 1847:

It is an error to suppose that in Tobago we give a high rate of wages: The price of field labor varies from six pence to a shilling per diem according to age for attached Negros [*sic*]; that is, for such as have houses and grounds: but one shilling and four pence is demanded on Saturdays, which is still ... considered as a day of exclusive freedom, and of exemption from Estates' employ. ... The charge in Slavery for preparing and opening an acre of land in this island by the employment of a Task Gang, was eight pounds sterling. The same amount of work was performed very recently for £1. 19. 10 upon a Saturday too, when the people as stated above, demand the higher rate of wages: The Gang consisted of twenty six men and women, with four water carriers: each person opened 100 four feet cane holes, which very nearly

⁴¹ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1847, 31 Dec. 1847, 31 Dec. 1848. The Liquor Act was revised in 1853 and 1858. The 1858 law permitted the issue of liquor in lieu of wages. CO285/75: Hincks to Stanley & Encs., 7 May 1858.

cover the surface of an acre of ground.⁴²

The labour described - 'holing' - was one of the most arduous of plantation tasks. As the 1840s progressed, task work, ending by 11.00 a.m., was increasingly preferred to day work.

Dependent capitalism in Tobago produced a class of capitalists with minimal capital and a class of labourers for whom the wage was not a wage, in the Marxian sense of the term. The nominal wages, which Lt.-Gov. Graeme so innocently described, continued into the succeeding decades. In 1858, Gov. Hincks reported, after visiting Tobago, that, while the ordinary wages paid by the planters were 8d per day, the metayers 'have frequently to employ additional hands and they are ready to pay 1s/4d or double the rate allowed by the Planters.'⁴³ Most labourers had several sources of income, of which the wage was only one. Low wages were premised on the availability to virtually every labourer of additional sources of income from provision grounds, metayage, freeholds, fishing etc., and this persisted well into the 20th century.⁴⁴

The pattern of landholding and the range of relationships outlined do not suggest a definitive 'flight' from the estates or an independence of estate labour on the part of the free

⁴² CO285/56: Reid to Grey, 18 May 1847, enc. Graeme's 1846 Blue Bk. Rept.

⁴³ CO285/75: Hincks to Stanley, 26 May 1858.

⁴⁴ See the Turpin Family Papers on Charlotteville Estate, which they have owned from 1884 to the present. Cyril to Charles Turpin, 14 Apr. 1926: 'The villagers may say what they like but the fish will always hold them on the spot.' Also, C. A. Turpin (Uganda), Conf., 'Memorandum on the Administration of Charlotteville Estate, Its Cultivations etc.', 25 Dec. 1929.

people, although their priorities were always given to their own holdings, or to their rented provision grounds. The estates' pay lists increasingly reflected a commitment to labour that was honoured, because of high rates of absenteeism from regular work, more in the breach than in the observance. Within the context of part-time or occasional wage labour in which even freeholders were involved, the labourers maximized their economic leverage and their degrees of freedom.

III.2.4 The Labourers' Options in A Period of Rapid Change: 1848-1855

The 1850s mark a turning point in the relations of production in Tobago. From that time, metayage became the dominant relationship between planter and labourer. Metayage was related to the labourers' access to land and patterns of land acquisition. We now examine these processes.

The late 1840s were a critical period for the BWI sugar economy. The introduction of the Sugar Duties Act, the depression in sugar prices, the financial crisis in the UK, the failure of the West India Bank (the only one in Tobago) in November 1847, and the inefficient system of production, were aggravated by a devastating hurricane in October 1847. Many absentee owners abandoned or sold their lands; and the number of working estates owned by residents rose from 3 or 4 (out of 72) in 1838 to 38 (out of 61) in 1858, a process that continued well into the 1860s. Most consignees became unwilling to advance money for Tobago estates. The threat of abandonment hung like a heavy pall over many estates until well into the 1850s.

The amount of coin in circulation fell drastically. Planters could not pay wages on time, because of the lack of cash and falling production on many estates; some could not pay at all. Those planters who obtained money from the local merchants paid a large premium and could get it only at uncertain periods. Free medical attention to located labourers was stopped on some estates. During 1848, 10 of the 30 or so Leeward estates abandoned cultivation.

Therefore, at the start of the 1848 crop, the planters waged 'a protracted and injurious Struggle'⁴⁵ to reduce the wage, which was bitterly resisted by the labourers, who went on strike. In the Windward District, where the reduction in wages was accomplished through the intervention of Magistrate Hall Pringle, was there no strike.⁴⁶ As late as February 1849, Graeme reported that 'one third of the usual number continued to hold out in the expectation that as the crop season advances the former wages will be given.'⁴⁷ So serious was the strike, that James Ewing and Co., Glasgow merchants who owned four Tobago estates, wrote to the Colonial Office, asking for an early supply of liberated Africans. Ewing and Co. also noted that because the labourer was able to 'dictate' his own time of work, estates were barely making one-third of the crop produced during slavery.⁴⁸ William Cruickshank, one

⁴⁵ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 Dec. 1848, Dowland.

⁴⁶ CO285/63: Pringle to Grey, 23 Nov. 1850, & Encs.

⁴⁷ CO285/60: Colebrooke to Grey, 14 Feb. 1849, enc. Graeme to Colebrooke, 1 Feb. 1849, & Stip. Mag. Repts.

⁴⁸ CO285/59: James Ewing and Co. to Grey, 7 Nov. 1848.

of three brothers who leased the leeward estates of Ellice, Kinnear and Co., British merchants, saw a desperate need for 3000 Africans if the estates were to be saved from a 'lamentable state of ruin', owing to the high rates of absenteeism of labourers and the lack of unanimity among the planters. His brother, Cosmo, manager and lessee of Amity Hope, a property of 400 acres, reported that 56 acres were cultivated, of which only 8 acres were newly planted.⁴⁹

The year 1848 marks the turning point as regards the workers' willingness to continue as located labourers. In the face of irregular wages, which were reduced by 20% after the crop, many of the located labourers left their houses and provision grounds on the estates and resorted to the independent villages, especially during the strike. Indeed, Child said that most of the strikers were residents of villages.⁵⁰

In order to avoid the insecurity of conditional tenure for houses and grounds, and wages that were often paid in arrears, and to avoid eviction for refusal to work, many of the located labourers in the Leeward District changed their status to that of renters on estate and other lands. Unfortunately, there are no statistics on resident estate workers, but Dowland reported in June 1848:

The Labourers are fast quitting their attached position on an Estate, and are renting land & becoming independent

⁴⁹ Ellice Papers, Ms. 15137, No. 182-3, Wm. Cruickshank to Ellice, 21 July 1848; No. 189, Cosmo Cruickshank to Ellice, n.d.

⁵⁰ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1848, Child.

Cottagers, their labour is precarious, and becoming more so every day.

In December, he wrote that 'very few' labourers were attached to estates, and that many were enlisting their names on the books of several estates at once. So rapid was the movement to rented land, and so serious the defection from regular estate labour because of the threat of reduced wages, that, in June, Dowland felt obliged to remark:

I have acted in the capacity of Special Justice in this Island thro' thirteen Crops, and I have never had so many general complaints of injurious annoyance to the Planter.⁵¹

By December 1853, the report for the whole island stated:

No Labourer will occupy an Estate Negro house, if he can get a piece of land and has the means of erecting a cottage.⁵²

In 1849, Dowland wrote that 'generally the planters now have neither Capital, nor credit', and therefore estates suffered from lack of labour. The delaying of wages, sometimes up to 3 months in arrears - '(a practice which could not obtain in England)' - had led to 'a feeling of want of confidence' among the labourers.⁵³

There was also increased migration to Scarborough; and a stringent Suppression of Vagrancy Bill was passed, but it was disallowed. By December 1852, there were very few located labourers in the Middle and Leeward Districts. By 1854, migration from the Windward District was great enough to cause

⁵¹ CO290/4: Dowland, 30 June 1848, 31 Dec. 1848.

⁵² CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1853, Consol. Tables.

⁵³ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1849, Dowland.

the Methodist missionary to consider abandoning their most easterly stations.⁵⁴

Parallel to the movement out of located labour was the increased refusal to work for wages on the estates. The Stipendiary Magistrates usually reported the actual number of workers to be two-thirds of those registered. By 1852, sometimes not even 20 out of a gang of 70 would be at work in the Middle District. Irregular, low wages, especially on the more decrepit plantations, and rising prices for the necessities of life, drove workers to an increasing dependence on other resources, even in the Windward District where there were few freeholds [cf. Hall 1978].⁵⁵ However, the decline in the number of workers on the estates' lists cannot be taken as evidence of increased independence of the estates, since there was a marked increase in metayage and piece-work by jobbing gangs (Table 17).

Jobbing gangs, which did piece work for the estates, were formed by the labourers from 1848 onwards:

... the "Head man" receives 1/- per diem for each labourer he brings to the field, of which he retains 2d as his own profit, in addition to his days [sic] hire. These Head men are negroes possessed of some little capital, & having considerable influence in the labour market. A Labourer hired on a plantation cannot leave without giving a months [sic] notice, - but the jobbing Labourers are under no such restriction.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1852, Consolidated Tables. WMS: Box 143, File 1854, No. 103, Rev. D. Barley to General Secretaries, 7 Dec. 1854.

⁵⁵ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1852, Child; Pringle.

⁵⁶ CO290/4: Child, 30 June 1853; cf. Dowland, 31 Dec. 1848.

TABLE 17

Labourers Registered with Estates: 1846-1853

<u>Year/Month</u>	<u>Labourers</u>	<u>Year/Month</u>	<u>Labourers</u>
31 July 1838 (effective apprentices)	7141	1850 {30 June {31 Dec.	3446 3368
1846 {31 March {31 Dec.	5280 4977	1851 {30 June {31 Dec.	3542 3529
1847 {30 June {31 Dec.	4761 4264	1852 {30 June {31 Dec.	3311 3765
1848 {30 June {31 Dec.	4325 2984	1853 {30 June {31 Dec.	3889 3861
1849 {30 June {31 Dec.	2334 3331		

Sources: CO290/4: Stip. Magistrates' Repts. for given dates.

In the new situation, the option which came to be most frequently accepted, both by the planters who were unable to pay money wages, and the wage labourers/tenants/jobbers cum freeholders, was metayage. In 1855, 13 out of 55 estates were partially cultivated by metayage. By 1857, 'there was scarce an Estate on which the share system had not been introduced to a greater or less extent, many of them, even some of the larger, being entirely worked by Metayers.'⁵⁷ By 1866, the system obtained 'universally'.⁵⁸ In the 1840s and 1850s, metayers were usually wage labourers on the estates from which

⁵⁷ CO285/75: Hincks to Lytton, 24 July 1858, enc. Drysdale's 1857 Blue Bk. Rept.

⁵⁸ CO290/50: Blue Bk., 1866.

they got metayer lands, except where the properties were wholly cultivated on the share system.⁵⁹

The report of the Magistrates for the whole island stated in December 1848:

... Cultivation of the Cane by small Freeholders, Renters, and 'Metairie' System Planters, has received an impulse owing to the reduction of wages, whilst, on the other hand, Estates have been falling off, and unusually fine as the Season was, few planters could take advantage of it by inserting a 'Fall Plant'; - Never was a remarkably fine Season so sacrificed to the want of labor at a fair rate of wages.⁶⁰

The withdrawal from regular estate labour, which was accentuated in the late 1840s and early 1850s, was in part due to the failure of the planters to pay prompt and adequate wages, because of declining advances from absentee owners and creditors, falling profits and scarce specie. However, independence of steady wage labour did not mean independent freeholding, but rather a multiplicity of activities that might/might not, but often did, involve freedpeople in a dependent relationship with the estates. Child observed:

The great bulk of the Labouring Class grow provisions, for which they have a monopoly -, cultivate Metayer canes, job all about, and occasionally work on Sugar Estates.⁶¹

⁵⁹ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1852, Windward Dist., Table A; 30 June 1853, Richardson, Leeward Dist.

⁶⁰ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 Dec. 1848, Consol. Tables.

⁶¹ CO290/4: Child, 31 Dec. 1851. CO285/70: Colebrooke to Russell, 7 Aug. 1855, enc. Shortland's 1854 Blue Bk. Rept.

III.3 THE LAND QUESTION AND THE DOMINANCE OF METAYAGE

The remarkable spread of metayage to become the dominant relationship of production from the 1860s onwards must now be briefly discussed, since the system is examined more fully in Chapter 5. In effect, it symbolized a narrowing of the labourers' options after 1855.

Initially, metayage was not popular with the workers. It had been tried by two labourers, one a Barbadian, on Prospect and Mary's Hill estates, in 1842. Both grew healthy crops of corn between the growing canes. Within a year, the grower at Mary's Hill opted out of the scheme. In 1843, it was tried at Betsy's Hope on a limited scale, but was regarded as not promising.⁶² The 'contracts', usually unwritten, were highly inequitable to the metayers who, after their first experience of them, clearly described all their disadvantages to Dowland (Leeward District) in 1849:

The Metairie System is about being given up by the Laborers on some Estates on the ground that it does not answer. Their objections are that their [sic] is not a fair division of expense, and of produce, between themselves and the Proprietor. That their Canes are sometimes left too long when ripe on the ground (this to enable the proprietor first to take off his own Crop) to the injury of their Cane Stools. That as Estates are becoming abandoned, they fear that their canes would not be ground within a reasonable distance of their place of growth.

The price they received for their sugar locally was 1½d per lb, which did not compensate for their labour, and they

⁶² CO285/51: Grey to Stanley, 28 Dec. 1842, Stip. Mag. Repts., Dowland. CO285/52: Grey to Stanley, 7 Dec. 1843, Stip. Mag. Repts., De Gourville.

complained of losing their share of the molasses or the rum, depending on which was manufactured. Dowland again returned to the subject in December 1849, in a long critique of the written metayer contracts, arguing that the planters who adopted metayage 'calculate best for their own interests', while the metayers were 'very much open to the will and caprice of the Landlord'.⁶³

Le Plastrier (Windward District) also wrote a long critique of the abuses inflicted on the metayers, through unwritten contracts without witnesses. He asked for legislation to protect the metayers.⁶⁴

Child (Middle District) saw metayage as highly profitable to those who invested only occasional labour, if they were not otherwise earning money, but as unprofitable to the person who engaged in it as the major deployment of his/her time and resources. He also noted that it was 'occasionally a means of oppression.'⁶⁵

The planters were equally vehement in their complaints against metayage, although it allowed them to preserve their estates in cultivation, without a great outlay of cash for wages. Increasingly, they saw it as disadvantageous, particularly because of the neglect of the canes in favour of the crops which were planted between the cane rows.

Why, then, did metayage, which was optimal for neither

⁶³ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1849, 31 Dec. 1849, Dowland.

⁶⁴ CO285/62: Colebrooke to Grey, 7 March 1850, enc. Le Plastrier, 'Remarks on Metairie Contracts'.

⁶⁵ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1853, Child.

planters nor labourers, become the dominant relationship of production from the mid 1850s onwards? The reasons are clearly, but subtly, linked to the popular desire for land ownership, and the planters' determination to prevent this.

Firstly, in the context of reduced or delayed wages, high costs of imports and unjust taxes, metayage offered the possibility of using estate lands to grow both provisions and canes. Metayers were also favoured with lands for pasture on the estates, sometimes free of rent. The testimonies before the 1890 Metairie Commission⁶⁶ suggest that considerable amounts of food crops were grown between the canes, often before the canes were planted. Metayage was, thus, a half-way house, affording to the planter, labour, and to the labourer, land. Short of emigration, to which the labourers increasingly resorted from the 1860s, it was the least objectionable option in a situation where freehold land, employment for wages and specie were all 'scarce'.

Secondly, metayage gave a twofold advantage to the planters. In spite of the inefficiency and poor husbandry into which the system rapidly deteriorated, it allowed failing estates, short of cash for investment and wages, to continue in cultivation. Moreover, it confined labour to the estates and to lands nearby.

For an understanding of how the latter was accomplished, we must go to the records of the 1880s, when the sugar economy toppled with the collapse of A. M. Gillespie and Co. and Thomas Reid and Sons, the two largest absentee owners. By

⁶⁶ Met. Com. Rept., 1891.

then, there was such large-scale emigration, that the planters desired, as a matter of urgency, to create a peasantry on the lands which should have been escheated to the Crown decades before. E. D. M. Hooper was invited to survey the forests in 1887. He estimated that a third of the island - 25,000 acres - was under forest. Hooper observed, as our data indicate, that, along the road connecting the western end of the Main Ridge to Scarborough (the Middle District), the properties were more broken up into allotments than elsewhere, 'where there has been co-operation among owners to resist the breaking up of estates'. With perspicacity, he wrote:

The demand for land has been met by the subdivision of estates and the continuation of the system of *metairie* has kept a portion of the population stationary that would otherwise have wandered to other more distant parts of the island.⁶⁷

It is not hard to see why the legislature took little interest in developing good roads.

But there is a third important factor. Metayage could have been the instrument for confining labourers to estate lands, only because they had restricted access to other lands. How this was accomplished is described below.

After the majority of labourers withdrew from residing as located workers on the estates in 1848, the planters imposed a tax of 5s per acre on provision grounds in 1849. In 1852, they introduced a Land Tax Act, imposing 4s per acre on cultivated land, and 6d per acre on uncultivated lands, whether occupied or not. This Act was objectionable in many

⁶⁷ CO321/104: Hooper [1887]; emphasis added.

respects, not least because, at the same time, the Assembly passed another Act to appropriate half of the land taxes so raised, to aid immigration. Not only owners of freeholds, but also tenants of land, metayers, located labourers, and all users of land were required to pay the assessment on lands they occupied. President Yeates remarked that 'every labourer occupying the smallest fraction of land shall contribute his or her quota to the introduction of competitors in the Labour Market [*sic*].'⁶⁸ The Assembly also abolished the export duties on plantation produce.

The Act provoked a riot in Scarborough on 22 November 1852. 'Seventy to Eighty persons armed with bludgeons' went to the Treasurer's Office and threw down their tax schedules, refusing to pay. An angry crowd threw missiles through the windows of the Court House - the building which also housed the Assembly rooms - and fought with the police and government officials. The crowd dispersed only when a detachment from the garrison was summoned.

President Yeates exercised considerable political skill, in frustrating the purposes of the planters who dominated the Assembly. He issued Instructions that the Act should be interpreted as exempting renters, located labourers and metayers from paying taxes as occupiers of lands, and as requiring the employers or owners to pay the impost - to the prolonged annoyance of the Assembly. Plots of less than 1 acre were deemed not subject to any tax. Garden lands and

⁶⁸ CO285/65: Gaskin to Pakington, 2 Nov. 1852, Enc. 11, Yeates to Gaskin, 24 Sept. 1852.

provision grounds under mixed cultivation were treated as uncultivated land, paying only 6d per acre.⁶⁹

Child, who, in June 1850, had recommended the escheat to the Crown of the seven-tenths of the island's area which was uncultivated, exploded:

It is not a Tax; - it is either robbery or confiscation, - and the harder to bear in-as-much [sic] as no attempt seems to be made to extend the operation of the Land Tax to abandoned Estates.⁷⁰

Child's comments hit the nub of the matter. In 1852, the Blue Book estimated only 7883 acres of cultivated lands, out of 57,408 acres alienated. In 1856, more than a third of the island was unclaimed, yielding no taxes to the revenue.⁷¹ Clauses 39 to 45 of the Land Tax Act provided for a survey and, after due process, for the escheat of all unoccupied lands. However, the escheat of lands was never implemented. The turn of events is noteworthy and, once again, the records of the 1880s are pertinent.

In 1887, Administrator Llewellyn wrote:

Possibly the Land Tax Commissioners of the day, who were planters and also Members of Council, in the researches they made in the office of the Registrar of Deeds to discover Owners of Land ... found out where the unoccupied lands were situated

⁶⁹ CO285/65: Colebrooke to Pakington & Encs., 9 Dec. 1852;
CO285/66: Colebrooke to Pakington & Encs., 4 Jan. 1853.

⁷⁰ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1850, 30 June 1853, 31 Dec. 1853, Child. The quot. is from the last rept.; author's emphasis; cf. Pringle, 30 Dec. 1852.

⁷¹ CO290/36, /37, /40: Blue Bks. for 1852, 1853, 1856. In the 1856 Blue Book, the Col. Sec. remarked on the 'frequent application' to the executive, which had been made by squatters in the Windward District for permission to use, and for legal possession of, abandoned lands.

and I am afraid turned that information to their own account.

The Commissioners had placed on the valuation rolls only the properties which were occupied, so forfeiting the revenue from the unassessed lands. In 1856, a new Land Tax Act was passed, without provisions for the escheat of lands. Llewellyn continued:

Very shortly after the act of 1856 was passed the Records show that several large transfers of properties were made, between the very men who had been Land Tax Commissioners and the Conveyances which are recorded are most vague; in many instances no acreage, boundaries or Parishes are ever given, but at the end of a long deed there is added "All the Plantations Estates, Lands and Hereditaments, if any, which were or have been annexed thereto and now form part thereof"; and that annexing was pretty extensive, as without any acreage tax it cost nothing for Taxes, to claim and occupy Land which was looked upon by the assessors as valueless, because no Sugar Cane was on it.⁷²

Abandoned estates (as well as Poor Settlers' Lots, some of which had already been annexed to the estates) were thus systematically appropriated by the planters over time. In 1886, Llewellyn told the Legislative Council that

large tracts of land quite unnecessary as an appendage to a Sugar Estate had been attached for the purpose of preventing other persons from occupying them or for some other selfish motive entirely opposed to the general welfare of the community.⁷³

In one instance, Pulteney Hill - 700 acres - was 'annexed' to

⁷² CO321/103: Sendall to Holland, 29 Mar. 1887, enc.
Llewellyn to Sendall, 11 Mar. 1887.

⁷³ CO321/103: Sendall to Holland, 1 Mar. 1887, enc. Leg. Co.
minutes, 8 Dec. 1886; emphasis added.

Richmond and other estates.⁷⁴ And the Poor Settlers' Lots were a rich source of conflict between the planters and the villagers at Charlotteville, down to the 1880s.⁷⁵

The interpretation offered here is borne out by a confidential despatch of Lt.-Gov. Ussher, who mentioned the misappropriation of land by the planters, and who stated in 1873:

The difficulties under which labourers are placed here, with respect to owning or renting land for their own purposes appears [sic] to be loosely analogous to those in St. Vincent ... The Consequence is the prevalence of the Metayer System to a considerable extent

Ussher observed that the lands bordering the sea 'are all in the hands of planters ... and although a proportion of them were doubtless obtained in a questionable manner, the rights of their present owners are too firmly established to be contested.'⁷⁶

Llewellyn summed up the situation of the labouring class:

Hitherto in Tobago there has been great difficulty for persons to acquire small Lots of Land and the Proprietors, who have absorbed and annexed vast tracts of unowned Lands as well as their own, have prevented in every possible way the encouragement of a small Peasant

⁷⁴ CO321/103: Sendall to Holland & Enc., 12 Dec. 1887.

⁷⁵ In Gov. Young's time (1807-15), the lands had already been 'usurped' by the planters [Young 1810:78]. See the controversy on the Poor Settlers' Lots when, in 1878, the villagers claimed that they belonged to the Crown. CO321/25: Chairman, West India Committee to Hicks Beach, 12 Dec. 1878, & Encs. Admin.'s Despatches, 1882-5: Carrington to Robinson, 6 Oct. 1883; The News, 10 Oct. 1883. Table 18.

⁷⁶ CO285/91: Rawson to Kimberley, Conf., 4 June 1873, enc. Ussher to Rawson, Conf., 16 May 1873.

Proprietary.⁷⁷

The planters, it would seem, succeeded in selling relatively little of their own lands. By 1885, only 1.5% of the land of estates sold in the Encumbered Estates Court had been sold to labourers (Table 18). In addition, they confiscated and 'annexed' lands of other people and of the Crown. But in 1887, there were still 13,000 acres not 'annexed', because they were not suited for sugar. With very few exceptions, these holdings were the same as those for which taxes had not been paid for 1852 and 1853; for most of them, the owners were unknown.⁷⁸ Little wonder that Llewellyn reported:

... and it is for the possession of these lands that the Peasantry are now most anxious.⁷⁹

III.4 CONCLUSION

We examined one segment of our hypothesis, Option 2B, the emergence of a class of smallholders able to diversify the economy. We considered this for the period 1838-55, in the context of the debate on the 'flight from the estates' after 1838 and in the framework of the **eight (8)** issues which we posed in Section III.1.2.

We conclude that, by 1855, the overwhelming majority of the freedpeople had established a measure of independence from

⁷⁷ CO321/98: Sendall to Stanhope, 31 Aug. 1886, enc.
Llewellyn to Sendall, 13 May 1886.

⁷⁸ CO289/5: Tobago Gazette, 18 Mar. 1887.

⁷⁹ CO321/103: Sendall to Holland, 29 Mar. 1887, enc.
Llewellyn to Sendall, 11 Mar. 1887; emphasis added.

the planters by acquiring their own homes, on land held freehold, or under various types of rented tenure. Home ownership symbolized a minimal degree of autonomy, both from the planters and for the creation of their own lifestyles [Mintz 1974a, Ch. 9]. The evidence made clear the importance of this point, which had not been anticipated. There are therefore nine factors to be considered, of which this is the first.⁸⁰

The movement into villages and other settlements off the estates (1) was more uneven. In the Middle and Leeward Districts, it advanced considerably, but in the Windward District, this was not so.

The acquisition of freeholds (2) progressed, but far more slowly than the village movement. The size of holdings was too small to permit a significant stratum of 'small farmers', independent of the estates, to develop.⁸¹ We also cannot discern the contours of a 'peasantry' cultivating its own or rented lands and offering occasional labour to the estates. Rather, there emerged a complex set of relationships between planters and labourers, although the metayage system predominated from the mid 1850s onwards. We argue, therefore, that the 'peasant labour process' was carried out by several means, in a multiplicity of tenures and relationships of production; but a peasantry did not exist by 1855.

⁸⁰ The numbering of the factors is kept the same for easy comparison with the earlier text.

⁸¹ Riviere [1972:21] states that, for the BWI, only in St Vincent and Jamaica did 'small farmers' emerge in this period.

It would be inappropriate to consider the metayage system as a 'major victory' for the peasant labour process, whereby it challenged the estates on their own ground, as Trouillot argues for Dominica [1988:84], given that it was the option to which the labourers, at first reluctantly, gravitated, when the alternatives were less profitable to themselves. Metayage, in the context which we have described, symbolized a narrowing of the labourers' options; but in the new situation, both protagonists sought to increase their advantage.

In the context of irregular, falling wages, of widespread access to provision grounds on the basis of non-freehold tenure (3), by labourers who had built their own homes, there was a marked withdrawal from steady, regular, wage labour on the estates (4). However, this was accompanied by an increase in metayage, which tied labour to the estates and exposed the metayer to the caprice of the planter (5).

Our sixth factor - the ability to survive independently of the estates in non-agricultural employment (6) - cannot be fully answered by the available data. A stratum of artisans, fishermen and petty shopkeepers emerged by 1855, but the predominance of the sugar economy meant that their ultimate survival hinged on the prosperity of the estates [cf. Wilmot 1986]. Our seventh factor, emigration (7), was negligible up to 1855. The paradox with which this chapter began, of abandoned land, irregular estate work and minimal acquisition of freeholds, has been fully explained, and we noted the regional variations (8) in the unfolding of these processes.

The questions raised by the historians' attempts to reconstruct the history of this period cannot be settled only by using statistics on the number of freeholds, of persons in villages and of those on the estates' pay lists. Above all, we must avoid the spurious choice between 'push' and 'pull' factors and the confusion between motive and outcome which are implicit in some of the literature. The Tobago data demonstrate the importance of understanding the complex and changing network of relationships and land tenures [Cooper 1981] which enmeshed the planters and the freedpeople, as each broad grouping exercised the degrees of freedom available to it in the changing circumstances of the time. On this, the perceptions of Higman [1990] and Marshall [1979a] are correct. Our story also highlights the creative process by which the ex-slaves constantly negated the restrictions which the planters imposed, and forged for themselves a greater measure of autonomy.

The multiplicity of relationships of production do not indicate several modes of production. The planters could not succeed in creating a proletariat in a situation where capital for investment and wages was scarce, where lack of investment fostered a reliance on labour-intensive methods, and where the available labour could use its bargaining power to gain access to land, under various forms of tenure. The ex-slaves could not easily succeed in becoming independent peasants near to the estates; and, with poor communications, to have possessed remote land, far from access to essential services and to markets, both local and overseas, would have been counter-

productive to the establishment of a peasantry. The diverse relationships were produced by compromises which both classes made in the unfolding circumstances.

Population density was a fundamental conditioning factor, within which the struggle for resources took place, but it did not determine the outcomes of the contest. The link between access to land and wages in the Windward Islands indicates the centrality of the land in the aspirations of both planters and freedpeople. But land hunger and withdrawal from regular wage labour in an island of low population density, with large tracts of abandoned land, did not automatically imply the flowering of a peasantry; the most abandoned district (Windward) had fewest smallholders and no 'free' villages. We therefore agree with Bolland that 'The availability of land is primarily determined by the power structure' [1984:125].

The historians' debate raises theoretical questions, about the relationship between motives, structures and human agency in the shaping of history, which continue to bedevil the social sciences.⁸² Structures enable, disable, sustain and constrain, but the human actors, metropolitan and local, as they aligned themselves to secure their perceived advantage, produced the outcomes in a process that was inherently political, open-ended and indeterminate.

⁸² For a recent discussion on the need for an appropriate 'paradigm' in the Caribbean, see Best [1991].

TABLE 18

**Labourers' Freeholds on Tobago Estates
Sold in the Encumbered Estates Court**

Windward District

<u>File</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Date Proceed- ings Begin</u>	<u>Acres for Sale</u>	<u>Acres to Labour- ers</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
5/9	<u>HERMITAGE</u>	1864	300	0	-
5/9	<u>CAMPBELTON</u>	1864	320	?	One labourer claiming purchase. Coastal lands reserved by the Crown annexed.
5/9	<u>KENDAL PLACE</u>	1864	225	5	Four labourers, all buying in 1845.
5/9	<u>ROSEBANK</u>	1864	300	0	Timber only.
3/9} 9/2} 18/1} Pt. 2} 19/1}	<u>KINGS BAY</u>	1869	476	23	23 acres sur- veyed for sale to workers c. 1848. Part of Crown reserve annexed.
	<u>KINGS BAY and Depend- encies</u>	1885	943	1½	943 acres acc. to E. Smart's plan, 18.6.1885. 1½ acres laid out for sale in 1885.
8/8	<u>MONTROSE</u>	c.1868	300	0	-
8/8	<u>LOT 51</u>	c.1868	300	0	Timber.
3/9} 9/2} 19/2}	<u>LUCY VALE</u>	1870	290	7½	Abandoned c. 1828. 7½ acres surveyed for sale to 4 workers c.1854.
	<u>LITTLE TOBAGO</u>	1870	240	0	Offshore isle; pasture. Files as for Lucy Vale.
3/9} 9/7}	<u>DELAFFORD</u>	1872	490	0	Abandoned in 1820s. Annexed Poor Settlers' Lot.

TABLE 18 continued
Windward District continued

<u>File</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Date</u> <u>Proceed-</u> <u>ings</u> <u>Begin</u>	<u>Acres</u> <u>for</u> <u>Sale</u>	<u>Acres</u> <u>to</u> <u>Labour-</u> <u>ers</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
18/1	<u>CHARLOTTE-</u> <u>VILLE</u>	1885	1833	21½	Annexed Poor Settlers' Lot.
18/1} 18/1} Pt.2}	<u>GOLDSBOROUGH}</u> <u>GOODWOOD}</u>	1885	2391	say 9	Worked as 1 Property. A small plot leased to heirs of Benj. Elder for 99 yrs, c. 1840. Five workers bought land.
18/1} 18/1} Pt.2}	<u>LURE</u>	1885	969	1	Sold to 'sundry labourers'.
18/1} 18/1} Pt.2} 19/1}	<u>RICHMOND}</u> <u>GLAMORGAN}</u> <u>BUSHEY PARK}</u>	1885	1918	27¼	Annexed Pulteney Hill, 700 acres Crown land, c.1871. 16 acres bought by 'sundry' labourers owing £156 on purchase, 1885.
18/1	<u>SPEYSIDE}</u> <u>TROIS}</u> <u>RIVIERES}</u> <u>and Depend-</u> <u>encies}</u>	1885	1781	1¼	Worked as one estate.
18/1} Pt.2} 19/2}	<u>BETSY'S</u> <u>HOPE</u>	1885	1317	say 10	13 acres sold, incl. land to Wesleyans (2 acres) and to Anglicans, & lot 'Seaforth'.
<u>SUB-TOTAL</u>			<u>14,717</u>	<u>107½</u>	

TABLE 18 continued

Middle District

<u>File</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Date Proceed- ings Begin</u>	<u>Acres for Sale</u>	<u>Acres to Labour- ers</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
10/2	<u>HIGHLANDS</u>	1872			No information.
3/9} 10/11}	<u>HOPE</u>	1874	1070	-	Parts of estate occupied by labourers claiming title. Poor Settlers Lot annexed.
3/9	<u>RUNNEMEDE/** KING PETER'S HILL</u>	1876			No information.
11/3	<u>INDIAN WALK**</u>	1872	430	31½	Moriah Village.
13/2	<u>STUDLEY PARK</u>	1878	750		No recorded sales of land, though there were 'lessees, tenants and occupiers'.
<u>SUB-TOTAL*</u>			<u>1180</u>	<u>31½</u>	

NOTES:

* Using only estates for which there is information.

** Where the population censuses give a clear indication (the 1871, 1881 and 1891 censuses), Runnemedede and Indian Walk are taken to be in the Leeward District. However, the Stipendiary Magistrates' reports for 1838-1853 placed them in the Middle District, and they are here included.

TABLE 18 continued

Leeward District

<u>File</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Date Proceed- ings Begin</u>	<u>Acres for Sale</u>	<u>Acres to Labour- ers</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
5/9	<u>GRAFTON</u>	1864	287	26½	47 labourers (Schedule K); surveyor's plan dd. 22 Oct. 1864 shows 50 claimants because of sub-division after sale. Only 14 had valid title. 9 other claimants.
5/9	<u>OLD GRANGE</u>	1864	252	9*	12 buyers; 3 had valid title. *Using list of sales; other documents say 5 acres sold.
5/9	<u>NEW GRANGE</u>	1864	241	9½	17 buyers; 6 had valid title.
5/9	<u>BUCCOO</u>	1864	9	8½	22 buyers; 6 had valid title.
5/9	<u>HAMPDEN</u>	1864	128	2	1 buyer; valid title.
5/9	<u>PIGEON POINT</u>	1864	60	0	Coconut estate.
8/8	<u>CROMSTAIN</u>	1864	240	0	
13/1	<u>COURLAND</u>	c. 1878	860	say 12	14 acres sold; acres to labourers not given. Part of this estate is in the Middle District.
13/5	<u>CARNBEE</u>	1878	218	0	
18/1} 19/1} 18/1} Pt. 2}	<u>PROSPECT/ ORANGE VALLEY</u>	1885	519	81**	**Includes acres 'sold or occupied'; considered here as sold.

TABLE 18 continued

Leeward District continued

<u>File</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Date Proceed- ings Begin</u>	<u>Acres for Sale</u>	<u>Acres to Labour- ers</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
18/1}	<u>AUCHENSKEOCH/ CARNBEE APPENDAGE</u>	1885	610	28	Acres sold are Lambeau Village.*
18/1	<u>WHIM</u>	1885	395	3	4 labourers bought; 2 other acres sold to the Anglican Church.
18/1	<u>MARY'S HILL</u>	1885	270		29½ acres sold in 1857 to Robert Gordon, planter.
18/1	<u>ORANGE HILL & AMITY HOPE</u>	1885	400} 764 364}	0	Some labourers lived on Amity Hope without title; both worked together.*
18/1} 18/1} Pt.2}	<u>BURLEIGH CASTLE/ SPRING GARDEN</u>	1885	733	0	33 acres sold, none to la- bourers.*
	<u>SUB-TOTAL</u>		<u>5586</u>	<u>179½</u>	

NOTE:

* Lambeau, Orange Hill, Amity Hope and Burleigh Castle are regarded as part of the Middle District in the 1871 census, but in 1881, Orange Hill and Amity Hope are treated as Leeward estates, while Auchenskeoch, Lambeau and Burleigh Castle are in the Middle District. The Stipendiary Magistrates (1838-1853) reported on them as part of the Leeward District, and we so regard them for the period 1838-1855.

TABLE 18 concluded

SUMMARY - for estates on which there is information

<u>District</u>	<u>Acres for Sale</u>	<u>Acres Sold to Labour- ers</u>	<u>Col. 3 as % of Total</u>	<u>Total</u>
Windward	14,717	107 $\frac{1}{4}$.7	14,824
Middle	1,180	31 $\frac{1}{2}$	2.6	1,212
Leeward	5,586	179 $\frac{3}{4}$	3.1	5,766
<u>TOTAL</u>	21,483	318$\frac{1}{2}$	1.5	21,802

Source: C0441: Files as given.

CHAPTER FOUR

AGRARIAN STRUCTURE, SMALLHOLDERS AND THE DIVERSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURE IN TOBAGO: 1856-1888

IV.1 INTRODUCTION

In keeping with our hypothesis, we examine the agrarian structure to see whether any class of landowners, large, medium or small, who could have diversified the economy, emerged by 1884 (Options 2A, 2B). Our first task is to estimate the number of smallholders for the period 1856 to 1875, using reports based on the Valuation Rolls for property and on the voters' registers derived from the Rolls. Secondly, we analyse the data from the Assessment Roll for 1881/1882, which has survived in its entirety. Although there were often complaints about the over-valuation of small properties and the under-assessment of large ones for taxation, we used the data yielded by this source as the best approximation of the number, distribution, and pattern of ownership of holdings, by 1884. Thirdly, consideration is given to the extent of diversification of the economy away from sugar and its by-products, as this is reflected in the exports. Fourthly, we offer some reflections on the nature and trajectory of the smallholders and peasants in the period 1838-1888.

IV.2 SMALLHOLDERS IN TOBAGO: 1856-1875

The 1856 Valuation Act provided the first uniform valuation of properties for determining taxation and eligibility to vote. Table 19 gives summary statistics on the assessed properties in 1856 and 1861. There was a net increase of 437 properties, of which 428 were not sugar estates; but there was an increase of 450 properties valued under £10. The growth in the latter, which exceeded the total net increase in all properties, could have been the result of several factors: more efficient procedure for registration; subdivision of properties sold earlier; the current acquisition of small properties. In 1856, 90%, and in 1861, 92%, of all properties, were valued at less than £10 per annum. Ten pounds per annum therefore were a 'threshold' which relatively few property holders surmounted. We have seen (Table 16) that, in 1856, 81% of all properties, and 91% of the properties valued less than £10, were assessed at less than £5 per annum. This suggests that, in the 1850s, the annual value of £5 per annum was almost as difficult to reach as that of £10.

In 1871, Lt.-Gov. Kortright noted a growing 'class of Freeholders', with property assessed between £5 and £10 per annum, to whom the privilege of the vote should be extended.¹ Attorney-General Cadiz estimated that the number to be added to the voters' list by such a change, excluding those known to

¹ CO285/89: Rawson to Kimberley, 29 April 1871, enc.
Kortright to Legislature, 14 Mar. 1871.

be dead or non-resident, would have been 217.² This estimate refers only to male owners, since women could not vote; some men voted 'in right of wife'. If we assume that the proportion of properties owned by females in 1871 and assessed between £5 and £10 was roughly the same as that of 1882 (21.5%), then, based on Cadiz's assessment, we estimate the total number of properties in this category to have been 273. The fragmentary data on properties assessed under £10 per annum are given in Table 20.

TABLE 19
Assessed Properties in Tobago: 1856, 1861

	<u>YEAR</u>		
	<u>1856</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>Increase/ Decrease</u>
Total No. of Properties Returned	2550 (99.9%)	2987 (100%)	+437
No. of Properties Valued < £10	2286 (89.6%)	2736 (91.6%)	+450
No. of Properties Valued > £10	264 (10.3%)	251 (8.4%)	-13
No. of Sugar Estates	60	69	+9
No. of Other Properties	2490	2918	+428

Source: CO285/80: Walker to Newcastle, 30 June 1862; extracted from 'Comparative Abstract of Valuation Roll' in Drysdale's 1861 Blue Bk. Rept., enclosed.

² CO285/89: Rawson to Kimberley, 15 Aug. 1871, & Encs., esp. Cadiz' rept., 3 June 1871.

TABLE 20

Properties Assessed between £5 and £10: 1856-1871

<u>Assessed Value of Properties</u>	<u>1856</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
£5-£10	214	not known	273 (estimate)
< £10	2286	2736	not known

Sources: As for Tables 16 and 19; for 1871, estimated from A.-G. Cadiz' rept. cited above.

The latest voters' list which survives is for 1875. The minimal voter's qualification was the ownership or possession of real property assessed at £5 or more per annum. The voters' registers could be an under-estimate of the smallholders if they were not regularly revised and if there was little vigilance from the electorate over the registration process. Persons qualifying to vote also had to possess their properties for 12 months prior to the elections, so recent owners or tenants were excluded. Because some individuals were eligible to vote in more than one district, it was necessary to adjust the 1875 totals to give the actual number of persons qualified to vote. We have no information on the size of smallholdings, but are able, by deducting those planters, merchants and professionals who held small properties, to calculate the owners and tenants of properties less than 50 acres in extent in 1875.

Table 21 estimates 177 owners and occupiers of properties

which were not estates, who satisfied the voter's qualifications in 1875. Again assuming that 21.5% of all persons in this category were females, the estimated number of such owners/occupiers in 1875 would be 223.

Three inferences are suggested by the fragmentary and unsatisfactory data for 1856 to 1875. Firstly, the overwhelming majority of holdings valued under £10 were assessed below £5 per annum, and therefore were less than 5 acres in extent, considering that many properties had houses and tenements on them. Secondly, while in 1854 only 43 persons possessed 10 acres or property valued at £30 per annum or more, twenty years later, with the required annual value of property being only £5 regardless of tenure, approximately 177 persons, who were not planters, merchants or professionals, qualified to vote. Thirdly, the small stratum of just over two hundred persons, of whom these voters are indicative, was perceived, in official circles, to have gained a measure of independence from the estates by the 1870s. In 1873, Lt.-Gov. Ussher reported:

A small but independent and comparatively wealthy class of negro is already to be found in Tobago, possessed of comfortable houses, and small lots of land.³

The most detailed information on land ownership survives for the 1880s, and these data are now examined.

³ CO285/91: Rawson to Kimberley, 4 June 1873, enc. Ussher to Rawson, Conf., 16 May 1873.

TABLE 21

Qualifications of Voters by Parish and Town: 1875

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
<u>Place</u>	<u>Proprietors of Estates & Land > 50 Acres</u>	<u>Other Land- owners/ Tenants</u>	<u>Managers and Over- seers</u>	<u>Lessees of Estates</u>	<u>Tenants & Owners of Houses or Shops</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>No. Regis- tered 1874</u>
St John	6	13	3	1	-	-	23	14
St Paul	6	8	3	-	1	-	18	14
St Mary	5	3	1	-	1	-	10	10
St George	14	18	3	-	-	2	37	36
St Andrew	12	53	3	1	10	-	79	81
St Patrick	8	29	2	-	6	2	47	42
St David	13	23	3	-	4	1	44	55}
Plymouth	-	11	-	-	1	-	12	12 }
Scarborough	-	36	-	-	12	1	49	47
Total	64	194	18	2	35	6	319	301
Adjusted 1875 Totals*	46	177	18	2	31	6	280	

NOTE: * The 1875 totals were adjusted to exclude multiple ownership/tenure in cols. (1) and (5) and 17 plots of land owned or rented by merchants, planters and professionals in col. (2).

Sources: CO289/1: Tobago Gazette, 30 July 1875, compiled from 'Revised List of the Names of Persons on the Register of Voters for the Towns and Parishes of the Island'; CO290/58: Blue Bk., 1874.

IV.3 LANDOWNERS IN TOBAGO, 1881/82

IV.3.1 A Note on the Assessment Roll, 1881/82

In 1881, when the economic crisis deepened owing to droughts in the late 1870s and the falling price of sugar, the Tobago administration revised its procedures for property valuation. For each parish or town, properties assessed at sums less than or equal to £2 10s per annum were listed separately from those valued above that sum, but only for the latter were the actual values of the properties given. Whereas in the 1850s 1 acre of land was assessed at £1,⁴ in the 1880s, judging from the acreages occasionally entered on the Assessment Roll, one acre of land was assessed at 10s. It is therefore probable that the size of holdings assessed under £10, and the meaning of the statistics, may have changed. The 1881/82 statistics also cannot strictly be compared with earlier data, since the boundaries of both Middle and Leeward Districts changed over time.

In the tables below, the data for the districts, each comprising two or three parishes, are given. Plymouth, though officially the second town, had dwindled in importance, and is considered, with all the settlements except Scarborough, as rural.

The assessment lists for each parish give two

⁴ The officials said in 1858 that the average annual rent of 1 acre of land was 'about twenty shillings sterling'. CO285/76: Hincks to Lytton, 10 Aug. 1858; Hincks' emphasis. Hincks doubted that the value of land was that high in the outer districts, but the 1858 Franchise Act gave sanction to the local official view.

categories - those with property assessed at or below £2 10s and those assessed above £2 10s. There are three basic ways of classifying the persons owning more than one property: those holding more than one in each major category, and those holding properties in both. In addition, some persons owned property in more than one parish or district. It was only possible to investigate this last group in the case of owners of estates and those possessing property valued £10 or more: the identities of these larger landowners are familiar from other sources in the records, and the risk of confusion between persons with the same names is smaller. Therefore, the analysis of smallholders who may have owned property in more than one parish or district was not undertaken, and there may be a few such persons who have been counted more than once. Within each parish, the persons whose names appeared more than once were taken to be owners of more than one property, unless there were remarks indicating that different persons had the same name. Those with properties valued both above and below £2 10s were also counted.

The owners of large acreages and estates are considered separately. Our final totals are adjusted to take account of multiple ownership by the same person(s) within and across parishes and districts.

We used the gender of proprietors as one basis of classification, and tried to interpret the data without 'reading back' into the past the perceptions of the present. Apart from inheritance, women, regardless of

conjugal status, acquired real property, although they could not vote. In 1879, Lt.-Gov. Gore endorsed the Married Women's Property Ordinance, which guaranteed women the income or savings from any employment in which they were engaged separately from their husbands, to protect wives whose husbands were of 'wandering dispositions'. Gore noted in his 1878 Blue Book Report that there were 'several cases',

in which a husband who had deserted his wife and family for years had returned ... to take possession of her savings or any other little property she might have acquired by her industry during his absence.⁵

Given this law and the centrality of property in the distribution of power, status, comforts and freedoms, we treated gender as a key factor in the analysis.

Several limitations of the Assessment Rolls as sources of data on Caribbean smallholders are outlined by Satchell [1990:32-33]. Firstly, the assumption is that only peasants were owners of small plots. This objection is valid, since teachers and others were petty landowners. However, the number of such persons in Tobago was very small, as Chapter 6 shows; we also do not equate landowning with the existence of a peasantry (Ch. 3). Second, is the objection that the land on which taxes were paid was not always rural land. Fortunately, the Tobago data distinguish urban land. Third, is the assumption that the lands listed

⁵ CO321/32: Strachan to Hicks Beach, 3 May 1879, enc. Gore to Legislature; PP. 1880, Vol. XLVIII, 1878 Blue Bk. Rept., p. 153.

were all freeholds or lands in secure tenure. The Tobago Rolls give the names of the proprietors and occupiers of the properties, but we do not make security of tenure a necessary assumption in the analysis of the data. Another major objection is to the view that the number of plots corresponds to the number of owners, and that the level of fragmentation and, hence, the number of occupiers is unimportant. Fortunately, the Tobago Rolls allow us to identify both the landholdings and the landowners, and we can identify those in each parish with more than one property. Most small plots had one or two named occupiers, and a few were listed as occupied by 'various persons'. But the actual number of occupiers must remain unknown, and the same applies to the properties which Satchell examined from the deed books.

For two reasons, we could not use the deed books as a source of information, as Satchell recommends. Firstly, the registration of deeds by freedpeople was often neglected, because of the cost. As ex-slaves who had bought land died intestate, leaving unregistered property, the Magistrates wrote of the increasingly precarious title of the plots which were being subdivided by their heirs. There were also never more than 3 barristers in Tobago between 1838 and 1884; sometimes, only 1. In 1858, when the only barrister was S. H. F. Abbott, the Attorney-General, Lt.-Gov. Drysdale himself examined 97 deeds of conveyance, all drawn by non-professionals; many were unrecorded, having been

drawn incompetently.⁶ In 1883, C. L. Abbott, son of the barrister mentioned above, himself a barrister, testified to the Royal Commission that the high fees discouraged the registration of deeds and the making of wills, so that 'if matters were brought to law almost one third of small properties at this moment would be escheated.'⁷ Secondly, low registration is compounded by an incomplete record: only two deed books for the 19th century (1842-68; 1889-90) survive in the Red House, Port of Spain, the official depository of deeds.

IV.3.2 Summary Distribution of Properties

There was a marked variation between the districts in the proportions of properties which were landed (Table 22). A substantial minority and, in the case of the Windward District a majority (58%), of the properties assessed ≤ £2 10s were houses alone. The incidence of landed property was greatest in the Leeward District (72% of properties) and lowest in the Windward (42% of properties). If, as Chapter 3 shows, the acquisition of a house alone was the first rung on the ladder of property ownership, by 1882, a significant proportion of property owners were still at the very base. Below them was the stratum, unrecorded in these data, of those who owned no property at all.

⁶ CO285/75: Hincks to Lytton, 24 July 1858, enc. Drysdale to Hincks, 22 May 1858.

⁷ Rept. from the Royal Com. ..., 1884, p. 413.

TABLE 22

Distribution of Properties by District and Gender
(Properties ≤ £2 10s)

WINDWARD DISTRICT

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Houses Only	304	84	388	58
Landed Properties	217	65	282	42
Other (shops, shops & houses)	1	--	1	.1
Total	522	149	671	100.1

MIDDLE DISTRICT

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Houses Only	314	125	439	37
Landed Properties	497	238	735	62
Other (shops, shops & houses)	11	1	12	1
Total	822	364	1186	100

LEEWARD DISTRICT

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Houses Only	336	173	509	28
Landed Properties	906	402	1308	72
Other (shops, shops & houses)	8	-	8	.4
Total	1250	575	1825	100.4

Source: C0289/3: Tobago Assessment Roll, 1881/82, in sundry issues of The Tobago Gazette.

TABLE 23

Distribution of Properties by District and Gender
(Properties > £2 10s)

WINDWARD DISTRICT

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Houses Only	23	4	27	20
Landed Properties	85	19	104	76
Other (shops, shops & houses)	6	-	6	4
Total	114	23	137	100

MIDDLE DISTRICT

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Houses Only	27	6	33	12
Landed Properties	184	47	231	85.5
Other (shops, shops & houses)	4	2	6	2
Total	215	55	270	99.5

LEEWARD DISTRICT

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Houses Only	35	8	43	13
Landed Properties	216	47	263	81
Other (shops, shops & houses)	17	3	20	6
Total	268	58	326	100

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

TABLE 24

**Distribution of Properties by District
and Gender (Proportions Only)**

WINDWARD DISTRICT

	<u>≤ £2 10s</u>		<u>> £2 10s</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Houses Only	78	22	85	15
Landed Properties	77	23	82	18
Other (shops, shops & houses)	100	-	100	-
Total	78	22	83	17

MIDDLE DISTRICT

	<u>≤ £2 10s</u>		<u>> £2 10s</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Houses Only	71.5	28	82	18
Landed Properties	68	32	80	20
Other (shops, shops & houses)	92	8	67	33
Total	69	31	80	20

LEEWARD DISTRICT

	<u>≤ £2 10s</u>		<u>> £2 10s</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Houses Only	66	34	81	19
Landed Properties	69	31	82	18
Other (shops, shops & houses)	100	-	85	15
Total	68	32	82	18

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

The gender distribution is also interesting - for houses alone and for landed properties, the proportion owned by females was lowest in the Windward District, and highest in the Leeward. In all districts, the owners of shops were virtually all male. Men greatly outnumbered women as property owners, by a ratio of over 2:1 in all districts, with the greatest disparity (3.5:1) in the Windward. Thus, there was differential ownership of property in houses and land between the districts, the Windward offering fewest opportunities for landowning. Gender was an important factor in these processes.

At the level of properties assessed > £2 10s per annum (Table 23), the proportions of properties which were houses alone are far lower (ranging from 12% to 20%), but the Windward District again had the highest, and the lowest percentage of landed properties. The ability of women to acquire properties at this level was also more circumscribed than for properties assessed ≤ £2 10s, and this is quite consistent in all the districts, only 17% to 20% of properties being owned by women (Table 24).

Table 25 gives, for each district, the summary distribution of landed properties according to their assessed value and the gender of their owners.

TABLE 25

**Distribution of Landed Properties by District,
Assessed Value and Gender of Owners**

<u>Value (£)</u>	<u>Numbers</u>			<u>Proportions</u>		
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>WINDWARD DISTRICT</u>						
≤ 2.10s	217	65	282	72	77	73
> 2.10s-5	41	12	53	13.5	14	14
> 5- 10	17	3	20	6	4	5
> 10- 15	7	1	8	2	1	2
> 15- 20	3	1	4	1	1	1
> 20- 50	5	2	7	2	2	2
> 50-100	1	-	1	.3	-	.2
> 100	11	-	11	4	-	3
Total	302	84	386	100.8	99	100.2
<u>MIDDLE DISTRICT (excl. Scarborough)</u>						
≤ 2.10s	497	238	735	73	83.5	76
> 2.10s-5	102	29	131	15	10	13.5
> 5- 10	34	14	48	5	5	5
> 10- 15	4	1	5	.6	.3	.5
> 15- 20	4	-	4	.6	-	.4
> 20- 50	22	1	23	3	.3	2
> 50-100	12	1	13	2	.3	1.3
> 100	6	1	7	.9	.3	.7
Total	681	285	966	100.1	99.7	99.4
<u>LEEWARD DISTRICT</u>						
≤ 2.10s	906	402	1308	81	89.5	83
> 2.10s-5	159	32	191	14	7	12
> 5- 10	18	3	21	2	.6	1
> 10- 15	7	3	10	.6	.6	.6
> 15- 20	2	-	2	.2	-	.1
> 20- 50	6	7	13	.5	1.5	.8
> 50-100	9	-	9	.8	-	.6
> 100	14	2	16	1	.4	1
Total	1121	449	1570	100.1	99.1	99.1

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

The proportions of landed properties assessed at £5 or under ranged from 87% in the Windward District to 95% in the Leeward. Although the Leeward District had 54% of all landed properties, only 5% of them were above £5 in value.

In general, the percentage of properties owned by women which were assessed at the lowest values exceeded that for men; but the differences are not significant. Men outnumbered women as owners of landed property in all districts, but in the Windward this was greatest; 78% of the properties belonged to men, whereas the comparable figures for the Middle and Leeward districts were 70% and 71%, respectively.

These summary distributions give a rough indication of the type of properties and the gender of the owners. The distribution of property owners for each district was also calculated. Table 26 shows the property owners who were landless and, of these, those who owned only a house.

In every district, the proportion of landless property owners is significantly higher for those assessed at or below £2 10s per annum than for those assessed above it. In the Windward District, the proportion landless at the lower level more than doubles the percentage at the higher level (58% and 22%, respectively). In the Middle District, the comparable figures are trebled (36% and 12%, respectively). In the Leeward District, the difference is least marked (28% and 17%, respectively).

TABLE 26

Landless and Those with One House Only
as Proportion of Property Owners
by District, Gender and Assessment Category

	<u>N U M B E R</u>			<u>% P R O P E R T Y O W N E R S</u>		
	<u>WINDWARD DISTRICT</u>					
	<u>< £2 10s</u>					
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Landless	272	80	352	58	58	58
1 House Only	268	79	347	57	57	57
Property Owners	472	138	610			
	<u>> £2 10s</u>					
Landless	23	4	27	23	18	22
1 House Only	21	4	25	21	18	21
Property Owners	99	22	121			
	<u>MIDDLE DISTRICT</u>					
	<u>< £2 10s</u>					
Landless	268	115	383	37	34	36
1 House Only	257	115	372	35	34	35
Property Owners	731	341	1072			
	<u>> £2 10s</u>					
Landless	21	7	28	11.5	13	12
1 House Only	17	5	22	9	9	9
Property Owners	182	54	236			
	<u>LEEWARD DISTRICT</u>					
	<u>< £2 10s</u>					
Landless	281	151	432	27	29	28
1 House Only	272	149	421	26	28	27
Property Owners	1035	524	1559			
	<u>> £2 10s</u>					
Landless	39	9	48	16	18	17
1 House Only	29	7	36	12	14	12.5
Property Owners	238	50	288			

NOTE: Those with property in both major categories are included > £2 10s.

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

The between-district variations are as striking as those within them. More than half of the property owners at Windward were landless (58%); more than a third of those in the Middle District (36%), and just over a quarter of those in the Leeward District (28%). For owners of properties assessed over £2 10s per annum, the Windward District had the highest incidence of landlessness (22%), followed by the Leeward (17%) and the Middle (12%). Since a few of the landless property owners were owners of shops, which offered the possibility of accumulation, the numbers and proportions of property owners with one house only were calculated. These follow closely the pattern for the landless. Among the landless, there were no marked differences between males and females: the proportions are very close.

The opportunity to advance beyond acquiring only a house increased as one moved away from the Windward District, where the possibility of land acquisition was particularly restricted. The ability to acquire land also increased among those with property assessed above £2 10s per annum.

Tables 27 and 28 should be taken together. In the former, the population of Tobago by district at Census 1881 and the numbers aged 20 and over are given; the latter expresses the property owners as proportions of the adult population of each district and of Tobago.

TABLE 27

**Tobago Population and Population Aged 20 and Over
by District: 1881**

	<u>District Population</u>			<u>Population > 20</u>		
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Windward	2041	1987	4028	1036	1045	2081
Middle (excl. Scarborough)	2502	2717	5219	1244	1494	2738
Leeward	3800	4151	7951	1763	2188	3951
Tobago (excl. Scarborough)	8343	8855	17198	4043	4727	8770

Source: Tobago Population Census, 1881.

Table 28 shows a remarkable similarity in the pattern of property and land holding in the Middle and Leeward Districts, as compared with the Windward. For the latter, we infer that 65% of the adults owned no real property, while 52% was the figure in the former two districts. In both the Middle and Leeward Districts, 26% of the adult women were property owners, while of adult men, over 70% owned property. At Windward, only 15% of the adult women and 55% of the men owned property. Row 4 of each section of the table allows us to infer that 83% of the adults at Windward owned no land, whereas the comparable figures for the Middle and Leeward Districts, respectively, were 67% and 65%. It also shows that the proportions of landowners in the Middle and Leeward Districts roughly doubled those in the Windward.

TABLE 28

**Property Owning by District, Gender and Proportion of
District/Island Population Aged ≥ 20**

	<u>N u m b e r</u>			<u>% District/Island Population ≥ 20</u>		
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>WINDWARD DISTRICT</u>						
Property Owners	571	160	731	55	15	35
Landless Property Owners	295	84	379	28	8	18
1 House Only	289	83	372	28	8	18
Owning Land	275	79	354	26.5	7.5	17
<u>MIDDLE DISTRICT (excl. Scarborough)</u>						
Property Owners	913	395	1308	73	26	48
Landless Property Owners	289	122	411	23	8	15
1 House Only	274	120	394	22	8	14
Owning Land	622	271	893	50	18	33
<u>LEEWARD DISTRICT</u>						
Property Owners	1273	574	1847	72	26	47
Landless Property Owners	320	160	480	18	7	12
1 House Only	301	156	457	17	7	11.5
Owning Land	959	408	1367	54	19	35
<u>ISLAND OF TOBAGO (excl. Scarborough)</u>						
Property Owners	2757	1129	3886	68	24	44
Landless Property Owners	904	366	1270	22	8	14
1 House Only	864	359	1223	21	8	14
Owning Land	1856	755	2611	46	16	30

Sources: Assessment Roll, 1881/82; 1881 Population Census.

The disparity, both within and between districts, when gender is taken into account, is also noteworthy. A half or more of the adult males in the Middle and Leeward Districts were landowners, while, for the adult females, the proportions were only 18% and 19%, respectively; in the Windward District, only 26.5% of adult males, and a mere 7.5% of the women, owned land. The proportions of landless female property owners were roughly the same in all districts (7% or 8%); but, although the percentages are higher for men, landlessness decreases as one moves away from the Windward to the Middle and Leeward Districts.

IV.3.3 Ownership of Homesteads (Persons with One Property Only)

We have seen that noteworthy proportions of those who owned property in each district were landless, almost all the landless being owners of one house only. Of those who owned land, the proportions owning only one house on a plot of land were remarkably high. In each district, persons owning land assessed \leq £2 10s who also had property assessed above that sum were excluded temporarily from the analysis; the statistics on homesteaders given in Table 29 therefore indicate those who owned one property only.

In the Windward District, of the landed owners, 79.5% of those assessed \leq £2 10s were owners of a house and land. Since the value of the house formed part of the assessment, these persons probably held less than 5 acres of land, the maximum acreage in this category, assuming assessment at 10s per acre. In two out of the three parishes in the

district (St John and St Mary), all the persons with property assessed above £2 10s and under £10 were homesteaders. Only in St Paul was this not so - for just 3 persons. The pattern is clear and uniform: the overwhelming majority of those who owned land valued less than £10 were owners of single homesteads.

In the Middle District, those assessed at less than or equal to £2 10s had the highest percentage of homesteaders (85.5%). In St Andrew, one of its two parishes, were located the suburbs of Scarborough, which grew after 1838, because of the availability of land and markets (Ch. 3). The 'residential' aspect of dwelling near the capital may also have reinforced the tendency to have a homestead.

In the Leeward District, the proportion of landowners assessed at or under £2 10s, who had one homestead alone, was 69%; but it was close to the figures for the other districts for the smallholders assessed above £2 10. This suggests a greater possibility for diverse and multiple holdings in the Leeward District, but only for the owners of the smallest properties.

TABLE 29

**Persons Owning One Homestead Only, as
Proportion of Landowners, by District and Gender
(Properties < £10)**

	<u>< £2 10s</u>			<u>> £2 10s < £5</u>			<u>£5 < £10</u>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<u>WINDWARD DISTRICT</u>									
1 Home- stead	152	53	205	32	11	43	16	3	19
Total Land- owners	198	60	258	34	11	45	16	4	20
% Land- owners	77	88	79	94	100	95.5	100	75	95
<u>MIDDLE DISTRICT</u>									
1 Home- stead	385	198	583	66	15	81	48	16	64
Total Land- owners	462	224	686	70	19	89	53	18	71
% Land- owners	83	88	85	94	79	91	90.5	89	90
<u>LEEWARD DISTRICT</u>									
1 Home- stead	504	275	779	124	26	150	34	6	40
Total Land- owners	757	365	1122	134	27	161	39	6	45
% Land- owners	66.6	75	69	92.5	96	93	87	100	89

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

The data on homesteaders, and those without land but with one house only, were expressed as percentages of the property owners in two categories: \leq £2 10; and over £2 10 but less than £10. Tables 30 and 31 show that, for Tobago, 83% of the proprietors assessed at \leq £2 10s had one house, or one homestead. The same figure (83.5%) obtained for the smallholders assessed above £2 10 but less than £10. This demonstrates impressively that most property owners had climbed only the bottom rungs of the ladder of property acquisition by 1882.

The variations between the districts are interesting, however. In the Windward District, the landless with just a house far exceeded the homesteaders (57% *vis-à-vis* 34%); but this was reversed in the Middle District, where homesteaders were 54% and house owners without land, 35%; the comparable figures for the Leeward District were 50% and 27%. Table 30 also reinforces the inference made from Table 29 that, of all the districts, the Leeward afforded most opportunity for the smallest property owners to acquire more than one house or one homestead, 23% being in this group, *vis-à-vis* 9% and 11% in the Windward and Middle Districts, respectively. In general, higher proportions of the female property owners were among those with one house or one homestead only, but the differences between males and females are not significant.

Table 31 shows that, for proprietors assessed above £2 10s, the Windward District again had the highest incidence of landlessness, the Middle District the lowest.

TABLE 30

**Landless Persons and Homesteaders: Numbers and
Proportions of Property Owners by District and Gender
(Properties Assessed ≤ £2 10s)**

	<u>Number</u>			<u>% Property Owners</u>		
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>WINDWARD DISTRICT</u>						
Landless	272	80	352	58	58	58
Landless - 1						
House Only	268	79	347	57	57	57
Homesteaders	152	53	205	32	38	34
No. Property Owners	472	138	610			
Proportion with 1 House, or 1 Homestead Only:	89	95	91			
<u>MIDDLE DISTRICT (excl. Scarborough)</u>						
Landless	268	115	383	37	34	36
Landless - 1						
House Only	257	115	372	35	34	35
Homesteaders	385	198	583	53	58	54
No. Property Owners	731	341	1072			
Proportion with 1 House, or 1 Homestead Only:	88	92	89			
<u>LEEWARD DISTRICT</u>						
Landless	281	151	432	27	29	28
Landless - 1						
House Only	272	149	421	26	28	27
Homesteaders	504	275	779	49	52	50
No. Property Owners	1035	524	1559			
Proportion with 1 House, or 1 Homestead Only:	75	80	77			
<u>ISLAND OF TOBAGO</u>						
Landless	822	346	1168	37	34	36
Landless - 1						
House Only	797	343	1140	36	34	35
Homesteaders	1041	526	1567	46.5	52	48
No. Property Owners	2238	1003	3241			
Proportion with 1 House, or 1 Homestead Only:	82	86	83			

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

TABLE 31

**Landless Persons and Homesteaders: Numbers and
Proportions of Property Owners by District and Gender
(Properties Assessed > £2 10s and < £10)**

	<u>Number</u>			<u>% Property Owners</u>		
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>WINDWARD DISTRICT</u>						
Landless	22	3	25	27	16	25
Landless - 1						
House Only	20	3	23	25	16	23
Homesteaders	48	14	62	59	74	62
No. Property Owners	81	19	100			
Proportion with 1 House, or 1 Homestead Only:				84	90	85
<u>MIDDLE DISTRICT (excl. Scarborough)</u>						
Landless	20	7	27	13	15	13
Landless - 1						
House Only	17	5	22	11	11	11
Homesteaders	114	31	145	73.5	67	72
No. Property Owners	155	46	201			
Proportion with 1 House, or 1 Homestead Only:				84.5	78	83
<u>LEEWARD DISTRICT</u>						
Landless	39	9	48	17	20	18
Landless - 1						
House Only	29	7	36	13	16	13
Homesteaders	158	32	190	70	73	70
No. Property Owners	226	44	270			
Proportion with 1 House, or 1 Homestead Only:				83	89	83
<u>ISLAND OF TOBAGO</u>						
Landless	81	19	100	17.5	17	17.5
Landless - 1						
House Only	66	15	81	14	14	14
Homesteaders	320	77	397	69	71	69.5
No. Property Owners	462	109	571			
Proportion with 1 House, or 1 Homestead Only:				83	85	83.5

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

Table 32 demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of property owners assessed above £2 10s were assessed under £10. It also shows that, although the Leeward District offered greatest opportunities to smallholders, only 6% of its proprietors crossed the £10 'threshold', while the comparable figure for both Windward and Middle Districts was 15%.

We now examine those who owned more than one property.

IV.3.4 Ownership of More than One Property

Since our interest is in ownership of land, the classification of landowners by assessment category for each district is given in Tables 33 to 35. In the Windward and Middle Districts, 95% and 97% of the smallest landowners had only one plot, whereas the figure for the Leeward District was slightly lower - 90%. In the category above £2 10s, the figures are also close (89%, 93% and 91%, respectively). What distinguishes the Leeward District is the larger proportion of the \leq £2 10s category with more than one plot of land, and the number (58, or 56% of those similarly placed in the island) of those who owned property both above and below £2 10s in value.

TABLE 32

**Property Owners with Property Assessed > £2 10s per annum,
by District and Gender**

<u>Assessed Value</u>	<u>Number</u>			<u>% Property Owners</u>		
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>WINDWARD DISTRICT</u>						
> £2 10s < £10	81	19	100	84	86	85
> £10	15	3	18	16	14	15
Total	96	22	118	100	100	100
<u>MIDDLE DISTRICT (excl. Scarborough)</u>						
> £2 10s < £10	155	46	201	85	87	85
> £10	28	7	35	15	13	15
Total	183	53	236	100	100	100
<u>LEEWARD DISTRICT</u>						
> £2 10s < £10	226	44	270	95	88	94
> £10	12	6	18	5	12	6
Total	238	50	288	100	100	100
<u>ISLAND OF TOBAGO</u>						
> £2 10s < £10	462	109	571	89	87	89
> £10	55	16	71	11	13	11
Total	517	125	642	100	100	100

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

TABLE 33

Windward District: Ownership of Land by Gender, 1881/82< £2 10s

<u>No. of Persons Owning</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% Owners</u>	<u>No. of Plots</u>
1 Plot	187	59	246	95	246
2 Plots	10	1	11	4	22
3 _____	1	-	1	.4	3
4 or more	-	-	-	-	-
Total	198	60	258	99.4	271

> £2 10s

1 Plot	59	14	73*	89	71
2 Plots	5	1	6*	7	10
3 _____	1	-	1	1	3
4 or more	2	-	2*	2	6
Total	67	15	82	99	90

BOTH CATEGORIES

1 Plot	4	1	5	36	5
2 Plots	5	2	7	50	14
3 _____	1	1	2	14	6
4 or more	-	-	-	-	-
Total	10	4	14	100	25

WINDWARD DISTRICT

1 Plot	250	74	324	91.5	322
2 Plots	20	4	24	7	46
3 _____	3	1	4	1	12
4 or more	2	-	2	.6	6
Total	275	79	354	100.1	386

NOTE: * Includes joint owners.

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

TABLE 34

Middle District: Ownership of Land by Gender, 1881/82

< £2 10s

<u>No. of Persons Owning</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% Owners</u>	<u>No. of Plots</u>
1 Plot	450	218	668	97	668
2 Plots	8	5	13	2	26
3 _____	4	1	5	.7	15
4 or more	-	-	-	-	-
Total	462	224	686	99.7	709

> £2 10s

1 Plot	123	39	162	92.6	162
2 Plots	6	2	8	5	16
3 _____	3	-	3	2	9
4 or more	2	-	2	1	13
Total	134	41	175	100.6	200

BOTH CATEGORIES

1 Plot	10	1	11	34	11
2 Plots	13	4	17	53	34
3 _____	3	1	4	12.5	12
4 or more	-	-	-	-	-
Total	26	6	32	99.5	57

MIDDLE DISTRICT

1 Plot	583	258	841	94	841
2 Plots	27	11	38	4	76
3 _____	10	2	12	1	36
4 or more	2	-	2	.2	13
Total	622	271	893	99.2	966

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

TABLE 35

Leeward District: Ownership of Land by Gender, 1881/82

< £2 10s

<u>No. of Persons Owning</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% Owners</u>	<u>No. of Plots</u>
1 Plot	675	338	1013	90	1013
2 Plots	72	26	98	9	196
3 _____	8	1	9	1	27
4 or more	2	-	2	.2	9
Total	757	365	1122	100.2	1245

> £2 10s

1 Plot	139	31	170	91	170
2 Plots	11	2	13	7	26
3 _____	1	1	1	.5	3
4 or more	2	1	3	2	15
Total	153	34	187	100.5	214

BOTH CATEGORIES

1 Plot	10	3	13	22	13
2 Plots	33	5	38	65.5	76
3 _____	4	1	5	9	15
4 or more	2	-	2	3	8
Total	49	9	58	99.5	112

LEEWARD DISTRICT

1 Plot	824	372	1196	87	1196
2 Plots	116	33	149	11	298
3 _____	13	2	15	1	45
4 or more	6	1	7	.5	32
Total	959	408	1367	99.5	1571

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

Female ownership within each assessment category declined sharply as the number of plots increased; also, above £2 10s per annum, only 18% to 22% of the landowners were women. Men exceeded women among the landowners by a ratio of 7:3 in the Middle and Leeward Districts; at Windward, it was 3.5:1. Although gender was contributory to the pattern of land ownership, these data show that the overwhelming majority of both men and women who could buy land had only one plot.

The persons owning landed properties assessed both below and above £2 10s were also studied. Since the value of the land valued under £2 10s is not given, only the values of the plots assessed over £2 10s could be analysed. The data are presented in Table 36, which shows that 89% of the landed properties owned by these persons were valued at £10 or below. The Leeward District had the highest proportion so valued (95%), although the number of persons was larger than in the other districts, where the comparable proportion was 83%. Where gender was concerned, the pattern was as one would expect: very few women owned land above the lowest assessment category and only 17% of these landowners, for Tobago as a whole, were women.

TABLE 36

Persons with Land in Both Major Categories:
Assessed Value of Landed Property > £2 10s
by District and Gender

WINDWARD DISTRICT

<u>Value (£)</u>	<u>Number</u>			<u>% Properties Owned by</u>		
	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
> 2.10-5	3	3	6	37.5	75	50
> 5- 10	3	1	4	37.5	25	33
> 10- 15	-	-	-	-	-	-
> 15- 20	-	-	-	-	-	-
> 20- 50	1	-	1	12.5	-	8
> 50-100	-	-	-	-	-	-
>100	1	-	1	12.5	-	8
Total	8	4	12	100	100	99

MIDDLE DISTRICT

> 2.10-5	18	4	22	75	80	76
> 5- 10	1	1	2	4	20	7
> 10- 15	4	-	4	16.6	-	14
> 15- 20	-	-	-	-	-	-
> 20- 50	1	-	1	4	-	3
> 50-100	-	-	-	-	-	-
>100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	24	5	29	99.6	100	100

LEEWARD DISTRICT

> 2.10-5	38	6	44	84	86	85
> 5- 10	5	-	5	11	-	10
> 10- 15	1	1	2	2	14	4
> 15- 20	1	-	1	2	-	2
> 20- 50	-	-	-	-	-	-
> 50-100	-	-	-	-	-	-
>100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	45	7	52	99	100	101

ISLAND OF TOBAGO

> 2.10-5	59	13	72	77	81	77
> 5- 10	9	2	11	12	12.5	12
> 10- 15	5	1	6	6	6	6
> 15- 20	1	-	1	1	-	1
> 20- 50	2	-	2	3	-	2
> 50-100	-	-	-	-	-	-
>100	1	-	1	1	-	1
Total	77	16	93	101	99.5	99

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

IV.3.5 Persons with Landed Property Assessed at Exactly £10

Except for Tables 25 and 36, we have consistently distinguished the persons whose land was assessed below £10 from those with land valued £10 or more. It is therefore useful to examine those who owned properties valued at £10, in order to justify this procedure. There were only 18 persons in this category (Table 37).

TABLE 37

Owners of Land Valued £10, by District and Gender

<u>District</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>No. of Properties</u>
Windward	6	1	7	8
Middle	7	3	10	10
Leeward	1	-	1	1
Total	14	4	18	19

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

In the Windward District, John Mc Call who, until his death in March 1879, was the largest resident landowner, was still recorded as owner of Little Tobago, an offshore island, and Lucy Vale, an abandoned estate. The acreage of Little Tobago and Lucy Vale together was 530 acres (Table 18) but their assessed value was £10. Mc Call was listed as owner of Irvine Hall, valued at £10. Thomas Blakely jun., coloured merchant and planter, owned Parrot Hall estate. Perhaps because it was not cultivated in sugar, Parrot Hall was valued at £10.

The other proprietors in the Windward District were as follows. Dublin Kerwood was a Roxborough shopkeeper with four

properties, of which one was a coconut walk of 6 acres. Peter McKenna was also a shopkeeper. Dublin Murphy sen. was the owner and occupier of land assessed ≤ £2 10 as well as land valued at £10. There were also Louisa Thomas with Leith's Grant, and James Davis.

In the Middle District, 9 of the 10 owners lived in St Andrew's parish, adjoining Scarborough; 8 possessed house and land. Among these properties was Deal Fair estate, owned by the heirs of Robinson Scobie, a black merchant; it later became the Botanic Station. These owners included Elizabeth and Nancy Panting, who belonged to a coloured merchant family; Frances Collier, of another coloured merchant family; James Crooks, from a coloured family of planters and lessees of estates; and Thomas Bowles of Riseland, who owned two plots of land with houses, and was joint trustee for two more similar properties and a shop. At least 6 of these 10 properties were in the hands of people from the coloured or black middle strata, involved with business and planting, or from the dominant class.

In the Leeward District, the only proprietor was Dr William A. Purser, an Irish doctor, whose house and land at Moriah, called 'Babylon', is so recorded.

Therefore, the owners of properties valued £10 were not largely the rising peasant proprietors. A few certainly were, acquiring their properties via petty shopkeeping or agriculture; but many were either planters, or scions of families involved in business and planting. Our examination of these owners bears out what the voters' registers and the

statistics clearly indicated: £10 constituted a 'threshold' which most of the small proprietors were unable to attain. We are therefore justified in considering the smallholders to be those with property valued under £10. Our data also bear out Lt.-Gov. Kortright's perception in 1871, that the rising 'class of Freeholders' consisted of those 'whose property is of an annual value or rental of £5 - and under £10. 0. 0.'⁸

IV.3.6 Landowners with Property Assessed over £10

There were 78 owners of landed properties which were not estates, 61 (78%) of whom possessed properties valued under £30. In the Windward District, none of these persons held property above £30. For the island as a whole, women were outnumbered by a ratio of 3:1 in most assessment categories. If the planters and lessees (some 30% of these proprietors) are excluded, the number of these landowners with tracts larger than 5 or 10 acres was approximately 56, as shown in Table 38. The gender disparity among the owners declines as one moves away from the Windward District, where the ratio of males to females was as high as 5:1.

We now examine the owners and lessees of estates. The concentration of estates in few hands was most pronounced in the Windward District. There were 16 estates, worked as 13, with 7 owners, of whom 4 were joint owners. Ownership was almost entirely white and exclusively male. The mean value of the properties was £215 (Table 39).

⁸ CO285/89: Rawson to Kimberley, 29 Apr. 1871, & Encs., esp. Kortright to Legislature, 14 Mar. 1871.

TABLE 38

Owners of Land other than Estates, Assessed > £10,
by District and Gender: 1881/82
(Owners and Lessees of Estates Excluded)**

WINDWARD DISTRICT**Assessed Value (£)**

10-19		20-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+		Total	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
10	2	2	1	3*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	3
Total	12	3		3		-		-		-		18	

* 2 are joint owners.

No. of Plots = 17

No. of Owners= 18

MIDDLE DISTRICT (excl. Scarborough)

10-19		20-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+		Total	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
8	5	6	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	17	6
Total	13	7		1		-		1		1		23	

No. of Plots = 23

No. of Owners= 23

LEEWARD DISTRICT

10-19		20-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+		Total	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
7	3	2	2#	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	9	7
Total	10	4		1		1		-		-		16	

1 owned in 2 categories.

No. of Plots = 15

No. of Owners= 15

ISLAND OF TOBAGO

10-19		20-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+		Total	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
25	10	10	4	4	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	41	16
Total	35	14		5		1		1		1		57	

No. of Plots = 55

No. of Owners= 56

NOTE: ** Excludes Ann Groom, owning 2 abandoned estates.**Source:** Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

TABLE 39

Windward District: Owners and Value of Estates, 1881/82

<u>Owner/s</u>	<u>No. of Estates</u>	<u>Mean/ Assessed Value (£)</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
J. G. & R. B. Anderson	1	120	Physicians, druggists and merchants; white residents.
John McCall	3 (2)	125	Resident white merchants, planters /attorneys.
John and James McCall	7 (5)	308	
Brutus Murray	1	150	Black planter; illiterate.
R. H. Pile	2	275	White; Barbados resident.
J. H. B. Thomas	2	95	Resident white.
<u>Total</u>	16 (13)	215	

NOTE: Numbers in brackets indicate the consolidation of holdings into fewer units.

Sources: Assessment Roll, 1881/82; sundry records.

In the Middle District, the number of estates was 21 (worked as 21); there was no consolidation of holdings. Whereas the mean value of the Windward estates was £215, in the Middle District it was £126 (Table 40). This suggests estates of smaller size and lower capitalization than those at Windward. Two females are listed, one a joint owner.

TABLE 40

Middle District: Owners and Value of Estates, 1881/82

<u>Owners</u>	<u>No. of Estates</u>	<u>Mean/ Assessed Value (£)</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Thos. Blakely jun.	1	100	Coloured merchant.
Craig Castella/ Elizabeth Boggett	1	130	Blacks; Castella, former merchant's clerk, also owned Providence Estate.
Robert Crooks	1	35	Coloured; also owned Milford Est.
A. M. Gillespie & Co.	2	75	British merchants.
William Gordon	1	100	-
James Hackett	1	100	Black carpenter who became a planter; also owned Les Coteaux estate, Leeward District.
Robert Hutchinson	1	80	UK resident.
Walter Irvine	1	200	UK resident.
Hrs. of Frederick Keens	1	70	Deceased white resident.
James Kirk sen.	3	150	Resident white; b. 1800, Dumfries; d. 1874; owned 12 tracts of land, of which 5 were estates.
Estate of Mary Kitson	1	70	Deceased white resident.
John McCall and others	3	283	-
Hrs. of Piggott	1	60	-
Thomas Reid & Co.	1	100	British merchants.
Hrs. of Robinson Scobie	1	10	Deal Fair estate. Scobie was African- born Scarborough merchant; d. 1856.
Estate of William Ward	1	150	Coloured.
<u>Total</u>	21	126	

Sources: Assessment Roll, 1881/82; sundry records.

In the Leeward District, there were 35 estates worked as 33. Only on the estates (9 worked as 7) owned by Gillespie and Co. was there amalgamation of holdings. The mean value of the Leeward estates was £121 10s (Table 41).

TABLE 41

Leeward District: Owners and Value of Estates, 1881/82

<u>Owners</u>	<u>No. of Estates</u>	<u>Mean/ Assessed Value (£)</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
George Agard	1	250	Coloured merchant.
Benjamin Alleyne sen.	1	40	-
Craig Castella	1	150	-
Robert Crooks	1	75	-
Davidson and others	4	84	Aberdeen lawyers.
Mary Ann Des Vignes	1	60	Resident coloured.
A. M. Gillespie and Co./			Also owned Cromstain
A. M. Gillespie <u>et al.</u>	9 (7)	177	Estate, not in cultivation. Value of one estate, Roselle, not given.
James Hackett	1	200	-
Frances Keens	5	76	Coloured; widow of James Henry Keens, English merchant and Pres. of Leg. Co. who died 1878.
James Kirk	2	115	-
John James Kitson	1	100	-
Hrs. of Gordon			Coloured heirs of
Turnbull Macdougall	1	180	Scots planter.
Duncan McGillivray	1	50	Scots attorney for Gillespie & Co.; resident white.
Thomas Reid & Co.	2	110	-
T. L. Rowe	1	280	Resident white.
John Spicer	2	120	Resident white.
Tom and others	1	40	Blacks; Golden Lane estate.
<u>Total</u>	35 (33)	121.5	

NOTES:

1. Numbers in brackets indicate the consolidation of holdings into fewer units.
2. Where information on a planter is given in Tables 39 or 40, it is not repeated here.

Sources: Assessment Roll, 1881/82; sundry records.

Table 42 summarizes the data on estate owners; it includes joint owners where these are given. Where the owners are heirs, or are a group of persons such as a company, the property is counted under the name of the person bequeathing, or under the principal of the company or group. The ownership of 24 estates, one-third of the total, by John and James McCall (with 13) and Gillespie and Co. (with 11) is remarkable.

Many of the owners, both resident and absentee, did not occupy their estates. Lessees therefore deserve attention. Some of them, like J. H. B. Thomas, Thomas Reid and Co., R. B. Anderson, and James McCall, owned estates. Leasing was an important stepping stone to ownership of estates for people of all colours. Among these aspirants were Ebenezer Henderson, a coloured merchant leasing Courland; John McKillop, from Britain, who began in 1863 as engineer on Castara estate and leased Bacolet in 1880; Walter Sladden, another Briton, who began in 1845 as overseer on Orange Valley and became lessee of Shirvan and Cromstain; Alexander Nora Henry, a black bailiff, who was joint-lessee of Golden Lane (Table 43).

TABLE 42
Tobago: Ownership of Estates by Colour and Gender, 1881/82

<u>No. of Estates</u>	<u>Absentee White</u>		<u>Resident White</u>		<u>Coloured</u>		<u>Black</u>		<u>Not Known</u>		<u>T O T A L</u>		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	T
1	2	-	6	1	3	-	3	1	4	1	18	3	21
2	1	-	2	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	6	-	6
3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
5	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Total	6	-	11	1	4	1	5	1	4	1	30	4	34
No. Estates	22		28		10		7		5		72		
Mean Value (£)	138		175		102		111		91		142		

TABLE 43

**Lessees of Estates by Colour and Mean Value of
Estates: 1881/82**

	<u>Absentee White</u>	<u>Resident White</u>	<u>Coloured</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Not Known</u>	<u>Total</u>
No. of Lessees	1	5	5	5*	9	25
No. of Estates	2	5	7	5	9	28
% Lessees	4%	20%	20%	20%	36%	100%
Mean Value of Estates (£)	225	121	99	80	101	111

NOTE: * Includes 2 joint-lessees.

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

As regards both owning and leasing estates, the properties invested in by the whites were the most valuable. The pattern of female ownership was consistent throughout: as the number of properties and their value increased, the ownership by women decreased. Therefore, there were only 4 female estate owners; and all the lessees were male. With the exception of Frances Keens, the widow of James Henry Keens, deceased merchant, planter and President of the Legislative Council, no woman owned more than one estate.

IV.3.7 The Windward District and the McCall/Gillespie Estates

The McCall/Gillespie estates were a single entity. When they were sold in the Encumbered Estates Court, the Commissioners ruled against a petition from William and John George McCall, who wanted the Windward estates to be kept

separate from the Leeward, and the losses of some not to be put against the profits of others.⁹ The Windward estates of John and James McCall had been financed by the Gillespies, who, from 1863, were their consignee. John and James McCall were part-owners of the Leeward estates listed as owned by the Gillespies, John being their attorney. The McCalls were also shareholders in the Gillespie vessels.¹⁰ Table 44 gives the McCall/Gillespie estates, from the records of the Encumbered Estates Court in 1885. Adventure, Roselle and Cromstain, which the Gillespies had owned, were not mentioned in the Court's 1885 records; nor was Riseland, a McCall estate.

⁹ CO441,18/1 Pt. 2: Judgement on petition of William and John George McCall, 30 Nov. 1885.

¹⁰ CO441,18/1: N. F. Robarts' Affidavit, 24 Nov. 1885, Bundle marked 'N'. N. F. Robarts' Affidavit, 24 July 1885.

TABLE 44

The McCall/Gillespie Estates: 1885**Windward Estates**

<u>Name of Estate</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Owners and Remarks</u>	
Betsy's Hope	1317		Dr Patrick
Charlotteville	1833		Mitchell
Goldsborough & Goodwood	2391	JOHN	McKenzie had
King's Bay	943		been part-
Lure	969	AND	owner of
Richmond, Glamorgan			Betsy's Hope,
and Bushey Park	1918	JAMES	Richmond,
Speyside and			Glamorgan &
Trois Rivières		McCALL	Goldsborough,
(incl. Goat Island and			but sold his
Little Tobago)	2021		shares to
			John McCall.

Leeward Estates

Auchenskeoch &		Ownership in undivided shares: 5/12 by John McCall; after his death by his trustees; 2/12 by James McCall; 5/12 by Alexander M. Gillespie & his sons, William and Colin Gillespie.	
Carnbee Appendage	610		
Prospect &			
Orange Valley	519		
Mary's Hill	270	Ownership in undivided shares: 1/4 by John McCall; 1/8 by James McCall; 1/2 by Alexander, William and Colin Gillespie; 1/8 by Alexander K. McKenzie, John McCall, James McCall & William McCall, exors. of Patrick McKenzie, dec.	
Whim	395		
Orange Hill &		Ownership in undivided shares: 1/4 by John McCall; 1/8 by James McCall; 1/2 by Alexander, William and Colin Gillespie; 1/8 by Alexander K. McKenzie, John McCall, James McCall & William McCall, exors. of Patrick McKenzie, dec.	
Amity Hope	764		
Burleigh Castle &			
Spring Garden	733		

21 Estates**14,683 Acres**

NOTE: John McCall devised all his real estate to his exors. and trustees - James, William and John George McCall, and William Gillespie.

Sources: The Tobago Chronicle and Royal Gazette, 16 Apr. 1869, for Voters' List giving the estates part-owned by McKenzie; CO441/18/1 Pt. 2 for the Particulars and Deeds of Conveyance, & Affidavit of William and Colin Gillespie, 20 July 1885.

The Windward District was crucial to the rise of the McCalls and the consolidation of their power, particularly through the energy of John McCall (c. 1824-1879). McCall began in 1843 or 1844 as overseer on one of the estates which he subsequently owned. By 1860, he was 'Attorney for several of the largest and best Estates'¹¹, and agent for Phoenix Fire and Life Assurance Co. With the help of the Gillespies, he and his brother, James, bought many of the estates which they managed in the Windward District. Shortly before his death, he declared himself to be 'the owner or attorney of 33 Estates'.¹² McCall resided at Betsy's Hope (Windward), one of the best estates. His Windward properties were higher in assessed value and far more profitable than many of the Leeward estates, which is why his heirs protested against combining the accounts. In 1883, in spite of the Sugar Depression, Betsy's Hope made a profit of 'over £10,000', Richmond and Glamorgan, £6429, Goldsborough, £4922 and Lure 'over £431'; King's Bay lost over £2000.¹³

The exceptional level of propertylessness and landlessness in the Windward District, the paucity of opportunities for those who acquired land to own large or multiple holdings, and the high concentration of estates in the hands of a few planters are related factors, which

¹¹ CO285/78: Hincks to Newcastle, 28 Apr. 1860, enc. Drysdale to Hincks, 16 Apr. 1860.

¹² McCall to Dundas, 23 Sept. 1878, The Barbados Agricultural Reporter, 22 Oct. 1878.

¹³ CO441/18/1: Affidavit of William McCall and John George McCall, 2 Oct. 1885.

reinforce the picture of the district shown in Chapter 3.

Why was the control of the planters so much greater there than in the other districts? Perhaps, the answer lies, firstly, in the relative lack of alternatives for those remaining at Windward. The bargaining power of the labourers in the Middle and Leeward Districts was enhanced by their ability more effectively to combine other options with wage labour.

Secondly, the Windward District relied heavily on Barbadian labourers from the 1840s to the 1880s, in addition to receiving two-thirds of the 292 Liberated Africans imported in 1851, and 83 of the 225 arriving in 1862. The exact extent of this Barbadian recruitment is unknown. Between August 1834 and April 1843, 6 Barbadians migrated to Tobago; between 1845 and 1846, there were 600; another 600 arrived in 1847, and over 200 in 1852.¹⁴ In 1871, Lt.-Gov. Kortright stated that the 834 Barbadians reported in the census had been introduced in the last decade; in 1870, he estimated that 500 Barbadians had been imported in the previous 2 or 3 years. Another 200 were imported in 1875.¹⁵ The efforts of a Mr Chandler, appointed recruiting Agent for Tobago in Barbados in 1870, were unsuccessful, but private recruitment continued, and in

¹⁴ CO285/52: Grey to Stanley, 10 May 1843, enc. Dowland to Darling, 27 Apr. 1843; CO285/56: Reid to Grey, 18 May 1847, enc. 1846 Blue Bk. Rept.; CO285/58: Reid to Grey, 12 May 1848, enc. 1847 Blue Bk. Rept.; CO290/36: 1852 Blue Bk.

¹⁵ CO285/90: Rawson to Kimberley, 2 May 1872, enc. Kortright to Leg. Co., 10 Oct. 1871; CO285/88: Kortright to Rawson, 27 Aug. 1870, enc. 1869 Blue Bk. Rept.; PP. 1877, Vol. LIX, 1875 Blue Bk. Rept.

1877, of 131 Barbadians arriving, 80 went to Windward, 10 having been imported by J. H. B. Thomas, and 70 by John McCall.¹⁶ It is reasonable to infer that Windward planters resorted to migrant labour, given the district's chronic labour shortage, and that this helped to account for the enhanced ability of the planters to control ownership of land.

The relative landlessness of the labourers contributed to the May 1876 rebellion at Windward, in which Corporal James Henry Belmanna was brutally murdered, and other police officers injured, in revenge for the killing of a Barbadian protester, Mary Jane Thomas, and the injury of a Barbadian man. The Roxborough court house was stoned, and damage done to Roxborough and other estates. So great was the planters' fear for their lives and property that, like the Jamaican planters after the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865, they surrendered the representative constitution in favour of Crown Colony government, hoping for a stronger imperial presence. The 'Belmanna War', as Tobagonians call it, followed closely on news of the 1876 Confederation Riots in Barbados. Lt.-Gov. Harley stated that the rioters were not the migrants who had arrived from Barbados in 1876, but 'Creoles and immigrants of former years'. Thus, the roots of the rebellion were in the local conditions: among them, low wages, the truck system, an oppressive system of medical care from the unpopular Anderson

¹⁶ CO321/24: Strahan to Hicks Beach, 22 March 1878, enc. Lt.-Gov. to Leg. Co., 25 Feb. 1878; Tobago Archives: S. J. Fraser to Byng, 24 Jan. 1878, Return of Immigrants to Windward Dist., 31 Dec. 1877; cf. The Barbados Globe, 11 Oct. 1877.

brothers, and the land question.¹⁷

According to Harley, the rebellion showed that among the Negroes there had been 'secret plans', 'by which to possess the lands themselves, and this the disclosures in connection with the recent riots make but too clear.'¹⁸ In his 1876 Blue Book Report, he plainly stated:

... the subsequent events disclosed that a latent feeling of discontent had existed in the District, for some time, and there was sufficient evidence to show that there was a plot to effect a rising and get rid of the Whites and seize the Estates.¹⁹

The evidence for the plot is not given, but Harley reported that 'some two or three' to whom he spoke during the riots wanted Crown lands for rent or purchase.²⁰ In the light of the statistics, and given that the rebellion was planned in, and confined to, the Windward District, the desire for land cannot be dismissed as a contributory factor.

IV.4 AGRARIAN STRATIFICATION BASED ON THE ASSESSMENT ROLLS

The picture that emerges is that of a steep pyramid. At the apex was the McCall/Gillespie combine, whose ownership of 24 working estates was enhanced by the social and economic power which the McCalls exercised as the leading merchants,

¹⁷ CO321/13: Hennessy to Carnarvon, 31 May 1876, & Encs.; Brereton [1984]; Levy [1980].

¹⁸ CO321/13: Hennessy to Carnarvon, 10 June 1876, enc. Harley to Hennessy, 6 June 1876.

¹⁹ CO321/17: Dundas to Carnarvon, n. d., (1877), enc. Harley's 1876 Blue Bk. Rept.

²⁰ CO321/13: Hennessy to Carnarvon, 11 May 1876, enc. Harley to Hennessy, 9 May 1876.

insurance agents, attorneys and planters. The Gillespies were the prime source of advances to most of the planters, consignees to many, and, with the McCalls, the main shippers to and from Tobago. The McCalls also worked, under lease, estates which they did not own. Below them were the other influential whites, resident and expatriate, along with a significant group of coloureds and blacks, who owned and/or leased estates - in all, some 59 persons. Many planters owned large tracts of land, the size of estates, which were abandoned, or used as pasture and provision grounds.

A further 56 persons, who were not planters or lessees, owned large properties whose assessed value fell, with few exceptions, between £10 and £60. When we add to them the 14 persons, not planters or lessees, who owned property valued at £10, we discern a small emergent petty bourgeoisie of shopkeepers, smaller merchants and landlords. Among them were Peter McKenna, Dublin Kerwood and Dublin Murphy (Section IV.3.5); David Cowie and Kent Hector (Section IV.5.1). There was also Christmas Murphy, a black shopkeeper, who owned property valued at £30 at Parlatuvier, which became known as Parlatuvier estate. The Bennetts, a black family, owned property valued at £25 at Bloody Bay.

Below these two strata were the 96% of proprietors with properties assessed at less than £10. At the very base were the landless, owning only a house, and these numbered 1223. Above them were the landless who owned one or more shops or more than one house; there were 47 such persons. Next, there were 397 persons who had acquired land alone, without

buildings. Above them we place the 1841 persons owning a single homestead valued less than £5. Homesteaders with property valued between £5 and £10 numbered 123. Ownership of more than one landed property was the privilege of 253 persons at most, but this figure included planters and other large proprietors. If we deduct the planters, lessees and other owners of property over £10, we are left with approximately 123 smallholders who owned more than a single homestead. Such persons were most frequent in the Leeward District, but the value of the properties was usually below £5, and nearly always less than £10. Table 45 sums up these findings. The dotted lines between strata indicate what we assume to be main lines of cleavage. Statistical aggregates are not dynamic groups, but they are a first approximation in understanding the class, race and gender relations, and the differentiation within Tobago society, which are fully explored in Chapter 7.

Gender was a significant factor among others determining the process of stratification. In the Middle and Leeward Districts, access to real estate was greater than in the Windward District, and female ownership of the smallest holdings was similarly greater. In the Windward District, both males and females were grossly disadvantaged; however, women were among the most disadvantaged, for there the disparity between male and female ownership was the most acute. In all the districts, female ownership declined steeply as the number of plots or the value of the holdings increased, with few female plantation owners and no lessees.

TABLE 45

Strata of Property Owners in Tobago: 1882

<u>Persons & Property Values (£)</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% Property Owners</u>
Planters	34}	.87}
Lessees (estates)	25} 59	.60} 1.5
. *
Owners of Property > £10	56}	1.4 }
Owners of Property = £10	14} 70	.36} 1.8
. *
Owners of > 1 Plot	123}	3.16}
Homesteaders £5 < £10	123} 246	3.16} 6.3
Homesteaders ≤ £2 10s < £5	1841}	47.4 }
Owners of 1 Plot (no house)	397} 2238	10.2 } 57.6
Landless (shops, > 1 house)	47}	1.2 }
Landless (1 house only)	1223} 1270	31.5 } 32.7
Total Propertied	3883**	99.9
Propertyless Adults	4887	

NOTES:

- * Dotted lines indicate assumed main lines of cleavage.
- ** The number of proprietors in Tables 26 and 28 is 3886.

Source: Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

Given that access to land is not determined only by ownership, we briefly consider the other opportunities for occupancy that were available to the landless and the smallholders in the 1880s. The evidence before the 1890 Metairie Commission attested to the importance to the metayers of growing crops between the canes. Some were metayers on more than one estate; some combined metayage with renting or owning provision grounds; and those who were day labourers often had access to provision grounds as part-payment of their wages.²¹ Officials continued to complain that one cause of unreliable labour was the allowance of abundant provision grounds to labourers, who gave their own cultivation precedence over estate work.²² In 1881, Administrator Laborde noted that the relative absence of squatting on the abandoned land was due to easy access to 'lands of the most fertile quality ... in places less remote, on the easiest terms.' The best land was rented at £1 per acre per annum; 'the owners are careless of measuring out the quantity to their tenants, who commonly cultivate more than the acre or two for which they pay rent.'²³

However, as regards facilitating ownership of land by the labourers, the planters remained obdurate. In 1880, Lt.-Gov. Gore reported the rejection by the Legislative Council of his proposal to sell Crown lands in 10-acre lots to labourers,

²¹ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, esp. pp. 212-3; 225-6.

²² PP. 1875, Vol. LI, Pt. III, 1874 Blue Bk. Rept., Lt.-Gov. Ussher, p. 89.

²³ PP. 1881, Vol. LXIV.II, 1880 Blue Bk. Rept., p. 83.

because it would be 'diminishing the planters' command of labour'.²⁴

The perception of the officials, which is supported by our data, is that a stratum of 'respectable' peasant proprietors, independent of the estates, had emerged by the 1870s. S. J. Fraser, a magistrate, observed in 1883 that 'the island was gradually passing into the hands of the black population' and that 'a strong class is rising in the shape of a well-to-do peasant proprietary body.'²⁵ In the absence of direct measures, we must therefore assess the export data, to make inferences about the size and significance of the surplus which they produced for external markets.

IV.5 EXPORTS FROM TOBAGO: 1838-1897

IV.5.1 A Note on the Recorded Exports

It is difficult to trace the exports of smallholders in the records, because they produced the major plantation crops. From the 1850s, metayers contributed at least one-third of the sugar exported.

Coconuts which were second in importance, were also grown by both smallholders and estates. Some estates had 'coconut walks', either worked by the proprietors or leased to renters, often from among the strata of shopkeepers cum landowners. For example, David Cowie, a Scots shopkeeper, rented part of Courland estate as a coconut walk at £40 per annum; Kent Hector, owner of 2 plots valued above £10, one of which was

²⁴ PP. 1880, Vol. XLVIII, Pt. II, 1879 Blue Bk. Rept.

²⁵ Rept. from the Royal Com. . . ., 1884, p. 409.

occupied by 'various renters', rented a coconut walk at Studley Park for £45 per annum in 1879.²⁶ According to Hay [1884, App.], in 1884 there were three coconut estates, and a fourth with coconuts in mixed cultivation; but many sugar estates exported coconuts.²⁷ However, coconuts reached only 5.4% of export value by 1888.

The third export crop was cotton, which was revived in the 1860s, under the stimulus of the Civil War in the USA. Much of it was grown by 'small Proprietors, of the class of Labourers'.²⁸ Cotton production lasted a decade (1863-73), and never exceeded 2% of export value.

In addition to smallholders being producers of the major plantation crops, some of Tobago's minor exports to neighbouring colonies were sent clandestinely from Plymouth, by small vessels. Plymouth was an official port of entry and exit until 1881, but poor administration gave 'undue facilities for smuggling' from the late 1840s to the 1880s.²⁹ By 1880, when, to protect the revenue, it was proposed to make Scarborough the sole port of entry and exit, the McCalls and Gillespies were implicated in the smuggling. Acting Attorney General, Albert Lewis, accused the McCalls of selling

²⁶ CO441, 13/1: Particulars of Courland estate, *Re* estate of Thomas M. Sealey *ex parte* Thomas Reid; 13/2: Particulars of Studley Park estate, *Re* James Kirk *ex parte* Thomas Reid.

²⁷ For example, Charlotteville, Speyside, Betsy's Hope, King's Bay, Studley Park. CO441: Files 18/1 Pt. I, & 13/2.

²⁸ CO285/84: Walker to Caldwell, 2 Apr. 1866, *enc.* Kortright (quoted) to Legislature, Sub.-Enc. to Enc. A.

²⁹ CO285/64: Colebrooke to Grey, 15 May 1851, *enc.* Yeates' 1850 Blue Bk. Rept.

uncustomed goods in their Windward shops, a view which the Treasurer, L. G. Hay, endorsed.³⁰

We do not know when the trade in minor crops and animals from Plymouth began. In 1887, according to John McKillop, a planter, it had started legally, between the northside of Tobago and Trinidad 'many years ago', using the Royal Mail steamers; British Guiana was also a destination of Tobago exports.³¹ This trade with other BWI colonies was therefore an organic, popular movement, reflecting the enterprise and interests of the smallholders. However, by 1879, Lt.-Gov. Gore reported considerable smuggling of stolen stock, such that the official statistics on Tobago's exports to Trinidad for 1874-78, were 'altogether illusory'.³²

Even when the trade was legal, the produce was underestimated in the exports, because the quantities were not in standardized units and they were regarded by Customs officials as difficult to enumerate.³³

To sum up, both smallholders and planters produced the major crops exported. The extent to which the former were able to diversify the economy is reflected in the minor

³⁰ CO321/41: Gamble to Kimberley, 24 July 1880, & Encs., esp. Lewis to Gore, 5 May 1880. CO321/49: Robinson to Kimberley, 14 Jan. 1881 & Encs., esp. Hay to Laborde, 5 Oct. 1880. McCall, Gillespie and the West India Committee, London, were the most vehement opponents of the proposal (Ch. 7).

³¹ CO289/5: Tobago Gazette, 28 Jan. 1887, Leg. Co. Minutes, 19 Jan. 1887.

³² CO321/33: Strahan to Hicks Beach, 19 Nov. 1879, Enc. 2.

³³ CO289/7: Tobago Gazette, 1 Mar. 1895, Com. L. G. Hay in Financial Board minutes, 4 Feb. 1895.

exports, much of which went to the neighbouring colonies; but clandestinity, inefficiency and the human factor in compiling the statistics make the data on the inter-colonial trade under-estimates of the actual trade. Given the implication of the largest planters in smuggling, and the fact that sugar exports were subject to duty, it may also be that the principal crop was under-estimated. The statistics are therefore taken as indicative of trends in production and exports, rather than of precise quantities.

IV.5.2 The Recorded Exports

The diversification of Tobago's recorded exports was gradual. In 1838 and 1839, the exports were only sugar, molasses and rum. In 1843, 175 cords of fuel wood were sent to the BWI, and this is the first indication of local smallholding enterprise, for Barbados, an island almost entirely cleared of forest, was a market for fuel wood, exported by smallholders throughout the Windward Islands [Marshall 1963]. The wood probably came from the northern village of Parlatuvier, which was founded in 1842; in 1843, there were 13 families, '... who principally support themselves by cutting fuel wood for the Barbados market.'³⁴

In 1856, for the first time, the value of each item exported is given. Table 46 presents the value of exports for 1856 to 1888, the last year of Tobago's separate administration, and also for 1890. Table 47 shows the

³⁴ CO290/22-27: Blue Bks., 1838-1843. CO285/51: Grey to Stanley, 28 Dec. 1842, & CO285/52: Grey to Stanley, 7 Dec. 1843, enc. Stip. Mag. Repts., Child (quoted).

rapidity of the increase in stock, poultry and local food exports in the 1890s, once sugar had collapsed and Union with Trinidad inaugurated.

From 1856 to 1875, the share of the value of exports accounted for by sugar, molasses and rum ranged from 95% to 98.5%. Animals, vegetables, fruit and wood products accounted for less than 1%. In 1880, the value of animals, vegetables, fruit and wood reached 4.2% of the exports. After the crash of 1884, which was exacerbated by drought in 1885/86, many labourers and smallholders exported animals, partly because they were unable to upkeep them. However, stock and poultry rearing became important by 1897, accounting for 44% of total exports (Table 47).

In 1888, the share of sugar and its by-products fell to 78% of the value of exports, while the value of animals, poultry, hides, vegetables, fruit and wood products rose to 14.6%. By 1897, although the vegetables and fruit exported to Trinidad were under-enumerated, these products constituted 55% of the exports. Sugar and its by-products fell to 28.6% of export value in 1897. An increasing share of exports went to Trinidad in the 1890s: 52% of the value in 1894, rising to 78% in 1897.

TABLE 46
Numerical and Proportionate Value of Tobago Exports: 1856-1890

<u>EXPORTS</u>	<u>1856</u>		<u>1860</u>		<u>1865</u>	
	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce
Sugar	59,615}		54,492}		35,929}	
Molasses	1,009}	98.5	326}	98.2	1,222}	94.8
Rum	17,622}		10,493}		5,886}	
Sugar (semi-fluid)	-	-	8}			
Shrub	5	.006	5	.007	-	-
Coconuts	694	.87	638	.96	1,023	2.2
Animals (incl. eggs)	30	.03	8	.01	97	.2
Hides & shells	311	.4	199	.3	161	.3
Vegetables, fruit (incl. pickles, preserves)	68	.08	30	.04	49	.1
Wood, woodfuel (incl. charcoal, sticks, etc.)	56	.07	296	.44	-	-
Cotton	-	-	3	.004	1,015	2.2
Cocoa	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other (incl. veg. manufactures)	-	-	-	-	22	.05
Produce of Tobago	79,410	99.96	66,498	99.92	45,404	99.85
Produce of Other Countries	379	-	626.8s	-	1,358	-
Total	79,789	-	67,124.8s	-	46,762	-

TABLE 46 continued
Numerical and Proportionate Value of Tobago Exports: 1856-1890

<u>EXPORTS</u>	<u>1870</u>		<u>1875</u>		<u>1880</u>	
	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce
Sugar	68,848}		76,498}		66,516.10s}	
Molasses	2,985}	97.8	3,347}	95.6	2,964}	91.8
Rum	9,268}		8,016}		1,778}	
Shrub	16	.02	-	-	12	.01
Coconuts	1,316	1.6	3,347	3.6	2,815	3.6
Animals (incl. eggs)	8	.01	298	.32	2,429	3.1
Hides & shells	107	.13	328	.36	82. 4s	.1
Vegetables & fruit (incl. pickles & preserves)	27	.03	20	.02	73.16s	.09
Wood, wood fuel (incl. charcoal, sticks, etc.)	34	.04	41	.04	731.10s	.9
Cotton	268	.32	-	-	-	-
Cocoa	-	-	-	-	99	.1
Other (incl.veg. manufactures)	-	-	37	.04	60.10s	.08
Produce of Tobago	82,377	99.95	91,932	99.98	77,561.10s	99.7
Produce of Other Countries	239	-	83*	-	53.10s**	-
Total	82,616	-	92,015	-	77,615	-

NOTES: *Includes £23 for old metal, which the Blue Bk. mistakenly treats as Tobago produce.

**Blue Bk. gives £65.10s as figure here, but only £53.10s (old metal) are accounted for in the listing.

TABLE 46 concluded
Numerical and Proportionate Value of Tobago Exports: 1856-1890

<u>EXPORTS</u>	<u>1885</u>		<u>1888</u>		<u>1890</u>	
	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce
Sugar	25,269}		28,016. 5s}		12,702. 7s.6d}	
Molasses	2,364}	78.2	1,325}	78.4	736}	76.3
Rum	2,200}		930}		372.10s}	
Shrub	-	-	-	-	-	-
Coconuts	1,987.18s.5d	5.2	2,098. 0s.9d	5.4	1,672. 9s	8.6
Animals (incl.eggs)	5,301.13s	13.9	5,233. 8s	13.5	2,251. 8s.4d	11.6
Hides & shells	84.17s.6d	.2	16.12s	.04	25	.1
Vegetables & fruit (incl. pickles, preserves)	45. 7s	.1	78.10s	.2	74	.4
Wood, wood fuel (incl. charcoal, sticks, etc.)	607. 5s	1.6	348. 0s.0d	.9	1,429. 5s	7.4
Cotton	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cocoa	223. 2s.10d	.6	551. 5s	1.4	108.10s	.6
Other (incl. veg. manufactures)	52.12s. 6d	.1	-	-	-	-
Produce of Tobago	38,135.15s.11d	99.9	38,597. 0s.9d	99.8	19,371. 9s.10d	100
Produce of Other Countries	301. 0. 0	-	300. 0. 0	-	-	-
Total	38,436.15s.11d	-	38,897. 0s.9d	-	-	-

Sources: CO290 series: Blue Bks. for 1856-1888; CO300/101: Trinidad and Tobago Blue Bk., 1890.

TABLE 47
Numerical and Proportionate Value of Tobago Exports: 1894, 1896, 1897

<u>EXPORTS</u>	<u>1894</u>		<u>1896</u>		<u>1897</u>	
	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce	Value £	% Value Tobago Produce
Sugar, molasses, & rum	8420. 5s	37.36	6423	30	5304. 5s	28.57
Coconuts	1284.11s.2d	5.7	911.13s	4.3	910. 1s.7d	4.9
Animals and poultry	9720	43	7768	36.3	8123. 2s.4d	43.8
Hides and shells	200. 5s	.88	11. 5s	.05	60	.3
Vegetables, fruit	98.12s	.4	2399	11.2	412. 5s	2.2
Vegetable manufactures	-	-	932	4.36	487.18s.4d	2.6
Wood fuel, wood products	1797.15s	8	1148	5.36	1218.18s	6.56
Cocoa	1011	4.48	1542	7.2	1698	9.1
Other	-	-	245	1.1	346	1.9
Total Tobago Produce	22532. 8s.2d	99.82	21379.18s	99.87	18560.10s.3d	99.93
Animals, hides vegetables etc. and wood as % Tobago exports	.	52%	.	57%	.	55%
% Exports Sent to Trinidad	.	52%	.	56%	.	78%

Sources: CO289/7: Tobago Gazette, 11 Jan. 1895; CO300/107, /109: Trinidad and Tobago Blue Bks., 1896, 1897; CO298/61: Council Paper No. 77, 1898.

IV.6 CONCLUSION

A stratum of smallholders with properties between £5 and £10 in assessed value had emerged by the 1870s. However, the preponderance of homesteaders among the owners of the smallest holdings, and the continued dependence of hundreds of propertyless and landless adults on the estates led to an exodus of workers from Tobago. Beginning in the 1860s, emigration grew to such a mighty stream, that there was almost no decennial population growth at the censuses of 1891 and 1901 (Ch. 6). Though a relatively prosperous stratum of peasants had emerged, it was too small in number (we estimate it to have been about 246 persons), in the extent of its holdings, in its export capability and its economic and political power, to have averted the economic collapse of 1884.

The relatively late emergence of a peasantry in Tobago, by contrast with the analysis of Marshall [1968], who described, for most of the BWI, a period of emergence in the 1840s to 1860, of consolidation in the 1860s to 1880s and of saturation in the early 20th century, highlights afresh the importance of the political and economic power of groups and classes in the historical process. Marshall [ibid.] observes that, from the 1860s, most Caribbean peasantries began to focus more on the production of export crops than on local food production. Thus, the late emergence of the Tobago peasantry may help to explain the late production of minor export crops.

The analysis according to districts demonstrated the

varying specificity of internal relations and micro-processes, even on a small island, which are significant in the dynamics of development [M. Silverman 1979:467]. It allowed us to relate the relative landlessness in the Windward District to the consolidation of the McCalls in particular, and showed that there was greater, though limited, opportunity for landownership by the labouring class in the Middle and Leeward Districts, down to 1882.

Although minor crops were under-enumerated in the exports, the data suggest that it took the collapse of the sugar economy to break the fetters on diversified production. The dominance of the McCall/Gillespie conglomerate over investment, shipping and plantation production meant that no large segment of the planter class could break away from sugar. The only significant alternative crop, produced by planters, lessees and the small shopkeepers and landowners who rented estate lands, was coconuts, which did not exceed 5% of export value before 1888.

Thus, in answer to our hypothesis (Options 2A, 2B), neither from within the plantocracy, from the stratum of persons who owned or occupied medium-sized holdings, nor from the smallholding sector, was there any group of people, numerous enough, and economically bouyant enough, to have successfully provided an alternative base for production by 1884. 'The peasant labour process' was continued on lands owned, or to which the people had access; but metayage tied the labourers to nominal cultivation of sugar. The peasant initiative away from sugar before 1888 was significant, but it

took time before the Tobago peasantry fully came into its own, both as landowners and producers. Its trajectory was thus different from that of peasants elsewhere in the BWI.

The peasant initiatives underscore afresh the conflicting strategies and interests of the dominant and labouring classes. Circumscribed though the latter were, they laid the basis for increased autonomy from the estates. That the peasants, labourers and metayers moved so swiftly and aggressively to intensify production of alternative crops and trade with the neighbouring colonies, is testimony to the vision, enterprise and energy of the common people of Tobago.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RISE AND DEMISE OF THE METAYAGE SYSTEM IN TOBAGO: 1842-1900

V.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 showed that metayage became the major method of cultivating the Tobago estates in the 1850s. We argued that it was integral both to plantation production, and to the patterns of wage earning and land acquisition among the ex-slaves; and it symbolized the stalemate in the struggle of the two major contending groups, planters and labourers.

Because of the centrality of metayage in the agrarian order and in the historical process, its rise and demise are now examined. First, we outline the major conceptions of metayage in the literature. Next, since its origins in Tobago were discussed in Chapter 3, we explore its development, and relate the Tobago experience to the conceptual literature. The social and political crises in which it was central in the 1880s and 1890s are then examined. We argue that metayage contributed to low levels of accumulation on the account of most planters and metayers, and therefore contributed to the failure to emerge of planters and smallholders, who could either upgrade the sugar industry or diversify the economy (Options 1 and 2 of our hypothesis).

V.2 CONCEPTIONS OF METAYAGE

'Sharecropping is as old as recorded history' [Byres 1983:7]. The classical economists assumed a calculus of self-interest by each party to such contracts. For Adam Smith, it was superior to slavery, since the slave had an interest in producing as little as possible above his own maintenance, while metayers would have an interest in making the whole product as large as possible, to increase their own share of the crops; but they would not be interested in further improvement of the land, since investment out of their own resources would give to the landlord one-half of the increased produce, in which he had not invested [1789/1937:366-368].

John Stuart Mill agreed with Smith, but saw many more positive facets to the practice. While the metayer had less motive to exertion than the peasant, he had more than the day labourer, whose main interest was in not being dismissed, and than the tenant farmer without a lease. Assuming that the metayer's share of the produce was sufficient to support his family, he would see himself as the landlord's 'partner'. Given the disadvantages noted by Smith, Mill felt that if the landlord was willing to provide capital for improvements, the metayer had the strongest interest in promoting them, because of the benefits accruing to himself. Mill also noted that metayer contracts were usually subordinate to usage and custom. Contrary to Smith and other detractors of the system, he reasoned that there was no necessary connection between metayage and poor husbandry of the soil or abject poverty of the cultivators [1926:303-315].

Alfred Marshall, developing further Smith's objections, argued that the metayer 'will apply only so much capital and labour as will give him returns more than twice enough to repay himself: so that his landlord will get a smaller share even of those returns than he would have on the plan of a fixed payment' [1961:644]. Thus, for him, 'the advantages of the metayer system are considerable when the holdings are very small, the tenants poor, and the landlords not averse to taking much trouble about small things'; otherwise, renting would be preferable [ibid.:645].

Marx regarded metayage as 'a transitory form from the original form of rent to capitalist rent' [1967:803], and in this he was followed by most Marxists, who see it as a pre-capitalist or intermediate form of surplus creation and appropriation, destined to be swept aside by productive forces which would revolutionize agricultural production and promote capitalist appropriation [e.g. Pearce 1983].

Another standpoint is that of Chayanov, although his concerns were not specifically with metayage. In considering peasant households in Russia, Chayanov rejected the classical and neo-classical models of economic man, and the economic theories derived therefrom. He argued that most peasant households balance the satisfaction of needs against the amount of drudgery required to fulfil those needs, a process affected by demographic factors as well as the mutual effects of size of holdings, type of soil, crops, availability of draught animals, land and market prices, interest rates and alternative work [Thorner 1966:xvi-xvii]. The usefulness of

Chayanov's approach lies in his appreciation of the non-quantitative criteria with which the farmer assesses any course of action, and in his perception that often the benefits pursued are indivisible goods.

Within the neo-classical paradigm, several writers tried to test Marshall's thesis, but because of the social, political and customary contexts in which sharecropping is embedded, the results of such attempts remain inconclusive [e.g. Bell 1977]. Cheung [1969] shows that different types of tenancies and contractual arrangements do not automatically result in different efficiencies of resource use. While Herring's study on South Asia places more weight on the Chayanovian than the Marshallian thesis, he is careful to state that factors such as the social organization of production, the extent of competition for tenancies, and the quality of land, are also important in 'this frustratingly inconclusive exercise' [1984:144].

Martinez-Alier argues, contrary to Marshall, that some systems of land tenure and use of labour, such as the Hindu jajmani system, cannot be explained using conventional economic analysis; neo-classical assumptions on economic rationality may play a role, but are not necessarily decisive, in systems such as plantation slavery, sharecropping, Andean haciendas etc. He also states that sharecropping or cash tenancy may exist in a free labour market even when agriculture becomes more commercialized, provided that the share of labour in total costs is high [1974:158, 135].

Cooper [1983:245] demonstrates that to view sharecropping

as a formal rental contract between two parties is 'a rather sterile approach', given the non-contractual factors (such as indebtedness or control of markets) which facilitate surplus appropriation and deny alternatives to the sharecroppers.

This is one of the central issues in the explanations of the rise of sharecropping after the Civil War in the South of the USA. Reid [1973; 1975], DeCanio [1974], Higgs [1977], Ransom and Sutch [1977]¹, are among those using the neo-classical paradigm, which is criticized by writers such as Roark [1977], Woodman [1977], Wiener [1978], Litwack [1979], Davis [1981], Mandle [1978; 1983] and Wayne [1983], on the grounds that it ignores the legacy of the past, the crop lien system, the role of merchant/planters, and their use of legal, political and other structures to hem in the ex-slaves. Mann [1990, Ch. 4] indicates regional differences in the post-bellum South; sharecropping was facilitated by the long crop cycle in cotton, which made easier the indebtedness of the labourer, and it was buttressed by crop liens and the use of family labour, both of which reflected attempts to deal with class conflicts and reduce the risks inherent in agricultural production.

The perils of the Marxian assumption are as real as those of the neo-classical position. In both the United States South and the Caribbean, wage labour preceded the introduction of sharecropping after Emancipation. That capitalist forms of

¹ Ransom and Sutch [1972; 1977] are among the most sophisticated authors in this genre of writing, since they take the non-contractual factors into account, far more than Higgs and Reid in particular.

surplus appropriation should be superseded, wholly or partly, by 'pre-capitalist' ones, should lead us to examine closely the structure of agrarian relationships, rather than to assume that non-capitalist forms bespeak the absence of capitalism. The Caribbean literature demonstrates that in the Bahamas [Johnson 1991], Nevis, Montserrat [Shephard 1945], and the Windward Islands [Marshall 1965], where the plantocracy was at its weakest, short of capital and credit, unable to procure indentured labour in large numbers, metayage became the long- or short-term expedient to which both the capitalist planters and the workers reluctantly agreed.

As happened elsewhere, non-contractual arrangements, which cannot easily be separated from the metayer contracts, buttressed the system in the BWI. Johnson [1991] shows how the share system in the Bahamas was undergirded by a credit and truck system, which ensnared even the peasantry. Where Bolland [1981; 1984] places the emphasis on the control of land as crucial to the control of labour, Johnson [1991:105] argues that the key to the control by the agro-commercial bourgeoisie lay in its 'monopoly of capital in an economy where forms of non-wage payment were widely used and where, as a result, the labouring classes depended on credit.' In both cases, though the mechanisms differed somewhat, the planters' strategy was to control the options available to the ex-slaves and to limit their bargaining power.

Most of the standpoints on metayage which we have considered have their strengths, though none has been shown to be adequate in actual situations. Many of their arguments are

illustrated in the Tobago data, which we now examine.

V.3 THE METAYAGE SYSTEM IN OPERATION

V.3.1 The Major Issues of the 1840s and 1850s

Although metayage began in Tobago in 1842, it was not widely employed until after the hurricane and the failure of the West India Bank in 1847, following the British Sugar Duties Act of 1846. At the time, the Stipendiary Magistrates recommended cash rental of estate land by the labourers, who would grow canes on their own account and sell them, when ripe, to the highest bidder. This solution, of separating cultivation from the manufacture of sugar, was seldom adopted.

While cash rental would have given more legal safeguards than metayage, it had its disadvantages. Firstly, there was no competitive market for the canes; thus, the grower would have been at the mercy of the manufacturer. Secondly, canes being heavy and bulky, bad roads and length of cartage would have made the grower vulnerable to planters and other owners of carts. Thirdly, cane has to be ground and manufactured within a few days after it is cut, a process requiring a large number of labourers. The acute shortage of cash was the crux of the matter. The planters could neither pay wages, nor purchase canes, nor procure continuous labour. The labourers lacked sufficient land and viable alternatives. Metayage, which involved the mutual interests of planter and labourer in the growth and processing of the crop, was the option to which both parties resorted.

There was no law governing metayage until 1888. The

Stipendiary Magistrates, until 1853 when their reports ceased, called for legislation to ensure uniformity and security of tenure, written contracts to protect the labourers from fraud, and jurisdiction to the magistrates in matters of dispute.

From 1849, the magistrates voiced their concerns more vehemently. Dowland (Leeward District) described its workings as follows:

The general terms of the Metairie System are, that the Renter cuts his Canes, and has them conveyed to the Mill, and that he finds the Boilerman and Mill Gang all at his own expense. That the cultivation be under the control of the Proprietor, who shall supply at his own Cost, Stock, and Carts & Machinery necessary to grind the Canes, and make the Sugar in the usual manner. The Sugar, when made to be divided in equal portions, and the Proprietor to have all Rum and Molasses. Renter to furnish his own barrels or Vessels.²

Commenting on the usual metayer contracts, Dowland wrote:

There is no specified termination mentioned, no period of notice to quit given, no equitable conditions named on giving up the Land with its Crop, nor is any Referee, or Arbitrator appointed in the event of dispute. On the contrary the Form is one sided, and the laborer seems to me to be very much open to the will and caprice of the Landlord.³

Le Plastrier (Windward District) suggested legislation, permitting leases for 3 or 5 years, which would avoid

the misunderstandings which now take place, as to whether he or the Estate is to cut and cart the canes, he or the Estate to pay for boilerman, firemen, fuel and a variety of other expenses ... which are frequently the cause of dispute when the

² CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1849.

³ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1849.

manufactured article comes to be divided.⁴

Nothing was done.

In 1849, Sir William Colebrooke, the Governor-in-Chief, agreed that laws were needed, especially when a mortgage was foreclosed, or when the estate changed hands. He wanted a 'prompt and summary process for the recovery out of the growing crops of all ... claims of the labouring classes', since their expenses were 'considerable', and their 'returns often precarious'.⁵ In 1850 and 1853, he called again for legislation,⁶ but nothing was done.

Another aspect of the relationship between planter and labourer was the use of taxation to curb the real income of the labourers. The houses, carts, mules, and asses of the estates were exempt from taxation; those of the labourers were not.⁷ Recommendations for tax exemptions for the metayer's house, mule, ass and manure were ignored. In 1850, a direct excise was imposed on all sugar produced by metayers. Child asked that only the sugar exported should be taxed, at the

⁴ CO285/62: Colebrooke to Grey, 7 Mar. 1850, enc. 'Remarks on Metairie Contracts' by Geo. Le Plastrier.

⁵ Fair Minutes of House of Assembly, Tobago, 1849-1851: Colebrooke to Yeates, 6 Nov. 1849, enc. Colebrooke to Lt.-Gov., St Lucia, 2 Aug. 1849. Cf. CO285/61: Colebrooke to Grey, 1 Sept. 1849, enc. Colebrooke to Yeates, n. d.; Colebrooke to Grey, 25 Oct. 1849, enc. 'Metairie Lease'.

⁶ CO285/62: Colebrooke to Grey, 7 Mar. 1850, enc. Colebrooke to Yeates, 4 March 1850. CO285/66: Colebrooke to Newcastle, 30 Sept. 1853, enc. Colebrooke to Yeates, 16 Aug. 1853.

⁷ Measures of this kind were common throughout the BWI; cf. Robotham [1981].

exporter's expense.⁸ This too was ignored.

The availability of capital and the size of the estates affected the conduct of the metayage system. Child, after 'minute enquiries', observed that metayage was best suited to estates where the landlord had works and plant, but not capital to hire labour.⁹ Similarly, Dowland reported that 'small scale' planters with no capital benefitted most from metayage, whereas it was a 'drawback' to large plantations, because it narrowed the labour supply.¹⁰

But size of estate was related to the availability of capital. The chief difficulty of the small estates was, in Dowland's words, 'the want of Capital!':

It is the Class of Petty Planters who are causing discontent amongst the Metayers by depriving them of a due return for their industry. Canes which ought to have been converted into Sugar in last Month (May) are still on the ground, and, perhaps, may never be reaped. Such spoliation of property leads to heart burnings, and distrust, and renders the Laborer unsettled and erratic.¹¹

The irony is that if the smaller estates were most likely to benefit from metayage, their lack of capital and increasing dilapidation made them least likely to provide harmonious relationships with the metayers. Many of the small planters were 'white and coloured persons, who have long acted as

⁸ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1849, Dowland; 30 June 1850, Child.

⁹ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1852, Child. Cf. Breen [1844/1970:202] on St Lucia.

¹⁰ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 Dec. 1850, Dowland.

¹¹ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1850, Dowland; author's emphasis.

Managers and Overseers', who acquired estates in the 1840s.¹²

The conditions of metayer tenure varied from district to district, and over time. By 1853, Child reported that 'occasionally' a proportion of the rum made from the skimmings of the sugar was given to the cultivator.¹³ Over the years, by a process of informal negotiation, many planters allowed the metayers either rum or a part of the molasses, in addition to their half of the sugar.

In 1850, Child observed that, from the metayer's standpoint, the system could be 'highly profitable', provided that he devoted to it only occasional labour, and that of his family if they were not otherwise earning money. He continued:

... but if, for the sake of a large crop
he entices Estates Labourers by high wages,
and other inducements, to work with him,
his net earnings will prove to be very
unsatisfactory.¹⁴

Not surprisingly, the planters and officials complained very frequently of the neglect of the metayers' cane pieces. Child's point, which is one about marginal utility and opportunity costs, shows that the calculus of interest, which the classical and neo-classical writers assumed, did operate; but the social, legal and political conditions coloured the perceptions of the actors as to what were rational choices. We should also note that family labour, which the planters could not automatically expect in a situation of wage labour, was

¹² CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1850, Consol. Tables.

¹³ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 31 Dec. 1853, Child.

¹⁴ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1850, Child; cf. 30 June 1853, Consol. Table C.

implicitly built into the metayage system.

Marshall [1965] gives the following reasons for the failure to legislate. First, the planters were unwilling to appear to make permanent what was regarded as a temporary expedient; second, neither were they willing to legislate on matters which affected the interests of the British capitalists who were absentee owners or creditors and consignees; third, it was difficult for official opinion, local and metropolitan, to hold sway where the Assembly was controlled by planters, who 'continued to resist even when it should have become clear in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties that metayage had come to Tobago to stay' [ibid.: 45]; fourth, it was the metayers who suffered most keenly from the refusal to make just laws to administer the system. In sum, the balance of power was against the metayers.

Appearing before the 1890 Metairie Commission, C. L. Abbott, whose father, S. F. H. Abbott, had practised at the Tobago Bar from 1850, produced one of his father's letter-books for 1854-1858. It indicated that many disputes between metayers and planters were settled out of court, by one of the disputants taking the matter to the solicitor, who would write to the other party, asking that (s)he come to see him to settle the matter.¹⁵ Thus, in the absence of formal rules, informal regulation became integral to the metayage system.

In the 1850s, metayage was, on balance, profitable to both planters and metayers. Moribund and formerly abandoned estates were kept as going concerns. No full estimate of a

¹⁵ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, Abbott's evidence, p. 141.

metayer's income and expenditure survives, but Child stated that the profit to those who sold their sugar locally was 'highly remunerative.'¹⁶ He attributed the falling rate of commitments to prison to the extension of metayage, 'which is gradually elevating many of the peasantry to a higher social standing than they could have otherwise attained.'¹⁷

V.3.2 Differentiation and Change: 1860-1890

In 1859, the planters decided to impose an export tax on all estate produce, including metayers' sugar, to raise revenue for the importation of labourers. A property tax, restricted to estates on which the immigrants would be located, along with a fee or stamp duty on all contracts of service with immigrants, had previously been mooted as the means of raising revenue for immigration. But Lt.-Gov. Drysdale lost the support of the leading planters on the issue, and in December 1859, the necessary Bills were introduced in the legislature.¹⁸

Several points on the metayage system emerge from the correspondence on these issues. First, metayage was island-wide by 1860. On some estates, the whole crop was so produced, but on all, it existed to a greater or lesser

¹⁶ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1851, Consol. Table C.

¹⁷ CO285/77: Hincks to Lytton, 3 Mar. 1859, & Encs., esp. Child's rept. on the prisons, 31 Dec. 1858 & Drysdale to Hincks, 22 Jan. 1859. Breen [1844/1970:302] on St Lucia.

¹⁸ CO285/77: Walker to Lytton, 28 June 1859, enc. Drysdale's 1858 Blue Bk. Rept.; CO285/78: Hincks to Newcastle, 4 Jan. 1860, enc. Drysdale to Hincks, 10 Dec. 1859.

degree. Moreover, it was directly related to the nominal wages paid. Drysdale observed that metayage would progress, 'so long as the rate of daily wages remains so low as it now is.'¹⁹ Low wages induced labourers to become metayers, which offered an incentive to the more productive growers; immigration, for which they were to be taxed, would keep wages low, and would remove the advantages of metayage by causing a reversion to wage labour.

Gov. Hincks, commenting on the proposed tax, called for a minimum wage of 1s per day, the Barbados rate; wages in Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana and St Lucia (to East Indians) exceeded 1s, while in Tobago, the rate paid by the planters was 8d per day, with metayers who employed labour paying 1s 4d per day. Agreeing with Drysdale that it would be 'not only impolitic, but unjust in the extreme' to impose the export tax, Hincks asked that the proposed legislation not be sanctioned, with which the Colonial Office agreed.²⁰

One of the factors which contributed indirectly to the spread of metayage was the truck system, defined as 'a set of closely related arrangements whereby some form of consumption is tied to the employment contract' [Hilton 1960:1].²¹ As

¹⁹ CO285/77: Walker to Lytton, 28 June 1859, enc. Drysdale's 1858 Blue Bk. Rept.

²⁰ CO285/78: Hincks to Newcastle, 4 Jan. 1860, & Encs., esp. Drysdale to Hincks, 10 Dec. 1859, from which the quot. is taken.

²¹ Hilton sees the system as a continuum ranging from outright compulsion to a situation of no compulsion except the existence of a company shop [1960:10]. Both ends of the continuum were practised in Tobago between 1838 and 1900.

early as 1839, a newspaper observed that many managers and planters kept retail stores on or near their premises.²² By 1842, the system was fully established. By the 1860s, it was entrenched. Drysdale wrote:

... Credit is easily obtained and debt insidiously contracted. ... It is ... the detestable truck system over again. ... proceedings such as these ... tend to estrange the laborers from engaging in the culture of the cane, otherwise than as independent Metayers.²³

Thus, to avoid indebtedness resulting from low wages, many labourers resorted to metayage.

Metayage was preferred to wage labour by the metayers for several reasons. The earnings were greater, and were enhanced by the provisions invariably grown between the canes. Secondly, the metayer's autonomy was far greater, since supervision by the managers was minimal. Thirdly, the input of the metayer into the upkeep of the soil was trifling, for he could occupy as much land as he wanted, whether he cultivated it all or not, and he could move from one plot to another, after reaping the crops from his ratoons. H. I. Woodcock, Chief Justice, gave a 'neo-classical' analysis of the system in 1862:

Under such a system of cultivation there can be no farming; the labourer cultivates his field so long as it remains in heart;

²² Tobago Gazette and West Indian News, 24 Dec. 1839, p.2. Marshall notes that truck shops are a means of getting back part of the nominal wage, and that foremen and managers who keep shops are often more injurious than employers, for these supervisors are not held in check by a regard for self-interest [1961:553, fn. 1b].

²³ C0285/80: Walker to Newcastle, 30 June 1862, enc. Drysdale's 1861 Blue Bk. Rept.

it is not in his interest to manure it; for as soon as it ceases to produce what will remunerate him for his labour he moves off to a fresh field: there is an entire absence of all implemental industry; and, owing in a great measure to the bad faith in which, on both sides, the contract is too often carried out, what is done is imperfectly done, and from many causes yields little return. I have known canes so planted to remain on the land two years without being cropped.

[Woodcock 1867/1971:190]

The contours of the metayage system changed in the 1860s. Whereas, initially, metayers were labourers on or near the estates on which they had contracted, this was no longer always the case. There was also increasing differentiation among the metayers, as many employed labour to do all the work involved. Daniel Gordon, owner of Courland estate, writing to the Colonial Office in support of the export tax for immigration in 1860, described himself as 'the largest Metayer Planter in this Island, my Estate being wholly cultivated by Metayers'. Gordon argued that the 'Agricultural body' might be divided into four 'classes'.

1st. The great majority who work in the fields have nothing whatsoever to do with Metairie Planting, labourers for hire, they make no Sugar on their own account and export none. 2nd. A smaller number though still large who do work in the fields and make their barrel each, but who being without any capital and industry cultivate their land in miserable and slovenly manner, the quantity of Sugar they make being too small to be of any value 3rd. A smaller body who make from three to four Hogsheads of sugar, these men do not till the soil exclusively with their own hands; they all hire labour, and all complain bitterly of the rascality of those whom they employ, and cry out for more labour. 4th. A few men who make from ten to twenty Hogsheads of sugar, these too employ labour and would treble their

present crops if they could command a supply of it[;] of this last class is my own butler who has grown this year Sixteen Hogsheads of Sugar without being absent from my house, and all by hired labour.

Gordon thought that only the second group would be adversely affected by immigration, and stated that every year, 'on almost every Estate', metayers' canes were not reaped, for lack of labour.²⁴

Stratification of the metayers was also indicated by Drysdale:

In many instances land has been allotted for Metairie cultivation to persons dwelling at a distance of several miles from the property of which it forms a part, not unfrequently to individuals who never work in these grounds themselves, but hire occasional labor for the purpose, and who are often tradesmen such as Carpenters or Masons, or even Grooms and Domestic Servants.²⁵

The legal problems continued. By 1874, the courts had no precedents to cover metayage cases. Lt.-Gov. Ussher stated that metayage disputes were

necessarily ... settled at haphazard, and according to some existing law which may appear to bear most closely upon the special case, ... and in the absence of written agreements, I believe the "custom", or practice, between metayers and planters is generally ignored by judicial officers, ... litigation ... is becoming frequent, and in some parts of the Colony is mischievous and highly injurious to planters²⁶

Ussher's successor, Harley, also wrote that the unwritten

²⁴ CO285/78: D. G. Gordon to Newcastle, 10 Jan. 1860.

²⁵ CO285/80: Walker to Newcastle, 30 June 1862, enc. Drysdale's 1861 Blue Bk. Rept.

²⁶ P.P. 1875, Vol. LI, Pt. III, 1874 Blue Bk. Rept., p. 90.

contracts were 'a fruitful source of litigation.'²⁷

As in the 1850s, many cases were informally compromised. Jackson O'Connor, a metayer from 1874, explained to the 1890 Metairie Commission how this worked:

The metayer used to go to a lawyer and he used to charge him 10s. to write a letter to the proprietor and compromise the matter. I know on several occasions he charge three guineas if he have not got the cane ground. But he would not go to law if he had not the money paid him. ... How could they [metayers] go through the law with empty hands, because it is three guineas for a lawyer besides Court expenses? and you have no money? That's the whole upshot.

He also claimed that often metayers going to court would have to forfeit the 'privilege' of pasturing their cows on the estate. 'You have to submit to these impositions on purpose to keep in friendship with them.'²⁸

We are fortunate to have the reports of several commissions and investigations of the system between 1884 and 1890, which allow us a clear picture for that period. All observers regarded metayers as better off than wage labourers. When Stephen Gatty, Chairman of the 1890 Metairie Commission, citing John Stuart Mill, questioned John McKillop, lessee of Bacolet estate, his reply was unequivocal:

A. I know it is the case here. If you go through the island ... where the metayer system is carried on you will see the difference. Every metayer's house is on a lot of land - and quite respectable houses too. You will not find the same in the parts where the labourer has been working on the monthly wage entirely. ...

²⁷ P.P. 1877, Vol. LIX, 1875 Blue Bk. Rept., p. 69.

²⁸ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, O'Connor's evidence, pp. 158, 156.

The metayer has been able to buy a piece of land and to build a comfortable house and presents a more respectable appearance.

Q. Then you say the custom has a civilizing influence?

A. It has most decidedly. ... as regards the metayer himself, it has a good effect, because it improves his social status.²⁹

In good years, when the prices were high, many metayers profited. Metayage was a means to land owning, and at least three of the 'large' metayers became planters.

Brutus Murray was born a slave on Orange Valley estate. According to Walter Sladden, who was an overseer on that estate from 1845, Murray was the first metayer when Mr Cruickshank, the lessee who introduced metayage in Tobago, first tried the system there. Murray moved to the Windward District, where he became the first metayer also. In 1853, he was manager of Belle Garden estate; in 1862, he was part-owner of Pembroke estate, which he wholly owned from the early 1870s until his death in 1887.³⁰

D. S. Gordon, while still a boy, worked with his father, a metayer on Annesdale (probably Arnos Vale) estate. Their net yield was 4 hogsheads of sugar per year. He continued as a metayer on Mary's Hill estate and bought Adventure in 1887, when prices were low. He was also a shopkeeper.

... I work from '65 up to now and I live by it up to now and what I make since '65 I hold out of my metayer work so that I call myself a proprietor. I work up to it

²⁹ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, McKillop's evidence, p. 13.

³⁰ Ibid., Sladden's evidence, pp. 34, 38; Vote Bk., 1862-1870; C0289/1: Tobago Gazette, 30 July 1875, revised voters' register; The News, 7 Jan. 1888, Leader.

you see.³¹

Paul Tobago, an illiterate shopkeeper, became the owner of Prospect, 500 acres in extent, in the late 1880s. He testified in 1890:

In all my time I work up from a metayer to what I is to-day. I make upwards of 20 and 21 hogsheads when I was a metayer. That was at *Adventure and Garden* estate.³²

J. B. Swalls testified to the 1897 Royal Commission that he had been 'a labourer, an overseer, and metayer, now a merchant and proprietor.'³³

Women were among the metayers, although none testified individually before the various commissions of enquiry which examined the system. Newton Browne, the police magistrate, told the 1890 Metairie Commission that women were among the best metayers. Maurice Rostant, manager of Mt Irvine estate, cited a Mrs Scotland as 'the best metayer we have':

She has 10 acres in cultivation. She made lots of sugar and I offered the price paid by Mr. McCall who was buying sugar up at 16/8 a barrel ... but she would not give it at that price and she went to Mr. McCall and shipped all the sugar on her own account. They have money and they are all well off. That Mrs. Scotland cultivates 10 acres of land and that is no joke I can tell you³⁴

Differentiation between large and small metayers produced a conflict of interest between them, which became most acute in the dealings of those who became planters with the metayers

³¹ Met. Com. Rept., Gordon's evidence, pp. 152-154.

³² Ibid., Tobago's evidence, p. 159.

³³ WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, App. C, Pt. V, p. 356.

³⁴ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, Rostant's evidence, p. 167.

contracted to them. Both Gordon and Tobago, two former metayers who became planters, expressed very unfavourable attitudes about the work ethic, the independence, and the ambition of the Tobago worker to the 1890 Metairie Commission [ibid.:153-162].

The chief problem faced by the metayers was to find the labour to cut, cart, grind the canes and manufacture their sugar in the reaping season. Many testified of this in reply to the questionnaire sent out by the Agricultural Society in 1884. Often, they exchanged 'labour for labour', each metayer giving to those who came to help him/her an equivalent number of days labour. The scarcity of labour was compounded when a metayer's turn to reap was at the end of the crop, in the wet months of June and July, which coincided with the season for planting provision grounds; often the metayers would be competing with the estates for labour as well. Several complained of not having the cash to pay wages, which were usually double the current plantation wage.³⁵ D. S. Gordon, owner of Adventure, testified in 1890:

It is a well known secret in cane cultivation ... that it is in the reaping part you have most expenses. The expense you take to reap canes in the dry season you must calculate to go through double that expense when the rain comes. ... it is double labour and you must look for double expenses, both metayer and proprietor, and every one.³⁶

John McKillop, the lessee of Bacolet estate and a keen observer of the merits and demerits of the system, stated:

³⁵ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. F, p. 228.

³⁶ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, D. S. Gordon's evidence, p. 155.

But the disadvantages under which the laborer works are to my mind more serious than those which affect the proprietor. In the agricultural part of the business the industrious labourer with his family can do all the operations required, from the clearing of the land to the ripening of the canes. But as soon as the manager gives him orders to cut his canes his troubles begin. He must now beat up his friends and those who owe him labour to come to his assistance. When he is cutting and carting his canes he requires the help of at least twenty able-bodied labourers, and then when the canes are carted home ... he requires ten to twelve more, and has to pay very highly for them, while any failure in providing sufficient labour to carry out the manufacture expeditiously entails serious loss both on the labourer and also on the employer.³⁷

As convener of the Committee appointed by the Agricultural Society in 1884 to examine the system, he wrote:

The industrious man with a good crop requires several days' labour ... and as the price they charge each other is considerably higher than the normal rate of wages, the metayer finds himself involved in expenses which absorb all the profit he would otherwise receive for his labour³⁸

An official Commission, which reported in 1885, concluded:

... and the necessary result of all this is, that there is no encouragement for a man, however able and willing to exert himself, in making a good crop under the system.³⁹

³⁷ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. R, 'Notes on the Metairie System by Mr McKillop', p. 262.

³⁸ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. G, 'Rept. of the Committee of the Agricultural Society appointed to enquire into the working of the Metairie System', 1884, p. 233.

³⁹ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. H, 'Rept. of the Commissioners appointed by His Honor the Administrator ...', 1885, p. 235.

The size of metayer ground was thus a crucial factor in assessing the costs and benefits of the metayer. All of the 40 'principal metayers' who responded to the questionnaire of the Committee of the Agricultural Society, when asked, 'How much land can an industrious man, with the assistance of his family, keep in cane cultivation?', gave between 1 to 4 acres as their answer, and only 5 persons mentioned 4 acres.⁴⁰ Patrick Edwards, a 'large' metayer of over 30 years' experience, and Henry Yeates, who were members of the official Commission appointed in 1884, both testified that it was disadvantageous; Yeates abandoned cultivation in 1885, after 12 years experience.⁴¹

Cultivation of large metayer holdings seems to have been exceptional. For those with little cash to pay for labour, the wisdom of having a small allotment to which little time was devoted, which Magistrate Child perceived in 1850, still held good in 1884.

In 1884, the metayers complained of the difficulty of getting cane plants. Some admitted to stealing them from the estates; others worked for other metayers in exchange for plants. Often, canes were grown on provision grounds and taken on the heads of the metayers and their families, for distances of from 2 to 4 miles, to the cane pieces. George Trestrail, lessee of Auchenskeoch estate, observed that one metayer sacrificed 10 hogsheads worth of canes in order to have plants

⁴⁰ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. XII, F, pp. 224-225.

⁴¹ Ibid.: App. H, pp. 239, 241.

for the next crop.⁴²

By 1884, certain customary practices prevailed. Only on 4 estates, all wholly worked by metayers, were there written contracts. The 'universal custom' was for the people to plant provisions among their canes. Planters also allowed provision grounds either free or at a nominal rent, the right to pasture stock either free or cheaply, and the right to gather firewood and grass on the estates. Although there had been 'spasmodic' attempts by the managers to supervise the metayers, 'generally speaking the people do very much as they like.' By then, the estates supplied the labour of the head boiler man, the mill or engine driver and one fireman for the manufacture of the sugar, the metayer paying for the rest. The 'invariable practice' was to allow the metayer molasses in proportion to his quantity of sugar, the average being 5 gallons per hogshead.⁴³

From the planters' standpoint, the 'chief disadvantage' of the system was 'the difficulty of controlling [*sic*] the metayer or his labour supply.' Metayers who reaped their crops were stated to be indifferent to the needs of those whose turn came after, and this was a frequent cause of canes not being fully reaped. Thus, the inability to exercise strict supervision and the scarcity of labour during crop seemed most

⁴² See Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. XII, F, p. 225, for the metayers' answers on the subject; App. XII, H, p. 238, for Trestrail's evidence before the official Commission on metayage.

⁴³ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. XII, G, Rept. of the Committee of the Agricultural Society appointed to enquire into the working of the Metairie System, 1884, pp. 232-233.

important to them.⁴⁴

V.3.3 The Tobago Experience in the Light of the Conceptions Reviewed

The Tobago experience well illustrates the points raised by the classical and neo-classical writers. The calculus of interest in surplus creation and accumulation by both parties, on their own account, was evident. So too was the importance of detailed supervision by the managers, which Marshall stressed. In the informal process of negotiation, one of the gains won by the metayers was the absence of supervision; the planters saw this as their greatest disadvantage. Thus, arbitrariness, which rendered metayer contracts precarious, was beneficial to both parties. Further, the importance of autonomy for the metayer highlights Chayanov's emphasis on non-quantifiable criteria and indivisible gains.

Secondly, the striking contrast between metayage and wage labour aptly reinforces Mill's points on the subject. Wage labour under the watchful eye of the overseer or manager was the negative backdrop, the unwanted alternative, to metayage.

Moreover, the planters' complete loss of control over the labour process held within it the seeds of their own destruction as a class. The failure to create a proletariat and the arbitrariness of the system could only lead to haphazard and wasteful cultivation. Given the low technological capacity, labour-intensive methods and consistently low acreages under cultivation, the planters, by

⁴⁴ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. VIII, Representation by Tobago Planters Club, p. 190.

having to agree to such an unsatisfactory compromise, were doomed to an irretrievable state of indebtedness and dependence on their creditors. Metayage generated too small a surplus on the planters' account. Yet, the constraints on the metayers also resulted in too low and too slow a rate of surplus accumulation on the account of most metayers. If, in the good years of the 1860s, the system appeared to be bouyant, as the long Sugar Depression set in after 1875, the crisis of production became increasingly a crisis of metayage. Metayage therefore contributed to the inability of the planters to break out of their indebtedness to Gillespie, to upgrade their estates and/or to diversify away from sugar (Options 1, 2A of our hypothesis). Although it enabled a small stratum of 'large' metayers and planters to emerge, most metayers who bought land were smallholders, who were unable to diversify the economy significantly before 1884 (Option 2B).

Thirdly, Mill's observation that metayage is usually subordinate to custom is significant. Without law, custom became the norm. Custom was double-edged; although it gave degrees of freedom to the metayers, the balance of power and advantage was overwhelmingly in favour of the planters. Thus, the planters were always committed to the custom.

These data also illustrate the limitations of the neo-classical standpoint. The relationships between planter and metayer cannot be understood as mere contracts, apart from the social, political and juridical context in which they took place. The absence of law and the unwritten 'contracts' reflected the power, and at times the caprice, of the dominant

class within each negotiation. Further, differentiation and conflict of interests between 'large' and 'small' metayers, and among the 'small' metayers, make it impossible to understand the system without locating it in the context of the relationships between the actors involved.

Another hidden aspect was the great dependence on family and community labour. The carrying of cane plants from provision grounds, the tasks of binding the canes, carrying them from field to cart or road, spreading out the megasse etc., which were done by women and children, and the exchange of 'labour for labour', were not accounted for in the fiction of a contract between 'planter' and 'metayer'. Most labourers depended on substantial kinship and community support.

Our data show that metayage led to poor husbandry, which supports Smith and Marshall; Mill, however, saw no necessary connection between the two. Since metayage also imposed severe restrictions on the rate of accumulation of both planters and metayers, Marx's view on the transitoriness of the system may be borne out in this case.

V.4 CRISIS, NEGOTIATION AND STALEMATE IN THE 1880s

In April 1884, when the news reached Tobago that Gillespie and Co. had crashed, one of the first responses of the labouring class was to refuse to continue as metayers. In part, this was because their profits were more precarious in a situation of low prices; but it was also a context in which, with the removal of both Gillespie and Thomas Reid & Co., the merchants who made advances to the planters, the power of the

metayers was greatly enhanced. There could be no possibility of continued sugar cultivation without their willing co-operation. In 1889, when the system became the subject of increased litigation because of the intervention of Sir John Gorrie, the Chief Justice, the planters averred that the metayage system had worked amicably until Gorrie incited the metayers to rebel. The evidence shows an entirely different picture for 1884.

In November 1884, Administrator Carrington stated that the Agricultural Society had asked him to

use my influence with the Metayers ... to induce them to commence planting operations for the crop of 1886. It appears that the Metayers generally, disheartened by the extremely low price of sugar and dissatisfied with the working of the Metairie system, were about to discontinue planting fresh canes

Carrington complied by addressing the metayers at the main population centres, in nine well attended meetings. Their complaints were 'so bitter, and so strong a feeling of dissatisfaction ... evidently existed', that he decided to establish an independent enquiry.⁴⁵

The Agricultural Society, the planters' association, confirmed this. Its 1884 Report stated that, at their request, Carrington 'was good enough to use his influence to encourage the Metayers to keep alive the sugar industry'.⁴⁶ In July 1884, it appointed a Committee to advise on the metayage system. The Committee sent out questionnaires to 48 metayers

⁴⁵ Admin.'s Despatches, 1882-1885: Carrington to Robinson, 22 Nov. 1884.

⁴⁶ The News, 7 Feb. 1885, p. 3.

and 50 managers, and reported in December 1884; its findings were made available to the official Commission, which Carrington appointed in December 1884.⁴⁷

The metayers' frustrations were graphically outlined by Percy Castillo, at Carrington's Mt St George meeting:

... my Honor you si dis head? He tun crook⁴⁸ fe carry cane plant from provision ground to cane piece. When managa please to gie you orda fe cut cane, you cane tan [stands] a ground fa tree week sometimes, fo [before] he go cat [cart] um. ... Heare me good. Suppose man mek 5 hogsheads sugar. He pay £1 for every hogshead[;] he pay all expenses for cat and grine [grind] and boil. Estate tek for dem half. Time come fe cat um a bay you mus leave one barrel⁴⁹ sugar in curin [curing] house, no so you no go get cat, same time you want cat estate cat fo'e [their] own all day. Time fo you own come fo cat, ship load go way. If you owe one merchant in town he no believe say you ha sugar. He no go gie you credit sak a you no [unless you] gie um sugar, betime man pay out all expenses wha lef fo feed he fambaly [family]? Ef you mek law fo metayer sa [say] dem proprieta for deal just wid awe [us], we go work; but ef not a no go mek one chop in a cane field, all awe [of us] go dead together.⁵⁰

Only one manager and eight metayers testified before the Commission appointed by Carrington. Perceiving that metayage

⁴⁷ For the full Rept. of the Committee, see Apps. A to G, pp. 208-233 of the Met. Com. Rept., 1891; App. H, pp. 233-241, for the Rept. of the Commissioners appointed by Carrington, 1885.

⁴⁸ A crook was a wooden device which was placed on the back of an animal to enable it to carry much load.

⁴⁹ The sizes of hogsheads (hhds) varied, but they were usually between 15 and 16 cwt. There were usually 8 barrels to each hhd.

⁵⁰ The News, 25 Oct. 1884, on the Mt St George meeting, 15 Oct. 1884.

was 'undesirable' but 'absolutely necessary', the Commission felt it 'imperative' that the Government regulate the system, to ensure equity and engender confidence. All of the eight metayers testifying, with experience of metayage ranging from 5 to 30 years, stated that it was disadvantageous to them.⁵¹

In October 1885, the new Administrator, R. B. Llewellyn, asked the Agricultural Society to respond to the Commission's Report. Their recommendations included several concessions to the metayers.⁵²

After further discussion, a draft Ordinance was prepared in 1886. It stipulated that contracts be written, and it outlined clear procedures for the magistrates to adjudicate disputes. It also provided for the managers to make the sugar at a fixed charge to the metayer.

A Committee of the Legislative Council considered the draft Ordinance and made recommendations in February 1888, on the basis of detailed consultation with 20 metayers delegated by their colleagues. This was a far cry from the official ignoring of the metayers' views, which had been the norm of previous decades.

The Committee sought to codify the unwritten practice. They recommended that the metayer be allowed three crops on any particular cane piece, with compensation for his crops if he was turned off before; that manure be supplied by the estate, with the manager bearing half the cost of cartage;

⁵¹ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. XII, H, Rept. of the Commissioners ..., 1885, pp. 233-241.

⁵² Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. XII, J, pp. 242-243.

that metayers be responsible for the repair of the cane piece roads, which was the 'general practice'; that the cost of fuel for the manufacture of the sugar should be included in the metayer's costs; and they endorsed the provision giving one gallon of molasses per barrel (8 per hhd) to the metayer. No existing metayer was to be bound by the law, unless he expressed a willingness to come under it; new metayers were to be bound by it, unless they expressly wished to opt out.⁵³

On balance, the gains to the metayer were as follows: an end to arbitrariness; the provision of cane plants either free or at low cost by the managers; assistance with manure; the option to let the estate find the labour for the manufacture of the sugar, by paying a fee instead; and entitlement to a greater share of the molasses. However, the metayer would still bear the major costs for both cultivation and manufacture, in exchange for half the sugar. Moreover, the law prevented him from asking for more land than he could easily cultivate, and imposed greater supervision by the manager, which would considerably limit his freedom.

The Metairie Ordinance, 1888, received assent in April 1888, but was not implemented. By then, Tobago's revenue was so low that, to cut administrative costs, it was annexed to Trinidad on 1 January 1889. The Chief Justice of Trinidad, Sir John Gorrie, became Tobago's Chief Justice. His intervention in the judicial system had enormous repercussions and warrants consideration.

⁵³ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. XII, O, Rept. of the Committee of the Leg. Co. on the Draft Metairie Ordinance, 1888, pp. 250-252.

V.5 THE INTERVENTION OF SIR JOHN GORRIE

V.5.1 The Immediate Background to the Litigation of 1889-90

By 1889, the crisis of the metayage system had been thoroughly discussed, but not resolved. Metayage, which was a compromise solution to the impasse in class relations, had itself been brought to an impasse! Llewellyn, under whose administration the 1888 Ordinance was enacted, stated that only a few alterations and concessions on both sides had been made 'in what has been the unwritten law for the past forty years.'⁵⁴ The planters and officials had confined the debate within the prevailing custom, and it was the custom, which was to the planters' advantage, that, with few alterations, had become law.

This stalemate in the simmering class conflict was the first of six major factors which helped to sharpen and ignite the situation.

Secondly, between 1884 and 1888, some estates passed into new hands, and many planters diversified cultivation. With these changes, customary practices were disrupted, and there were more complaints from the metayers.

Thirdly, the administration of justice in Tobago had reached its lowest ebb by 1888. Since 1880, there had been no resident Chief Justice to handle cases above the jurisdiction of the Stipendiary Magistrates. Tobago shared a Chief Justice with St Lucia, and was served by him for three months each year. The crisis of 1884, resulting in drastic cuts in

⁵⁴ CO321/109: Sendall to Knutsford, enc. Llewellyn to Sendall, 10 Apr. 1888.

government expenditure, meant that, thereafter, there was little legal administration. Annexation to Trinidad was intended to procure the services of professionals of high calibre at little cost, among them the senior legal officers.

The keeping of the laws and the Court records was chaotic. Administrator Carrington (May 1883-May 1885), who had been Chief Justice in the early 1880s, offered, in 1882, to revise and compile the laws, since 'the Statute Book in its entirety [was] non-existent'.⁵⁵

In 1888, there were only two magistrates in Tobago: S. J. Fraser, also the owner of Orange Hill estate, worked by metayers; and T. Newton Browne, who was Inspector of Police, Actg. Marshal of Gaol and Actg. Stipendiary Justice, an unfortunate combination of offices. Thus, the entire administration of justice was unsatisfactory.

The fourth combustible ingredient in the situation was the personality and politics of Sir John Gorrie (1829-1892), the Chief Justice from January 1889. Gorrie, a Scotsman, was called to the Scottish Bar in 1856. After the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica in 1865, he was selected by the Jamaica Committee in Britain to enquire into excesses of martial law and, assisted by two other lawyers, he exposed the cruelty and injustice committed in those events.

From August 1869, he was appointed Substitute Procureur and Advocate General, Mauritius, where he quickly reported and investigated 'great abuses' against labourers, which led to a

⁵⁵ CO321/72: Carrington to Wingfield, 22 Aug. 1883, enc. Carrington to Laborde, 22 Nov. 1883. CO321/99: Carrington to Herbert, 6 Apr. 1886.

Royal Commission, through which the labour laws were altered. As Chief Justice of Fiji from 1876, he reformed the land and bankruptcy laws and secured to the natives possession of their land, for which he was thanked by the Secretary of State. For his services, he was knighted in 1881. In 1882, he became Chief Justice of the Leeward Islands, where he revised the laws on land tenure, for which he was again specially thanked by the Colonial Office.⁵⁶

Gorrie had had a long career as a radical, energetic advocate for the poor. He was fearless, outspoken and intolerant of humbug. Therefore, after his arrival in Trinidad early in 1886, he quickly collided with the leading merchants and planters, some of whom called for an enquiry into the administration of justice in August 1887.⁵⁷

Brereton [1980:44] writes:

As Chief Justice, he reformed judicial proceedings, he promoted suits *in forma pauperis*, and he instigated a long series of cases by cocoa contractors, cane farmers and metayers against the planters.

He promoted a People's Bank to give small farmers access to credit. He was therefore immensely popular among the poor and his frequent trips around Trinidad 'assumed the character of triumphal processions' [ibid.:57].

Because of the constant traffic between Trinidad and Tobago, Gorrie's reputation had been established in Tobago before he arrived in January 1889. For example, James Smith,

⁵⁶ CO295/350: E. Counel to Ripon, 11 July 1893; POSG, 5 Oct. 1889.

⁵⁷ The Times (Bridgetown), 17 Sept. 1887, on the proceedings of the Trinidad Leg. Co., 2 Sept. 1887.

metayer on Goldsborough estate, wrote to William Sanger Tucker, the proprietor, in November 1888, concerning their disputes:

So sir as my layer [lawyer] tell me to write to you before the Judge come and hear if you will agree to pay me for my half of suggar so be if no must come back to him before the Judge so sir I write to know from you what you intend to do Sir I am poor but I am not a blackgrad [blackguard] but if you want to make me one I will not be one with you but Gurry [Gorrie] will cool each and every one of us ...

Smith sued *in forma pauperis* and won in January 1889.⁵⁸

The fifth combustible element in the situation was Robert Benjamin Anderson (b. 1848, UK), a physician and surgeon. He and his brother, James Goodridge Anderson, also a doctor, arrived in Tobago in 1874. By 1876, the Andersons were notorious for charging extortionate fees. During the 1876 riots, they had to flee from the Windward District.

After the riots, Robert Anderson was one of the planters who urged the change of constitution to Crown Colony government upon the Assembly.⁵⁹ In 1881, however, his brother started a newspaper, Daylight, whose 'main object' was 'the abrogation of the Crown Colony system.'⁶⁰ Robert was catapulted, by his conflicts with Gorrie, into the role of angry critic of Crown rule.

⁵⁸ Smith to Tucker, 26 Nov. 1888, POSG, 30 Jan. 1889, p. 5, reporting on Smith v Tucker before Judge Gorrie on 17 Jan. 1889.

⁵⁹ Barbados Globe, 13 July 1876, quot. The People (Tobago), 4 June 1876.

⁶⁰ C0321/79: Robinson to Derby, Conf., 1 Nov. 1884, enc. Daylight No. 1, 4 Oct. 1884; leading article.

In 1877, Robert Anderson was appointed District Medical Officer (DMO) in District No. 1, which included Scarborough; and he and his brother became lessees of Castara estate, which they bought in 1880. They displayed a remarkable penchant for litigation, and took clients to court for trifling sums. In 1878 alone, Robert brought 80 such cases before the courts.⁶¹

Between 1880 and 1882, three petitions, signed by people of all walks of life, asked for neither brother to be DMO.⁶² Robert Anderson was therefore confined to being the Colonial Surgeon, with responsibility for the Scarborough hospital, which the 1883 Royal Commission described as the worst in the BWI.⁶³ Sir William Robinson, then Governor of the Windward Islands, called them 'a hard & grinding lot.'⁶⁴

Anderson's removal from office was made imperative by his treatment of Jane Dryce, also known as 'Blacky Mamby', who died at Lambeau in childbirth, late in 1885. Anderson refused to visit her, although she was in labour and having fits. Her mother, Sarah Mamby, walked many miles to find the DMOs without success, since two of them were out of their districts. Even though she returned several times to plead, and undertook to pay little by little, as was common, Anderson demanded that people with cash guarantee his payment before he

⁶¹ CO321/40: Strahan to Hicks Beach & Encs., 11 Feb. 1880.

⁶² CO321/41: Robinson to Kimberley & Encs, 13 Sept. 1880;
CO321/42: Reid to Kimberley, 31 Dec. 1880. CO321/59:
Robinson to Kimberley, 8 July 1882.

⁶³ Rept. from the Royal Com. . . ., 1884, Pt. II, p. 36.

⁶⁴ CO321/59: Robinson to Kimberley, 8 July 1882; Robinson to Wingfield, 18 June 1882.

visited Blacky. The News, commenting on Anderson's 'surpassing heartlessness', called for his dismissal for such a 'heinous' offence.⁶⁵ This is the unhappy record of Anderson's public service before 1888, when his brother died.

Sixthly, the unusual circumstances of Tobago must be understood. Throughout the decades after 1838, money wages were small, always supplemented by access to land and other payments in kind. From the 1850s, there was very little coin in circulation.⁶⁶ By the 1870s, the planters began to 'give day', meaning that they decreased the few labourers whom they employed, and hired only on a rotating basis.⁶⁷ After the Gillespie crash of 1884, the availability of cash was further diminished.

For this reason, the truck system took on new forms by the 1890s. C. Plagemann, a druggist, told the 1897 Royal Commission that wages were usually paid after a delay of 2 or 3 months, 'in shops or stores owned by the estates[,] ... by an order on the store', or with deductions from the wage for debts already incurred. A meeting of labourers at Plymouth petitioned the Commission, *inter alia*, for wages to be paid 'in the coin of the realm, and not in kind.' Labourers at

⁶⁵ The Times, Bridgetown, 23 Dec. 1885, quot. The News, Scarborough, n.d.

⁶⁶ The Blue Bk. for 1854, the year in which the garrison (a source of cash via the soldiers' salaries) was removed, noted that the coin in circulation had been decreasing 'for some years past'; there was no paper currency in circulation; cf. CO290/38, /41, /42, /50, /69: Blue Bks. for 1854, 1857, 1858, 1866, 1885.

⁶⁷ Barbados Times, 11 Dec. 1878, quot. Tobago correspondent (7 Dec. 1878) who commented on the 'scarcity of money'; *ibid.*, 15 Nov. 1879, quot. Barbados Globe, 13 Nov. 1879.

Moriah asked the Commission to enquire into the method of payment, with a view to enforcing the Truck Act.⁶⁸ Because of the long crop cycle for sugar, it was easy for metayers to become ensnared in debt. Thus, if metayage was a means of avoiding the truck system in the 1860s, by the 1890s many metayers were indebted to the merchants and planters.

In the 1890s, the only sources of cash were wages earned in, or the profits of trade with, Trinidad. The lack of cash and the indebtedness of metayers to planters/shopkeepers, are important features of the context in which the litigation took place. The lawyer's fees of 3 guineas plus the other costs put the courts out of the reach of many metayers.

V.5.2 The Litigation of 1889 and Its Aftermath

The first sittings of the courts before Sir John Gorrie began on 15 January 1889. On the first day, 3 appeal cases were heard - Anderson v Philip, Gordon and George, claiming rent for provision grounds and pasturage. They were all dismissed. Gorrie stated that the matter had been carried by Dr R. B. Anderson, the plaintiff, 'beyond human endurance', and Anderson left the court, 'through a deriding crowd'.⁶⁹ In the afternoon, Anderson appeared as defendant in a debt suit, and lost the case, with Gorrie observing that Anderson would argue at a stone wall, if given the chance. This public humiliation of Anderson was the start of a long train of litigation that continued even after Gorrie's death.

⁶⁸ WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, App. C, Pt. V, pp. 355-358.

⁶⁹ POSG, 23 Jan. 1889, p. 5.

Several *in forma pauperis* cases were allowed. According to the Judicature Ordinance, No. 28 of 1879, to sue *in forma pauperis*, the litigant must not be possessed of property valued over £10, exclusive of his or her wearing apparel. He/she must also sign an affidavit. All these requirements were waived by Gorrie in Tobago in 1889 and 1890.

Gorrie later gave his reasons as follows. There were in Tobago only two solicitors, one of whom he considered 'incompetent', and the other newly arrived. There was little money in circulation. Therefore, the common people had neither the financial nor the technical means to know the Trinidad Rules of Procedure, and the Judge had to direct them as to how to enter their actions. Further, the officials were friends of the planters, 'and share their dislike of the metayers'.

Moreover, in the metayer cases, many of the plaintiffs had not had their canes ground for over two years. In that context, the Trinidad fees of court were too high. There was also no time to have affidavits filed and applications made to the Commissioner of the Supreme Court, since this would have unduly delayed the sittings. He admitted that

indeed there would have been a difficulty in many of the plaintiffs signing the affidavits, as having a right of metayer-ship, a house and a provision ground, they may have had something worth £10 over and above the cause of an action. The reason requiring the interference of the Judge was the absolute want of money, both because of the little in circulation and from the peculiar position of the metayer not getting wages.

Therefore, to exact the fee of 5s for a summons and fees of service from metayers 'would have been to shut out the people

from the Courts of Justice altogether'.

Gorrie argued, further, that many metayers were indebted to the planters with whom they were in conflict; those who won their cases received only a book entry in their favour. The cases therefore helped to relieve the metayers of debts and to redress the arbitrariness to which planters had become prone, there being little legal administration.⁷⁰

Justice Lewis, who conducted the Tobago sittings in October 1889, supported Gorrie's position. Lewis stated that he found 'a quite abnormal state of things'; the official responsible had not given notice of the sittings and the preliminary proceedings had not been taken. Moreover, 'I was much struck with the poverty of the people and under the circumstances I was forced to adopt one of two courses': either to return to Trinidad, or to modify the preliminary proceedings in keeping with his powers under the Judicature Ordinance. He therefore suspended payment of court fees.⁷¹

Gorrie also complained that he could find no record of former metayer cases. (Some of the records were produced, however, for the 1890 Metairie Commission.⁷²) And he marvelled at the absence of legislation for the past forty years:

Why ... it was not from time to time regulated by Ordinance so that Judges could have some guide to go by would have been incomprehensible were we not dealing with Tobago.

⁷⁰ CO295/328: Robinson to Knutsford, 21 June 1890, & Encs., esp. Gorrie to Robinson, 19 June 1890.

⁷¹ CO295/328: Robinson to Knutsford, 24 June 1890, Enc. 5, Lewis to Robinson, Conf., 2 July 1890.

⁷² Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. IX, pp. 193-204.

He noted that the 1888 Metairie Ordinance gave 'the sanction of law to the worst features of the system':

... the one great evil is that the proprietor in claiming half the sugar exacts too much, considering all the expenses which are cast on the metayer.⁷³

Gorrie used his visit to Tobago to urge greater self-reliance on the populace. He told the people at Roxborough to buy land and work. He exhorted a large Wesleyan congregation in Scarborough to take advantage of their access to the Port of Spain market, to increase production and decrease the need for imports from Venezuela. He told them to start Penny Banks, beginning in the Sunday Schools. With popular credit institutions, they could 'reconquer' Tobago:

... form your own bank and keep all the others out. (Laughter and applause.) Haven't you got a proverb somewhere in these West India Islands ... "When cockroach give dance, he don't invite fowl to supper." (Loud laughter.) ... what is the use of a multitude of savings lying idle in the Government Savings Banks? They are very good to deposit your reserves in, but then you ought to have other institutions where you can deposit your savings, in order that they may pour forth like rivers to fertilise the land.⁷⁴

Gorrie later started a Penny Bank, enabled by Ordinance No. 15 of 1891; it had three branches, one being the Tobago Crop Advance and Discount Co. (1892). Brereton states that none of the companies went into operation [1979:23].

Gorrie's visit was followed by that of the Governor, Sir

⁷³ CO295/328: Robinson to Knutsford, 21 June 1890, & Encs., esp. Gorrie to Robinson, 19 June 1890.

⁷⁴ POSG, 23 Jan. 1889, p. 6.

William Robinson, in February 1889. 'Several hundred labourers and others in a humble walk of life' travelled from the most distant villages, to see him at the Court House. They complained that Tobago wages should be equal to those of Trinidad, and that the condition of metayers should be improved. Robinson reported that the relations between planters and metayers were coloured by 'a spirit of discontent' among the people.⁷⁵

In mid February, L. G. Hay, the Commissioner, asked for a man-of-war, which would 'have the effect of aweing the people and reassuring the timid.'⁷⁶ Hay's request was in response to a strike and unrest at Studley Park estate in January and February 1889. The Inspector of Police, Newton Browne, reported a speech by Joseph Prescott, one of the spokesmen for labour there:

"Besides who is Robinson or Hay or Browne?
- all one lot who have put their heads
together to oppress us. We have no
other Governor than Gorrie and he tell
us already that he coming back in May.
Dont [sic] do a damned thing till he
comes and let the canes go to Hell!"
After loud shouts of "Gorrie!", "Gorrie!",
some of the crowd said - "damned Tobago
Buccras, he cut their tails for them the
other day, and he will cut their tails
again when he comes."⁷⁷

Browne reported a 'distinct spirit of something worse than discontent' among the 'lower orders' everywhere in Tobago.

⁷⁵ CO295/321: Robinson to Knutsford, Conf., 28 Feb. 1889.

⁷⁶ Ibid.: Enc. 1, Hay to Robinson, Priv., 16 Feb. 1889.

⁷⁷ CO295/321: Robinson to Knutsford, Conf., 28 Feb. 1889, Enc. 3, Browne to Hay, 16 Feb. 1889. 'Buccra' referred to white people.

The man-of-war was sent and Hay went on it to Studley Park, to be greeted, according to Byles, the ship's captain, by shouts of, 'We don't want Robinson or Hay, we want Gorrie!'⁷⁸ The few who met with Hay complained of what he called 'the old notion of obtaining higher wages'.⁷⁹

On receipt of this correspondence in the Colonial Office, Sydney Olivier, recalling the metayer contracts which they had received over the years, minuted:

Sir J. Gorrie seems to have been telling the blacks that the planters oppress them, which is a statement justifiable perhaps, in fact, though not in policy.

It was decided that Gorrie should not return in May.⁸⁰

Throughout Tobago, the antagonistic class relations that had simmered for years became explosive. The Port of Spain Gazette (20 March 1889) wrote of a 'state of ferment' in Tobago. The Tobago News, owned by Ebenezer Henderson, a leading merchant and planter, wrote on 16 February of the 'class antagonism' that imperilled the 'peaceful relationship' between employers and employed.⁸¹

In April, after petitions from the leading Tobago proprietors and officials against the return of Gorrie in May,

⁷⁸ CO295/321: Robinson to Knutsford, Conf., 2 Mar. 1889, enc. Hay to Robinson, 1 Mar. 1889. CO295/322: Robinson to Knutsford, 16 May 1889, enc. Byles' rept., 2 Mar. 1889.

⁷⁹ CO295/321: Robinson to Knutsford, 15 Mar. 1889 & Encs., esp. Hay to Byles, 28 Feb. 1889, & Hay to Robinson, 2 Mar. 1889. The quot. is from the latter.

⁸⁰ CO295/321: Robinson to Knutsford, Conf., 28 Feb. 1889; Minutes, 10 Mar. (Olivier), 16 & 22 Mar. 1889.

⁸¹ Newspaper cuttings, Encs. 1 & 2 in CO295/321: Robinson to Knutsford, 30 Mar. 1889.

Knutsford, the Secretary of State, authorized, on grounds of economy, an Ordinance to provide for the sittings of the Tobago Supreme Court to be held 'invariably at all times' by a Puisne Judge.⁸²

The Gorrie Exclusion Bill, as the Ordinance was nicknamed, was an embarrassment to the Government. Gorrie wrote a printed letter of 17 pages to Knutsford, enclosing statutory declarations from the Solicitor-General and the Registrar General, in his defence. The Act was disallowed.⁸³ In a second letter, Gorrie complained that the Bill was aimed at personally discrediting him and weakening his moral competency to make rules of court for Tobago, since the saving from sending a Puisne Judge was £15 7s 6d per year.⁸⁴

Knutsford, hoist by his own petard, could only reply hypocritically, especially since, to test the Government's sincerity, Gorrie had offered to go to Tobago free of charge. He regretted that the Ordinance was construed as excluding Gorrie from the Tobago courts, and he cleared Gorrie of any 'indirect censure'. He minuted, however, that, 'The mischief which might have been occasioned by a second visit following so soon after the former one ... has been averted'.⁸⁵

⁸² CO295/322: Robinson to Knutsford, 12 Apr. 1889, & Encs.; Robinson to Knutsford, 13 Apr. 1889, & Encs.; Knutsford to Robinson, 1 May 1889. The quot. is from Cl. 2 of the Act.

⁸³ CO295/326: Gorrie to Knutsford, 24 June 1889; Knutsford to Gorrie, 10 July 1889.

⁸⁴ CO295/326: Gorrie to Knutsford, 24 June 1889, & Encs.

⁸⁵ CO295/326: Knutsford to Fowler, 10 July 1889; Knutsford's minute, 6 July.

The number of cases heard in 1889 did not exceed that of 1884 (Table 48). However, 150 actions were set down for trial in the Court of Summary Jurisdiction, only 8 or 10 of which had been ready before Gorrie arrived; the rest were brought to court in the fortnight after his arrival.⁸⁶

Throughout Tobago in 1889, there was an uneasy peace. In April, the Annual Races, held under the auspices of the dominant class, were disrupted by members of the 'lower classes', who invaded the course and resisted the police.⁸⁷ In August, J. H. Hart, Superintendent of the Trinidad Botanic Gardens, visited Tobago and surveyed its agri-horticultural resources. He stated:

... I failed to find any one good point in favour of the [metayage] system either from employer or employed, and I questioned both; and I believe the Island would indeed be rid of a great "bugbear" were it totally abolished.⁸⁸

All the evidence shows that the problems of the metayage system were deeply rooted and far from new. What was new was the opening of the courts to the poor by a judge who did not conceal his hostility to the planters.

⁸⁶ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, evidence of H. H. Sealy, App. I, pp. 59-63. Many actions were settled out of court.

⁸⁷ In April 1890, the races were postponed indefinitely, since Gorrie stated that the beach belonged to the 'Imperial public'. CO295/328: Robinson to Knutsford, 14 Apr. 1890, & Enc.; POSG, 28 Mar. 1890, p. 7, ad. signed by Dr J. P. Tulloch, Sec. of Race Committee.

⁸⁸ Hart [1889:8, 9; author's emphasis].

TABLE 48

Number of Cases Filed in the Summary and Ordinary
Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court: 1884-1890

<u>Year</u>	<u>Summary</u>	<u>Ordinary</u>
1884	38	15
1885	12	19
1886	4	10
1887	7	8
1888	7	4
	<hr/> 68	<hr/> 56
	<hr/>	<hr/>
1889	35	2
1890	196*	2*
	<hr/> 231	<hr/> 4
	<hr/>	<hr/>

NOTE: * Up to 1 July 1890.

Source: Met. Com. Rept., 1891, App. IX, F, p. 202.

V.5.3 Grinding Canes at the Court House: 1890

Gorrie returned to Tobago on 29 January 1890, and was greeted by a waiting crowd, who escorted him from the jetty with 'one or two salvos of small artillery'.⁸⁹

The courts began on Monday 4 February 1890. In the first three days, in which he saw litigants in Chambers before the sittings began, Gorrie disposed of 214 applications. In the fortnight of sittings, 162 actions were brought before the court, 140 of them without prepayment of fees. The unprecedented wave of litigation, the many cases that had to

⁸⁹ POSG, 4 Feb. 1890, p. 5.

be compromised out of court for fear of heavy fines, and the celebrated Frank v Anderson decision, brought the explosive situation to a head.

In the matter of Frank v Anderson, the plaintiff, Joseph Frank, aged 73, who had been born enslaved on Castara estate and had been a metayer there from 1845, was evicted by Anderson for refusing to pay rent for the provision grounds which, it seems, he had been allowed without charge by the former owners. Judgement was given in favour of Frank, and the case raised several controversial points. Firstly, Anderson disputed Frank's right to sue *in forma pauperis*. Secondly, he argued that no automatic right to provision grounds was ever part of written or unwritten metayer contracts; Frank had had a written contract since 1877, which included no such right. Thirdly, Gorrie's judgement raised the issue of 'fixity of tenure' within metayage. It argued that a metayer must have security of tenure on the estate on which he served, and could not be easily evicted. Gorrie stated that metayer contracts could not be altered without going to court, with which Anderson disagreed.⁹⁰

The Colonial Office received a spate of petitions on the litigation. They included one from Anderson; one from Alexander Davidson of Aberdeen, an owner of Old and New Grange estates, for which Anderson was attorney; and one from merchants, planters and others of Tobago, complaining, *inter alia*, of the admission of 140 cases without court fees, of too little time for the preparation of their cases, and of Gorrie

⁹⁰ POSG, 20, 23, 30 May; 4, 20, 24 June 1890.

being 'insulting and humiliating in the extreme' to 'respectable persons and their witnesses'. The petitioners asked for protection in their appeals, since they were obliged to appeal to the Chief Justice as President of the Appeal Court. A further petition, signed by nearly all the planters, complained of the *in forma pauperis* cases. They were dismayed by the *Frank v Anderson* judgement, which was upheld in the Trinidad Supreme Court on appeal before Gorrie and Justices Lumb and Cook in June 1890. The insistence on fixity of tenure was contrary to custom and to the 1888 Metairie Ordinance. They therefore called for an independent enquiry.⁹¹

Gorrie replied to his critics giving his frank, but uncomplimentary, opinion of the leading petitioners, and named Hay as 'The Petitioner who does not sign'. He justified his suspension of court fees on the grounds of the financial situation of the metayers. There must, he felt, be some continuity of tenure if the people were to be attached to the properties in a reliable way; even the 1888 Ordinance, 'which was not made by metayers for metayers', provided for this.⁹²

By March 1890, the London officials, led by Sir Robert Herbert, the Permanent Under-Secretary, decided to remove such a 'political and partisan judge'. Knutsford decided to catch Gorrie craftily:

The only way to meet his action [is]
... to appoint an impartial Commission
to inquire into the metayer system ...:
This will be the professed object of the
Commission but indirect good might be

⁹¹ CO295/328: Robinson to Knutsford, 21 June 1890, & Encs.

⁹² Ibid.: Gorrie to Robinson, 19 June 1890.

gained by exposing some of Sir J. G's decisions.⁹³

Sir William Robinson appointed a local Commission to enquire into the metairie system; but it was not impartial. The Chairman, Stephen Gatty, the Attorney General, had publicly clashed with Gorrie, and had opposed the judgement in *Frank v Anderson*.⁹⁴ The other members of the Commission, Aucher Warner, a barrister, Robinson's son-in-law, and L. G. Hay, Commissioner for Tobago, were both opposed to Gorrie.

When the Metairie Commission left for Tobago in June 1890, the appeals were being heard in several of the Tobago cases in the Trinidad Supreme Court, over which the Chief Justice presided. Gorrie agreed to send down 20 cases against the Davidsons for rehearing in Tobago before another judge, but on condition that the plaintiffs, who had all sued *in forma pauperis*, be allowed to file their affidavits of poverty and sue as paupers, 'to put them on the same footing that they were in when these cases were tried first.' It was a tacit admission that his procedures had been faulty:

... if from the pressure of business
they were not filed then it is proper
that they should be filed now.⁹⁵

The pressure to remove Gorrie continued from within and without the colony. By June 1890, Sir George Baden Powell and other British MPs raised questions in the House of Commons.

⁹³ CO295/331: Davidson to Knutsford, 8 March 1890; minutes of Herbert (12 March) & Knutsford.

⁹⁴ CO295/328: Robinson to Knutsford, 24 June 1890, & Encs., esp. A.-G.'s Rept.

⁹⁵ POSG, 1 July 1890, p. 5.

The West India Committee expressed support for the planters and merchants, and the Colonial Bank stated that the administration of justice prevented financiers from investing and lending in Trinidad. In December, a committee of Tobago planters made several charges against Gorrie, asking that he be impugned and suspended from office.⁹⁶

V.5.4 The 1890 Metairie Commission

The Commissioners reported, contrary to the abundant evidence but consonant with the testimony of the planters, that the relations between employers and employed had been harmonious until 1889, and that the system had worked very favourably for the metayers. They did not explicitly blame Gorrie for the class antagonisms, but stated that both planters and metayers believed that 'the metayer's best chance of getting all he claims is to go before the Chief Justice, whether his demand is just or not'⁹⁷ They argued that Gorrie's judgement in *Frank v Anderson* was incorrect about fixity of tenure for the metayer.

Before the Commission sat, Gorrie and W. S. Kernahan, the Receiver for Mt Irvine estate, devised a metayer contract in which the people were only to grow the canes, which would be carted and paid for by the estate at the rate of 7s per ton. The Commissioners felt that such terms could not be afforded

⁹⁶ CO295/331: WI Committee to Knutsford, 17 June 1890 & 24 July 1890, enc. Col. Bank to WI Committee, 11 July 1890.
CO295/330: Robinson to Knutsford, 15 Dec. 1890, & Encs.

⁹⁷ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, p. vi.

by most Tobago planters.⁹⁸

Among the minor modifications to the 1888 Act, they suggested that where ratoons continued after 3 crops, provision should be made for the metayer to continue on his holding from year to year. The right to terminate his tenancy by six months' notice was also recommended for the metayer, since this was allowed for the planter.

They recommended that all points for adjudication should be interpreted by the corresponding section of the 1888 Metairie Ordinance, which was to govern all metairie contracts, existing and future. The law would thus become 'a statutory declaration of the custom of the country.'⁹⁹

Gorrie's comments on the Metairie Commission Report were caustic. The Commissioners, he remarked, had no moral authority, since they had the confidence of one class only, and had all 'conspicuously' taken one side. Gatty, the chairman, had held a brief before the Appeal Court for the Davidsons 'on the employment of the notorious Anderson', and had attacked him 'like a partisan'. Hay suffered from 'offended dignity and feminine spitefulness', because the people had regarded the Chief Justice as their Governor. Robinson did not escape Gorrie's anger: he had served for almost 12 years as Governor of the Windward Islands and, under his administration, there was not even an inland post in

⁹⁸ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, p. viii; App. V, pp. 184-186; Rostant's evidence, App. I, pp. 166-167. Kernahan testified in 1897 that when he paid 7s per ton, the estate lost £500. WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, App. C, Pt. IV, p. 299.

⁹⁹ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, p. x.

Tobago. Gorrie denied that it was the litigation which caused the disturbed relations and not *vice versa*; the problems lay in the failure in 1888 and 1889 by some estates, including those of Gatty's clients, to perform their contracts.

Gorrie stated, too, that the metayer contracts, by allowing for the wife and children of the metayer to keep the allotment after his death, implied that a 3-year term was not the normal practice, but that there was security of tenure, though not fixity to a particular allotment.

The Commission, Gorrie concluded, had missed the point. Metayage had been responsible for the 'deplorable condition of everything connected with agriculture' in Tobago. He felt that the estates should buy the canes, as at Mt Irvine, or give 6-year leases instead.¹⁰⁰

The London officials were more dispassionate in assessing the evidence than the Commissioners. Wingfield, on whose analysis Knutsford's reply was based, minuted:

The selection of Commissioners was unfortunate and I think many of Sir John Gorrie's strictures on their procedures are justified.

Knutsford concluded that in 1884 and 1890, there was 'great and general dissatisfaction on the part of the Metayers with the working of the system ...'. He agreed that the law should cover all contracts, and he concurred with the Mt Irvine agreement, where the planters bought the canes and manufactured the sugar. He also agreed to the extension of

¹⁰⁰ Trinidad Royal Gazette, 23 Sept. 1891: Council Paper No. 113, 1891, 'Papers relating to the Commission to Enquire into the Metairie System in Tobago'.

contracts beyond 3 years for ratoons to be reaped.

He clarified that Gorrie's judgement in Frank v Anderson was not accurately stated by the Commissioners. The judgement, however, was found to be 'contrary to the general understanding' of the metayer contract, and Knutsford recommended that it be annulled.

Knutsford disagreed with the Commissioners and the planters on the causes of the litigation. He noted that numerous successful actions were brought only against a few proprietors.

... it seems reasonable to conclude
that the cause of the litigation was
the failure of those few proprietors
to perform their contracts.

If all contracts were brought under law, oral ones abolished, and canes bought by the planters, the sources of conflict would become fewer. Thus, he leaned heavily towards Gorrie's perception of the issues. He also asked for Gorrie's remarks to be given publicity equal to that of the Report, though his tone was 'very unbecoming'.¹⁰¹

V.5.5 The Judicial Enquiry

The pressure for Gorrie's removal produced another enquiry, this time into the administration of justice.

In January 1891, Anderson, having lost his appeal in Frank v Anderson, was imprisoned by Justice Cook, for failing to pay £500 bail and £500 security for the judgement debt of £42 2s owed to Frank. Leading Trinidad planters paid

¹⁰¹ CO295/333: Knutsford to Robinson, 18 Aug. 1891, & minutes.

Anderson's bail and security, which were obviously too high, convinced that his imprisonment was judicial persecution. Public outrage was heightened by allegations that Cook was alcoholic and sometimes inebriated in court. The beleaguered Anderson had become a hero among the élite of the colony.¹⁰²

The new Governor, Sir Frederick Napier Broome, was faced with a political crisis. On November 22nd, the unofficials in the Legislative Council passed resolutions asking for an independent enquiry into the conduct of Cook, and into the administration of justice. Broome summed up the situation:

The Legislature ... as [*sic*] at open war
with the Bench ... The Bench is at open
war with the Legislature.

So scandalous had the situation become that one of the movers of the resolutions, A. P. Marryat, referred to Cook publicly as a 'drunken imbecile.'¹⁰³ Some of the unofficials complaining were planters who had had adverse judgements in court, especially from *in forma pauperis* cases.¹⁰⁴

Knutsford agreed to a Judicial Commission of Enquiry, selected from outside the colony and empowered to examine witnesses under oath. It comprised two UK lawyers - Sir William Markby, the Chairman, and Sir Frederick Pollock. They sat in May 1892, but in Trinidad and not in Tobago, although

¹⁰² CO295/333: Robinson to Knutsford, 24 June 1891, & Encs.

¹⁰³ CO295/335: Broome to Knutsford, 16 Nov. 1891, & Encs., esp. Minutes of Leg. Co., 2 Nov. 1891; POSG, 3 Nov. 1891.

¹⁰⁴ CO295/334: Broome to Knutsford, 26 Dec. 1891, enc. Gorrie to Broome, 20 Dec. 1891. Lange, Fenwick and Marryat, 3 of the unofficials, received adverse judgements. Ninety cocoa contractors had sued Fenwick *in forma pauperis* in 1888.

it was agreed that the man-of-war, *Tourmaline*, would be despatched there. Gorrie, who presided over the Tobago Supreme Court in May 1892, awaited the Commissioners in Tobago. After that, he refused to co-operate with the enquiry.¹⁰⁵

Broome observed that the Commission did not thoroughly examine all the available evidence:

In my opinion, the Commissioners made a great mistake in not proceeding to Tobago, and in assuming, as they did in effect, that they had already heard enough to condemn Sir John Gorrie, ... I think that a more discreet line of action on the part of the Commissioners would have enabled them to have had before them the full facts and defence, in both Mr. Justice Cook's and Sir John Gorrie's cases, before reporting on them.¹⁰⁶

The Commission's report condemned Cook, who was dismissed. Cook's imprisonment of Anderson was deemed excessive; and Gorrie's treatment of Anderson was tantamount to 'judicial persecution'. Of the three senior judges, only Lumb emerged without serious blame.

One area of concern was the procedure for dealing with funds in trust of the Courts of Equity for persons entitled, many of them infants. Gorrie, the Commission found, did not respect the individuality of each fund, and did not always seek the wishes or interests of their beneficiaries. Thus, there were several cases in which infants' money was invested as loans to assist planters. Among the recipients was Edward Keens, Tobago planter and merchant, who borrowed £3000 on the

¹⁰⁵ CO295/337: Broome to Knutsford, Conf., 17 May 1892, & Encs.; Broome to Knutsford, 19 May 1892, & Encs.

¹⁰⁶ CO295/338: Broome to Knutsford, 2 June 1892.

security of his estates; £2830 of this came from funds on which consultation with the solicitors of the beneficiaries had not taken place. Gorrie was condemned for this, as well as for relaxing the rules in *in forma pauperis* cases.

The Commission condemned Gorrie for acting in several of Anderson's cases, including *Frank v Anderson*, 'contrary to law' and in a manner involving 'a substantial denial of justice'. In general, he was said to have displayed a perverse disregard of law and procedure in a manner tending to destroy confidence in the administration of justice, and to have used intemperate language in public.¹⁰⁷

Broome tried to persuade Gorrie to resign, but he refused, intending to vindicate his judicial reputation, and was interdicted from duty on 21 June 1892, to face trial before the Executive Council. On June 23, however, Gorrie was granted 3 months sick leave, owing to 'persistent mental overwork', 'deficient and irregular feeding' and anaemia.¹⁰⁸

The story of Sir John Gorrie came to a tragic denouement. On June 30, escorted by a large crowd of lower class people from his home in Diego Martin, some 20 miles from the city, to the Port of Spain Crop Advance and Discount Company, which he had founded, and then to the jetty, he left Trinidad never to return. The Port of Spain Gazette stated that 'Crowds of the *hoi polloi*' carried a banner saying, '*Au revoir* our upright

¹⁰⁷ Jud. Inq. Com. Rept., 1892.

¹⁰⁸ CO295/338: Telegrams, Broome to Knutsford, 17, 21, 22, 23 June 1892; Broome to Knutsford, 27 June 1892, & Encs., esp. Gorrie's application for sick leave with medical certificate, 22 June 1892.

judge'. Mrs Catherine Rawlins, a fowl vendor, organized a banquet of over 100 people in his honour at the People's Bank. But Gorrie could hardly respond to the adulation of the crowd:

Haggard looking, with a death-like palor
[sic] overspreading his face, Sir John
Gorrie presented a woful [sic] ...
appearance; yet his carriage was erect,
his bearing defiant ..., and there was to
be seen from the Chief Justice's flashing
eyes that the old temper was still not
extinguished.

Because of Gorrie's popularity, Broome wanted to make him 'an example', by denying him a pension, but this punitive notion was overruled by Knutsford.¹⁰⁹ Gorrie died at Exeter on 4 August 1892, shortly after his arrival in England.¹¹⁰

V.5.6 Judge Gorrie: An Assessment

Gorrie intervened in three crucial areas of social life in Tobago: metayage, credit institutions and the administration of justice. He perceived with stark clarity the issues that class bias and official neglect had allowed to fester for decades. He fought for greater self-reliance and prosperity for the labouring class, but his role as tribune of the plebs was incongruous. Ironically, he was applying the principle of 'trusteeship' by the Crown on behalf of the poor, to protect them from the powerful rich, with which the advocates of Crown Colony government had always justified their rule.

Credit institutions were important in determining the

¹⁰⁹ CO295/339: Broome to Knutsford, 9 July 1892, & Encs., esp. POSG, 1 July 1892.

¹¹⁰ CO295/342: M. Graham Gorrie to Knutsford, 12 Aug. 1892.

prospects of labour from Emancipation to the present in the Caribbean [Sharpe 1977]. Throughout the 19th century in Trinidad and in Tobago, there were no banks or institutions advancing money to smallholders [Brereton 1979; Brown 1989]. Their exclusion from access to credit continued for decades after Gorrie's death. Therefore, the People's Banks were timely and significant.¹¹¹

Gorrie's language was often injudicious, his methods arbitrary; but none can deny the worthiness of his motives, especially as he acted at such high personal cost.

Since the Crown Colony system was based on class bias and official paternalism, Gorrie's intervention was the mirror image of what he opposed: he sought, by what today is called 'affirmative action', to redress the class bias in a way that smacked of paternalism. At the time, it may have been the only way; but his only success was to expose the sharpness of the class conflicts and the unviability of metayage as a system of production. Ultimately, the labourers themselves had to be organized to effect lasting change.

'Judge Gorrie', as he was called in Tobago, was one of the few officials with the moral courage to fight publicly for the advancement of the poor. The Tobago folk graphically recorded their appreciation in song:

Sar [Sir] John Gorrie
Never make a bit of fun;

¹¹¹ See Collens [1912b:84, 87], Craig [1988:15-17] for debt peonage in early 20th century Trinidad. Credit for smallholders remained a major area of racial discrimination by the banks, according to the 1970 Commission of Enquiry into Racial Discrimination in the Private Sector.

He knock de fine
Like de eight o'clock gun!¹¹²

V.6 THE METAYAGE SYSTEM: 1892-1900

The 1888 Metairie Ordinance was amended by Ordinance No. 17 of 1892, in accordance with Knutsford's wishes. The Act covered all metayer contracts, both oral and written, included a penalty for unauthorized reaping of metayer canes, and provided for the purchase of the canes or the cane juice by the planters.¹¹³

At the end of 1892, the Acting Commissioner, T. C. Rayner, observed that 'all over the island', there was only nominal cultivation of canes and large tracts of abandoned sugar lands. He said of the metayers:

I hear they dislike the new Ordinance, and are refusing to work under it. They say it is too stringent, though the older metayers say it is merely a return to the old system; but the bulk of the metayers, being accustomed to the loose state of things which prevailed here lately, refuse to be bound by it, and are giving up cultivation.¹¹⁴

However, Commissioner Low reported increased cane cultivation in 1893; but there were 'very few, if any, written contracts made under the Ordinance'. Low reported two complaints by the metayers. One was that the metayer should be allowed to remove a small part of his sugar for home use,

¹¹² Because very few people in Scarborough and its environs had clocks and watches, a gun was fired from Fort King George above the town at 8.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m. daily.

¹¹³ CO295/340: Fowler to Ripon, 20 Oct. 1892, & Encs.

¹¹⁴ CO295/341: Broome to Ripon, 5 Dec. 1892, enc. Rayner's Rept.

before it was 'cured', with which the planters disagreed. The second was that they had to provide all the labour for cutting, carting and manufacturing of the sugar (except for the head boiler man, engine or mill driver and one fireman). Low saw no inequity in this, but found 'a strong impression on their mind that all law was for the white man and planter.'¹¹⁵

But the attempt to prop up the moribund sugar industry with metayage had failed. At its best, metayage encouraged poor husbandry; in the Depression, only minimal cultivation was viable. In 1898, Sir Hubert Jerningham, the Governor, wrote of 'disused sugar mills, deserted cane fields and ruined tenements', and of 'capital irretrievably lost', wherever he went in Tobago.¹¹⁶

In 1897, although most of the sugar produced was by metayage, 95% was from ratoons, little new cultivation being undertaken. The Royal Commission published a list of production on the 39 working sugar estates in 1897, which shows that only 7% of the acreage and 17% of the capacity of the mills were in use (Table 49).

The submissions of metayers to the Commission reflected the old disaffections. A meeting of 200 labourers at Moriah advocated 'the entire abolition of the metayer system.' Another meeting at Plymouth unanimously resolved likewise, and requested payment for the canes by the estates. Watty Cudjoe, who had been a metayer since 1864, testified that if he made

¹¹⁵ CO295/351: Broome to Ripon, 30 Jan. 1894, enc. Low to Col. Sec., 19 Jan. 1894.

¹¹⁶ CO295/388: Jerningham to Chamberlain, 24 Nov. 1898.

62 barrels of sugar, his net product was only 4 barrels after paying for labour to manufacture.¹¹⁷

TABLE 49

Sugar Production in Tobago: 1897

<u>Number of estates</u>	39
<u>Acreage of estates</u>	27435
<u>Acres Cultivated by Owners</u>	149
<u>% Acreage Cultivated by Owners</u>	.5%
<u>Acres Cultivated by Metayers</u>	1793
<u>% Acreage Cultivated by Metayers</u>	6.5%
<u>Capacity of Machinery (hhds sugar)</u>	8140
<u>1896 Crop (hhds sugar)</u>	1364
<u>1896 Crop (% Capacity)</u>	16.7%

Source: Compiled from WI Royal Com. Rept., App. C, Pt. V, 'List of Working Sugar Estates, March 1897, Tobago' by Duncan McGillivray, pp. 361-362.

¹¹⁷ WI Royal Com. Rept., App. C, Pt. V, pp. 358-360.

V.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter amply demonstrates that the metayage system permeated the entire social fabric of Tobago. The crisis of metayage was a crisis of production, of commerce and credit; of class and colour relationships; a crisis of the law, and of fundamental conceptions of equity and justice; ultimately, too, it was a crisis of the moral authority of Crown Colony rule by officials. Its rise and demise reflected the centrality of class relationships in the social order, and the failure of the planters' efforts to achieve capitalist accumulation based on non-wage labour.

Ironically, metayage, whose hallmark for over 40 years was lack of legal regulation, became so intertwined with the judicial system that protagonists on either issue were protagonists on both. The courts in 1889-92 were the terrain on which the battles between the planters and the metayers, formerly fought to a stalemate on the terrain of the estates, were carried forward. The metayers themselves succinctly summed up their strategy:

Me no grind, me grind canes at Court House.¹¹⁸

Gorrie's intervention highlighted the class conflicts that had simmered for decades. It further undermined popular confidence in the metayage system and exposed its unviability.

The reliance on custom and the failure to enact laws on metayage for 40 years resulted from official neglect and compromise with the planters. It led to an impasse within an impasse, to which the planters and officials responded by

¹¹⁸ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, p. v.

seeking to codify the custom in the 1880s. In response to pressure from the metayers and Gorrie, the 1892 Act was designed to change the custom to some degree. But it was too late. The Act was a dead letter, not only in the decreasing number of persons to whom it applied, but in the increasing recourse to custom which was implied in the inability of the estates to purchase the canes or the juice. It was a return to the old ways, within the new constraints imposed by the law. The old burdens were thrown on the shoulders of the metayers; and the intentions of Gorrie, Knutsford, and the officials of the 1840s and 1850s foundered on the want of capital and the privileged power of the planters.

Within metayage, both planters and metayers sought to accumulate surplus. Neither succeeded to any great extent. From the planters' side, it proved impossible to be successful agrarian capitalists without control over the labour process. Poor husbandry, low technological capacity and low prices led to low levels of surplus creation, which enhanced the chronic indebtedness of the planters and their dependence on a few British merchants. For the majority of labourers, metayage offered a limited mechanism for surplus creation. The greater the investment of time and labour, the greater the costs; and most metayers reckoned that the optimal size of holding was less than 4 acres. Therefore, in spite of the exceptional 'large' metayers who became planters, there were structural obstacles to the metayers' viability as sugar producers.

Neither of the two contending classes could therefore fully accomplish their aims. The planters failed to create an

agro-proletariat and a viable agrarian capitalism, whether in sugar or other crops. The metayers succeeded in avoiding becoming proletarians, and in increasing their autonomy and access to land. But before the collapse of the sugar economy, to which the crisis of metayage contributed, except for a small stratum of smallholders and large metayers, most metayers could not fully succeed in becoming independent of the estates. The conflicts within the metayage system thus help to explain why neither Option 1 nor Options 2A, 2B of our hypothesis were fulfilled. Low profitability on the planters' account also indicates why they could not extricate themselves from acute dependence on small British merchants.

We inferred from Bolland [1981; 1984] and Johnson [1991] how crucial the control of alternatives was to the planters' strategies of controlling the labour force in the BWI after 1838. Metayage was the compromise reached by 1855 in a context where the planters had annexed unused land and effectively narrowed the options available to the ex-slaves (Ch. 3). The supreme irony, therefore, is that metayage, by providing access to, and ultimately ownership of, land for the ex-slaves and their descendants, while denying the planters control over the labour process, provided the leverage for the creation of alternatives to estate monoculture, and for the diversification of the economy so dramatically accelerated after 1884, as seen in the export data (Ch. 4). Directly and indirectly, therefore, metayage contributed to the demise of the agrarian order which it was established to maintain.

CHAPTER SIX

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE IN TOBAGO: 1838-1900

VI.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the demographic trends and occupational structure are analysed, using the censuses. In spite of limitations such as inconsistent definitions and time-bound perspectives (both ours and theirs), we assess those aspects of the patterns of occupational and gender stratification which are amenable to quantitative study. This is a necessary part of using all the available sources to provide a composite, though at times refracted and blurred, picture of Tobago society between 1838 and 1900.

VI.2 MAJOR DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE POPULATION

VI.2.1 The Origins and Composition of the Population

There was no compulsory registration of births, deaths or marriages until an enabling Act was passed at the request of the Colonial Office in 1868; but the records were unreliable until a more stringent Ordinance of 1882¹ was revised in 1884. There were no comprehensive records on migration. Thus, the major sources of statistics on the population in the 19th

¹ CO321/59: Robinson to Kimberley, 27 Oct. 1882, enc. The Births, Marriages and Deaths Registration Ord., 1882.

century are the censuses taken in 1844, 1851, and thereafter decennially. The 1844 census was a simple enumeration, and for most purposes does not allow comparison with the later ones. The 'base' data are therefore usually those from the 1851 census, but the officials regarded its population total of 14,378 as an under-estimate, 15,000 being seen as more accurate.²

At census 1851, 89% of the population had been locally born. The largest migrant groups were, firstly, the natives of Africa (753 or 5.2% of the population), whose numbers had been boosted shortly before the June census by the arrival in May of 292 Liberated Africans; secondly, there were the British West Indians (732 or 5.1%), of whom the Barbadians were the largest group (Table 50). (A second and final group of 225 Liberated Africans arrived from St Helena in April 1862; 134 of them were under 15 years old.³) In 1851, the European-born, of whom the Scots (66 persons) formed the largest subgroup, constituted only .8% of the population (115 persons). By 1871, the last year for which we have information, 38 Scots were enumerated, but the resident Europeans may have been fewer than 104, the census figure, because the sailors on ships in the harbour, most of them European, were also included.⁴

² CO290/38: Blue Bk., 1854; CO285/73: Hincks to Labouchere, 7 July 1856, enc. Dowland to Shortland, 5 June 1856.

³ CO285/80: Walker to Newcastle, 22 May 1862, enc. Drysdale to Walker, 5 May 1862.

⁴ CO286/26: Fraser to Kortright, 22 July 1871, Rept. on the 1871 Census. Fraser believed that many of the Africa-born had been enumerated as natives of Tobago.

TABLE 50

Origins of the Tobago Population: 1851-1901

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>1851</u>		<u>1861</u>		<u>1871</u>		<u>1881</u>		<u>1891</u>		<u>1901</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Tobago	12744	88.6	14029	91.0	15484	90.8	16665	92.3	16942	92.3	17241	91.9
Africa	753	5.2	426	2.8	378	2.2	199	1.1	204	1.1	132	.7
BWI	732	5.1	837	5.4	1060	6.2	1112*	6.2	1118	6.09	1299	6.9
Barbados	489		610		834				735			
Grenada	115		97		83				66			
Trinidad	17		18		40				193		340	
Other	111		112		103				124		959	
Other WI	22	.15	18	1	12	.07			10	.05	13	.07
UK	109	.76	84	5	88	.5	52	.3	47	.25	48	.25
England	37		41		42							
Scotland	66		36		38							
Ireland	6		7		8							
Other Eur.	6	.04	12	.07	16	.09	3	.01	2	.01	5	.03
Rest of World	12	.08	4	.02	16	.09	20	.1	25	.14	11	.06
Not Given	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	.03	2	.01
Total	14378	99.9	15410	99.9	17054	99.9	18051	100	18353	99.9	18751	100

NOTE: * The 1881 Census gives 1093 from 'Other WI Colonies' and 19 from British and Dutch Guiana.

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

The century was marked by the steady decrease of natives of Africa and Europe, and an increase of British West Indians. Tobago's planters could not afford to recruit Indian indentured labourers. There were 24 persons of Indian birth or descent in 1891, and only 8 in 1901. By 1901, only 1.04% of the population had been born outside of the Caribbean, and nearly all the people were of African or mixed African/European descent.

The attrition of the white population is important for the class/colour/gender configuration of Tobago society. In 1842, the Blue Book gave the distribution of whites by parish and town, which are compared with a similar distribution for 1844, based on the census (Table 51). The totals are 225 and 208, respectively. As in the 1830s, white females were few, and most whites who reproduced begat progeny of mixed race. The Europeans were concentrated in the major centres of economic activity - Scarborough, its suburbs, and the leeward parishes of St David and St Patrick. When we exclude the five children, 49% of the white males were 'proprietors' or in supervisory positions on estates in 1842; they also dominated banking, the professions and the clergy.

TABLE 51

Distribution of Whites by Gender, 1842, 1844
and
Occupational Classification of White Males, 1842

<u>Place</u>	<u>1842</u>			<u>1844</u>			<u>Occupations of White Males, 1842</u>	
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total		
Scarboro'	54	12	66	45	10	55	Resident Proprietors	11
Plymouth	4	3	7	3	4	7	Managers of Estates	49
St John	8	0	8	11	2	13	Overseers	27
St Paul	16	2	18	17	1	18	Merchants	10
St Mary	11	3	14	5	2	7	Merchants' Clerks	9
St George	18	2	20	17	4	21	Public Officers	16
St Andrew	17	4	21	24	5	29	Barristers	3
St Patrick	17	2	19	22	3	25	Clergymen	6
St David	39	13	52	27	6	33	Doctors	8
							Bankers	4
Total	183	42	225	172	36	208	Mechanics	11
							Sailors	4
							Domestics	7
							Vendue Master	1
							School Master	1
							Children	5
							Overseers & Clerks	
							Unemployed	11
							Total	183

Sources: CO290/26, /28: Blue Bks. for 1842, 1844, respectively.

The only census with a 'racial' classification is that of 1881, which shows 109 'Europeans' (.6% of the population of 18,051), a half their number in the 1840s. Of these, only 55 were born in Europe, which suggests that 50% of them were Creoles. Those classified 'mixed' were 2862 (15.8%), 'Asiatics' 8 (.04%), and 'Africans' 15,072 (83.5%).

VI.2.2 Population Density, Growth and Settlement Patterns

Throughout the 19th century, the population density was low. Table 52 gives the data and compares Tobago with the Windward Islands, of which it formed part until 1889.

TABLE 52

Tobago Population Density, 1844-1901, and Comparison with the Windward Islands, 1882

A: TOBAGO

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Persons/Sq. Mile</u>
1844	13208	116
1851	14378	126
1861	15410	135
1871	17054	150
1881	18051	158
1891	18353	161
1901	18751	164

B: WINDWARD ISLANDS, 1882

<u>Island</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Area (sq. miles)</u>	<u>Density</u>
Barbados	172000	166	1036
St Lucia	39300	243	162
St Vincent	41000	132	311
Grenada	43000	133	323
Tobago	18500	114	162

Sources: A: Tobago Population Censuses for given years;
B: Report from the Royal Commission ..., 1883, Pt. II, p. 4.

Population growth, which was 1% between 1851 and 1861, declined to insignificant levels between 1871 and 1901, and it is only by 1911 that the annual rate of growth again reached 1% (Table 53). Although infant mortality rates were high, the major determinant of population growth was emigration to Trinidad and other nearby colonies, which grew to remarkable proportions between 1871 and 1901.

VI.2.2.1 Population Changes at District Level

Emigration took place from the entire island, but the Leeward District experienced the heaviest loss. In 1844, almost 20% of the population resided in the Windward District, 41% in the Middle, and 39.5% in the Leeward. By 1891, the last year for which these data are available in the 19th century, the proportion for the Windward District had risen to 24%, after a decline owing to internal migration in the 1840s and 1850s (Ch. 3). The Middle District, in which Scarborough and its suburbs were situated, suffered a decline in its share of the population to 34% and the Leeward, which in 1871 accounted for 47% of the population, declined to 42% by 1891. Strict comparisons are not possible for the entire period, because the extent of the districts is not known for 1851 and 1861; but the 1871, 1881, and 1891 censuses appear to have used the same district boundaries. The intercensal population changes at district level, for the decades 1871-81, 1881-91, subdivided by gender, are given in Tables 54 and 55.

TABLE 53

Tobago: Population Growth, 1844-1931, and Comparison with the Windward Islands

<u>Census Years</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Increase per annum in the intercensal period preceding</u>	<u>% Increase</u>	<u>Windward Islands % Intercensal Increase per annum</u>	
1844	13208	-	-	-	-	-
1851	14378	1170	167	1.3	-	-
1861	15410	1032	103	.7	1844-61	.82
1871	17054	1644	164	1.0	1861-71	1.37
1881	18051	997	98	.58	1871-81	1.25
1891	18353	302	30	.17	1881-91	.88
1901	18751	398	40	.2		
1911	20749	1998	199	1.06	1891-1911	.79
1921	23390	2641	264	1.3	1911-21	.42
1931	25358	1968	197	.84	1921-46	.94

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses, 1844-1931; Roberts [1957: 50], Table 8, 'Annual Intercensal Rates of Growth (%) for West Indian Populations', for Cols. 6 & 7.

TABLE 54

Population by District and Gender: 1844-1891

	<u>1844</u>				<u>1851</u>			
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Windward	1227	1364	2591	19.6	1205	1144	2349	16.3
Middle	2439	2955	5394	41	2866	3287	6153	42.8
Leeward	2486	2737	5223	39.5	2878	2998	5876	40.8
Total	6152	7056	13208	100.1	6949	7429	14378	99.9
	<u>1861</u>				<u>1871</u>			
Windward	1358	1321	2679	17.4	1559	1572	3131	18.3
Middle	2995	3398	6393	41.5	2835	3079	5914	34.7
Leeward	3080	3258	6338	41.1	3868	4141	8009	47.0
Total	7433	7977	15410	100	8262	8792	17054	100
	<u>1881</u>				<u>1891</u>			
Windward	2041	1987	4028	22.3	2145	2264	4409	24.0
Middle	2853	3219	6072	33.6	2842	3319	6161	33.6
Leeward	3800	4151	7951	44.0	3653	4130	7783	42.4
Total	8694	9357	18051	99.9	8640	9713	18353	99.9

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses of given years.

TABLE 55

Gender Specific Population Increase/Decrease by District: 1871-1891

	<u>1 8 7 1-1 8 8 1</u>			<u>1 8 8 1-1 8 9 1</u>	
	Increase/ Decrease	% Change		Increase/ Decrease	% Change
<u>MALES</u>					
Windward	482	+31		104	+ 5
Middle	18	+ .6		- 11	- .4
Leeward	- 68	- 1.8		-147	- 3.8
Total	432	+ 5.2		- 54	- .6
<u>FEMALES</u>					
Windward	415	+26.4		277	+13.9
Middle	140	+ 4.5		100	+ 3.1
Leeward	10	+ .2		- 21	+ .5
Total	565	+ 6.4		356	+ 3.8
<u>MALES AND FEMALES</u>					
Windward	897	+28.6		381	+ 9.6
Middle	158	+ 2.7		89	+ 1.5
Leeward	- 58	- .7		-168	- 2.1
Total	997	+ 5.8		302	+ 1.7

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

The Windward District was said by the compiler of the census to have contributed most to population growth between 1871 and 1891, because of less communication with other colonies.⁵ However, in the Windward and Leeward Districts, male rates of growth declined markedly in the decade 1881-1891, and the decline in the rate of increase of males in the Windward District was steeper than it was elsewhere. The Middle District showed the lowest rates of decline for both males and females (Table 55).

VI.2.2.2 Population Changes in Parishes and Towns

For most of the censuses, the districts were deemed to be composed of parishes and towns as follows: St John, St Paul and St Mary were the Windward District; St George, St Andrew and Scarborough, the Middle District; St David, St Patrick and Plymouth, the Leeward District. The data were therefore examined at the parish level also. (See Figures 3, 4, for parish boundaries.)

The parish boundaries were the most stable spatial boundaries over time, although for the censuses in which the settlements in each parish are given (1881 and 1891), there are slight discrepancies. The most dramatic changes were in the Leeward District where St Patrick rose from having 14% to 21% of the population between 1844-61, to fall to 17.2% by 1891 (Table 56).

⁵ Tobago 1881 Census, H. H. Sealy (Compiler) to Laborde, 1 Aug. 1881; cf. Sealy to Hay, 31 Aug. 1891, on 1891 census.

TABLE 56

Population of Parishes and Towns by Gender: 1844-1891

<u>Parish/ Town</u>	<u>1844</u>				<u>1861</u>			
	M	F	Total	% Pop'n	M	F	Total	% Pop'n
St John	485	474	959	7.3	455	424	879	5.7
St Paul	443	476	921	7.0	729	744	1473	9.6
St Mary	299	412	711	5.4	313	299	612	4.0
St George	785	818	1603	12.1	903	966	1869	12.1
St Andrew	1049	1268	2317	17.5	1291	1294	2585	16.8
St David	1409	1580	2989	22.6	1448	1575	3023	19.6
St Patrick	899	935	1834	13.9	1563	1695	3258	21.1
Scarboro'	605	869	1474	11.2	467	723	1190	7.7
Plymouth	178	222	400	3.0	250	249	499	3.2
Total	6152	7056	13208	100.0	7419	7969	15388*	99.8

<u>Parish/ Town</u>	<u>1881</u>				<u>1891</u>			
	M	F	Total	% Pop'n	M	F	Total	% Pop'n
St John	588	543	1131	6.3	568	623	1191	6.5
St Paul	860	891	1751	9.7	973	1074	2047	11.1
St Mary	593	553	1146	6.3	604	567	1171	6.4
St George	1032	1039	2071	11.5	1062	1158	2220	12.1
St Andrew	1470	1678	3148	17.4	1376	1646	3022	16.5
St David	1928	2011	3939	21.8	1889	2096	3985	21.7
St Patrick	1517	1728	3245	18.0	1467	1695	3162	17.2
Scarboro'	351	502	853	4.7	404	515	919	5.0
Plymouth	355	412	767	4.3	297	339	636	3.5
Total	8694	9357	18051	100.0	8640	9713	18353	100.0

NOTES:

1. *The 1861 Census does not account for 22 persons in its table on population by place of abode.

2. Persons in the harbours are included in the relevant parishes.

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

The sex ratios (males per 100 females) in the parishes also showed marked fluctuations. The remotest Windward parish, St John, had high sex ratios until 1881, after which there was a decline to 92.2. St Mary (Windward) experienced a sharp increase from 72.6 in 1844 to 104.7 in 1861; and this high level was sustained until 1891, probably as a result of Barbadian immigration. The parishes with the lowest sex ratios were St Andrew near Scarborough, and St Patrick. In the former, this was probably related to the traditionally high female component in Caribbean urban populations (see below); St Patrick, as a result of emigration, experienced a steady decline in its sex ratio, although its population grew by 77.4% between 1844 and 1861 and declined by 2.5% between 1881 and 1891 (Tables 56, 57).

TABLE 57

Male/Female Ratios by Parish: 1844-1891

<u>Parish</u>	<u>1844</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1891</u>
St John	102.3	107.3	108.3	92.2
St Paul	93.1	98.0	98.0	90.6
St Mary	72.6	104.7	107.2	106.5
St George	96.0	93.5	99.3	91.7
St Andrew	82.7	99.8	87.6	83.6
St David	89.2	91.9	95.9	90.1
St Patrick	96.1	92.2	87.8	86.5
TOBAGO	87.2	93.1	92.9	88.9

NOTE: Males per 100 females are given.

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

The net decreases in the population of Scarborough for 1861-91 (-31.4%) and for Plymouth between 1881-91 (-17%) are important for different reasons. In neither case do we know the boundaries used at each census. Assuming that they were the same over time, Table 58 presents their composition by gender for 1844-1891.

In 1844, Scarborough was a primate capital town, typical of the BWI colonies during slavery [Higman 1984b]. Such towns had low sex ratios, because of the high demand for female domestic slaves, and because of the high degree of female ownership of urban slaves, women also tending to own more female than male slaves. There were usually also high proportions of the African-born, and of Creoles from other colonies in the towns [Higman 1984a:118-9, 145]. In 1844, 11.7% of the population lived in Scarborough; and females far exceeded males, the sex ratio being 69.6 males per 100 females.

The absolute and proportionate decline of the Scarborough population down to 1881 does not indicate the decline of the town *per se*, but rather the growth of its suburbs, to which some freedpeople had resorted before 1838, and which became more populous thereafter. In 1861, the census gave the 'suburbs of Scarborough' as having 276 persons, 130 males and 146 females. In 1891, considering the suburbs of Scarborough to be those settlements within a radius of one mile from the town, their population was 1331 persons (Table 59). (The 1881 data are also given, but the enumeration of settlements is inconsistent, and comparison of settlements would be unwise.)

The female preponderance was maintained over the years.

The slow increase of Plymouth's population over that of 1844 does not indicate a growth in urban characteristics. Situated on Courland Bay with a deep harbour, it was the sole port of entry for the ships of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. (RMSPCO), which brought the mail and passengers from Europe. However, from 1841 to 1881, there was often protest against this by the planters and merchants, since Plymouth was not a place of trade. Late in 1881, Plymouth ceased to be a port of entry. It was a fishing and agricultural village, and a centre for sea communication, some of it clandestine, with nearby islands, for smallholders. None of the merchants did business there, and few of the propertied able to vote resided there.

TABLE 58

Population of Scarborough and Plymouth by Gender: 1844-1891

SCARBOROUGH

	<u>1844</u>			<u>1861</u>			<u>1881</u>			<u>1891</u>		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
No.	605	869	1474	467	723	1190	351	502	853	404	515	919
% M/F	41.0	58.9		39.2	60.7		41.1	58.8		44.0	56.0	
Sex Ratios*		69.6			64.6			69.9			78.4	
% Pop'n	9.8	12.3	11.2	6.3	9.1	7.7	3.9	5.3	4.7	4.7	5.3	5.0

PLYMOUTH

	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
No.	178	222	400	250	249	499	355	412	767	297	339	636
% M/F	44.5	55.5		50.1	49.9		46.3	53.7		46.7	53.3	
Sex Ratios*		80.2			100.4			86.2			87.6	
% Pop'n	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.4	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.4	4.2	3.4	3.5	3.5

NOTES: 1. No data are given for 1851 and 1871. 2.* Males per 100 females.

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses of given years.

TABLE 59

Population of Scarborough and Its Suburbs: 1881, 1891

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Population</u>					
	<u>1881</u>			<u>1891</u>		
Suburbs of Scarborough	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Lower Scarborough	149	170	319	93	119	212
Wilson's Road	Not Given			56	99	155
Breeze Hall	1	6	7	4	5	9
Morne Quiton	Not Given			100	120	220
Bagatelle	160	221	381	16	25	41
Fort Road	Not Given			29	27	56
Fort King George	51	22	73	43	48	91
Rockly Vale	247	315	562	202	248	450
Bacolet Road	Not Given			41	56	97
Smithfield Estate	3	2	5	Not Given		
Total	611	736	1347	584	747	1331
% Male/Female	45.4	54.6		43.9	56.1	
Sex Ratio*		83.0			78.2	
% Population	7.0	7.9	7.5	6.8	7.7	7.25
Scarborough	351	502	853	404	515	919
Scarborough & Suburbs	962	1238	2200	988	1262	2250
% Male/Female	43.7	56.3		43.9	56.1	
Sex Ratio*		77.7			78.4	
% Population	11.1	13.2	12.2	11.4	13.0	12.2

NOTE: * Males per 100 females.

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses, 1881, 1891.

VI.2.2.3 Population Changes at Settlement Level

There were 95 settlements apart from Scarborough and Plymouth in 1861, and 112 in 1891, the earliest and latest years for which there are data. In 1861, outside of the towns, only Rockly Vale, a suburb of Scarborough, had over 500 persons (503 or 3.3% of the population). By 1891, 8 villages, with 4746 persons or 25.9% of the population, had more than 500 persons. These large villages were Riseland (563), Canaan (532), and Buccoo (511) in the Leeward District; Mt St George (800), Mason Hall (663), Adventure (616) and Indian Walk⁶ (Moriah) (551) in the Middle District; and Roxborough (510) in the Windward District.⁷

The most significant change in the settlement patterns between 1861 and 1891 is that, although an increased proportion of settlements had fewer than 100 persons, whereas 46.3% of the population had lived in villages with between 100 and 299 persons in 1861, 33.9% lived in such settlements at the later date; settlements with over 400 persons in which resided 11.6% of the population in 1861, had 30.7% in 1891, the greatest shift being to the villages with over 500 persons. There was thus, by 1891, a proliferation of very small settlements, flanked by a growing number of larger ones

⁶ Indian Walk was the estate from which the ex-slaves bought land and built Moriah village after 1838. The 1891 census gives 'Moriah' as having 10 persons, but this prob. refers to the residents of the Moravian mission.

⁷ Mason Hall, Mt St George, Moriah and Riseland (near Bethel) had been noted as centres of smallholding activity in the 1840s (Ch. 3). Roxborough was the main port of entry for the Windward District before 1881 and its administrative centre.

which accounted for an increasing share of the population (Table 60).

Figures 3 and 4, in giving the spatial dimension to these statistics, show the development, by 1891, of what may be termed 'conglomerate settlements', where two or more larger villages were close together, usually with smaller settlements nearby. For example, in St Patrick, Canaan and Tyson Hall comprised one such grouping; Buccoo, Riseland, and Bethel/Bethlehem were another. Mason Hall (St George) had smaller satellite settlements nearby in Adelphi and Concordia, and it was closely linked by road with Mt St George and Indian Walk. The largest such cluster was Scarborough and its suburbs, of which Rockly Vale was the largest.

None of these 'conglomerate settlements' was in the Windward District. This pattern of development, which was already discernible in 1861 (Figure 3), is probably related to the availability of land for village settlements, which in turn was affected by the pressure on the planters, which the labourers congregating in the Middle and Leeward Districts exerted after 1838.

TABLE 60
Population in Settlements of Varying Population Sizes
and Proportion of Settlements with Varying Population Sizes: 1861, 1891

<u>Proportion of the Population in Settlements of Varying Population Sizes</u>											
	0-	100-	200-	300-	400-	500+	Sub- Total	Towns	Estates	Shipping Etc	TOTAL
	<u>1861</u>										
Number	2322	3529	3602	2357	1275	503	13588	1689	N.G.*	111	15410**
% Pop'n	15.1	22.9	23.4	15.3	8.3	3.3	88.3	10.9	-	.7	100
	<u>1891</u>										
Number	2290	2428	3798	2406	872	4746	16540	1497	257	59	18353
% Pop'n	12.4	13.2	20.7	13.1	4.8	25.9	90.1	8.2	1.4	.3	100
<u>Proportion of Settlements with Varying Population Sizes (Excluding Towns)</u>											
	<u>1861</u>										
Number	46	24	14	7	3	1	95				
% Settle- ments	48.4	25.3	14.7	7.4	3.1	1.0	99.9				
	<u>1891</u>										
Number	62	18	15	7	2	8	112				
% Settle- ments	55.3	16.1	13.4	6.2	1.8	7.1	99.9				

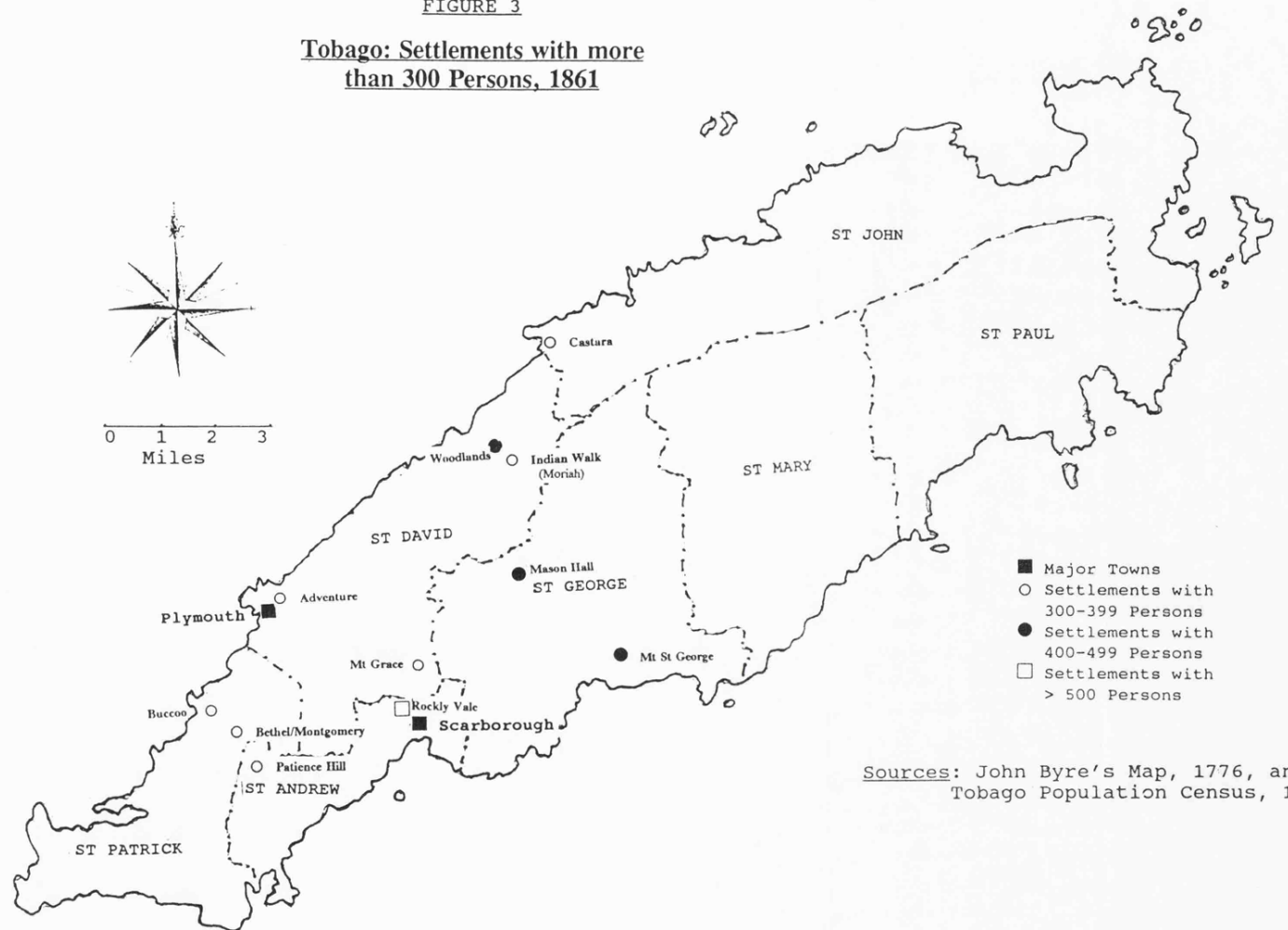
NOTES: * N.G. = Not Given.

** Includes 22 persons not accounted for in the census tables on place of abode.

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses, 1861, 1891.

FIGURE 3

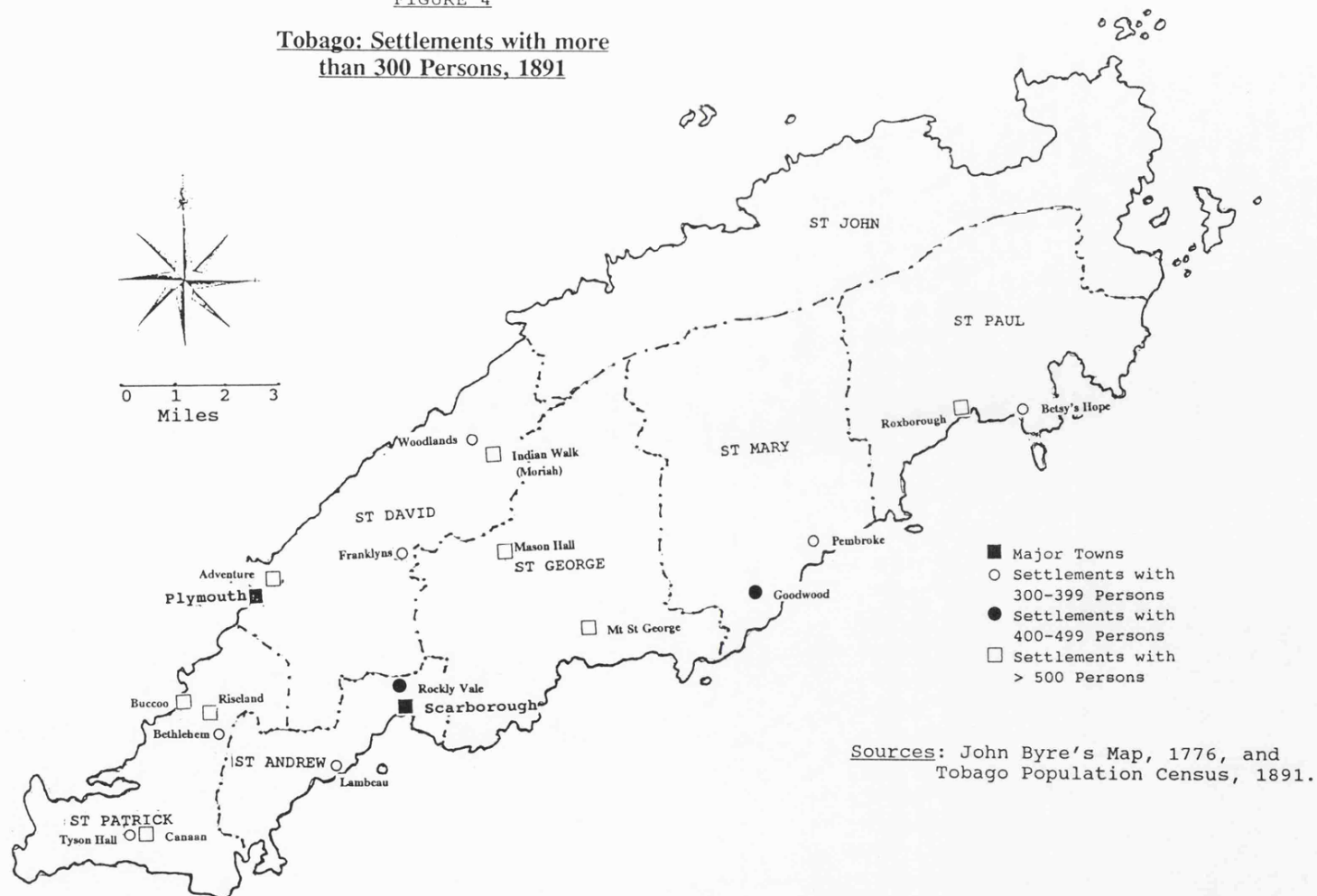
**Tobago: Settlements with more
than 300 Persons, 1861**



Sources: John Byre's Map, 1776, and
Tobago Population Census, 1861.

FIGURE 4

Tobago: Settlements with more
than 300 Persons, 1891



Sources: John Byre's Map, 1776, and
Tobago Population Census, 1891.

Unfortunately, the censuses do not consistently distinguish settlements on estates. In 1891, they were given only for the parishes of the Middle and Leeward Districts. Altogether, the estate residents identified were 1.4% of Tobago's population. For the parishes for which there is information, the figures are given in Table 61.

TABLE 61

Residents on Estates, Available Parishes: 1891

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Estate Residents</u>	<u>% Pop'n</u>
St George	2220	52	2.3
St Andrew	3022	42	1.4
St David	3985	85	2.1
St Patrick	3162	78	2.5

Source: Tobago Population Census, 1891.

The picture that emerges is that of a population living at low density, in small settlements, which were increasingly becoming clusters of villages by 1891; there, face-to-face relationships and popular sanctions would have been the norm. Most people lived off the estates, at least in the Middle and Leeward Districts, but there were no inaccessible settlements; the population was concentrated near the estates and towns, within reach of the roads and services.⁸ In 1884, when the Administrator, Dr Carrington, did a tour of the island, the

⁸ Holt [1992:150] argues for Jamaica that if the ex-slaves were oriented to marginal subsistence, as was believed by Colonial Office officials, they would have gone to the remote backlands. Mintz [1974a:155] shows that the creation of Caribbean peasantries was an act both of westernization and of resistance.

northern coast beyond Parlatuvier was still uninhabited.⁹

VI.2.2.4 Types of Dwellings

The 1891 census was the first to describe the types of dwellings. Although the Registrar General saw the 1901 figures as only approximate, the pattern for Tobago was particularly interesting. In 1891, 95% of the occupied dwellings were undivided dwelling houses, and 3% divided dwellings; in 1901, the respective proportions were 97.7% and 1.4%. In 1891, there were 31 'barracks' with 106 rooms; in 1901, there were only 6 'barracks' with 6 rooms. Thus, by 1901, the overwhelming majority of the population lived in undivided dwellings. Although the ratio of persons to rooms (2.6 in 1891 and 1901) was less favourable than that of Trinidad (2.2 persons per room in 1901), Tobago had almost no estate barracks and urban 'barrack yards', which were integral to the development of society and culture in Trinidad in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Table 62).¹⁰

⁹ CO321/79: Robinson to Derby, 7 June 1884, enc. Carrington's 'Notes of a Journey ... made in April, 1884'. Bloody Bay (Bennettsville), was partly owned by a Mr Bennett who, with other cultivators, commuted there to plant cocoa and ground provisions.

¹⁰ Brereton [1979] and Wood [1968] show for Trinidad that the barrack yards were the crucible in which stick fighting, calypso, steelband and other folk traditions were forged.

TABLE 62

Types of Dwellings, Tobago: 1891, 1901;
Trinidad: 1901

	<u>T O B A G O</u>				<u>T R I N I D A D</u>	
	<u>1891</u>		<u>1901</u>		<u>1901</u>	
Dwellings	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dwelling Houses	4011	95.1	4045	97.7	36889	66.1
Divided Dwellings	128	3.0	57	1.4	5089	9.1
Barracks	31	.7	6	.1	4948	8.9
Rooms in Yards	49	1.2	29	.7	8898	15.9
Total Dwellings Occupied	4219	100.0	4137	99.9	55824	100.0
Rooms Occupied	7026		7083		121033	
Population	18353		18751		255148	
Unoccupied Houses	128		170		1805	
Houses under Construc'n	91		112		607	
Rooms Unoccupied	304		372		4555	

Sources: Tobago Population Census, 1891; Trinidad and Tobago Census, 1901, p. 25.

VI.2.3 Age Structure, Sex Ratios, Migration and Fertility

Migration affected the age/sex structure of the population. Before 1891, only the 1871 census gave details on the age categories above 60 years; therefore, in the tables immediately following, persons over 60 are treated as one group. Table 63 gives the distributions of age cohorts, which are further subdivided by gender in Table 64. Since the migration was largely of the able-bodied, the proportion of the population aged 20-50 declined steadily from 41.7% in 1851 to 33.5% in 1901, rising again slowly to 36.4% in 1931 (Table 65). The disparity in the sex ratios in those age cohorts, and particularly for the 20-29 age group, is marked between 1871 and 1911, as Table 66 indicates. Table 66 also shows a decline in the ratio of males per thousand females in the population between 1871 and 1901 and, thereafter, only a gradual increase to the ratio of 1871, which was attained in 1931. Between 1881 and 1891, the male population declined by 54, while females increased by 356; in the subsequent decade, only 31 males were added to the population, while there was an increase of 367 women (Table 64).

TABLE 65

Proportion of Population Aged between 20-50: 1851-1931

<u>Year</u>	<u>% Population</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>% Population</u>
1851	41.7%	1891	36.2%
1861	39.6%	1901	33.5%
1871	38.5%	1911	35.3%
1881	37.5%	1921	36.2%
		1931	36.4%

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

TABLE 63
Population by Age: 1851-1901

AGE	<u>1851</u>		<u>1861</u>		<u>1871</u>		<u>1881</u>		<u>1891</u>		<u>1901</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0- 4	1910	13.2	2035	13.2	2604	15.3	2593	14.4	2616	14.2	2767	14.7
5- 9	1641	11.4	1836	11.9	1882	11.0	2274	12.6	2201	12.0	2580	13.6
10-14	1539	10.7	1732	11.2	2002	11.8	} 3964	22.0	2423	13.2	2430	13.3
15-19	1306	9.0	1497	9.7	1759	10.2			1864	10.1	1943	10.3
20-29	2541	17.6	2688	17.4	3176	18.6	2970	16.5	2831	15.3	2729	14.4
30-39	1971	13.7	1811	11.75	2064	12.1	2235	12.4	2089	11.4	1924	10.2
40-49	1505	10.4	1611	10.5	1339	7.8	1577	8.7	1762	9.5	1696	9.0
50-59	905	6.2	1124	7.3	1159	6.75	1181	6.5	1178	6.3	1331	7.0
60+	1060	7.3	1076	7.0	1069	6.2	1257	7.0	1389	7.6	1351	7.2
<u>TOTAL</u>	14378	99.5	15410	99.9	17054	99.75	18051	100	18353	99.7	18751	99.7

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

TABLE 64

Population by Age and Sex: 1851-1931

<u>AGE COHORT</u>	<u>1851</u>				<u>1861</u>				<u>1871</u>			
	<u>Numbers</u>		<u>% Pop'n</u>		<u>Numbers</u>		<u>% Pop'n</u>		<u>Numbers</u>		<u>% Pop'n</u>	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0- 4	924	986	6.4	6.9	986	1049	6.4	6.8	1257	1347	7.4	7.9
5- 9	805	836	5.6	5.8	936	900	6.1	5.8	939	943	5.5	5.5
10-14	839	700	5.8	4.9	903	829	5.9	5.4	1052	950	6.2	5.6
15-19	636	670	4.4	4.7	701	796	4.6	5.2	865	894	5.1	5.2
20-29	1273	1268	8.9	8.8	1299	1389	8.4	9.0	1405	1771	8.2	10.4
30-39	959	1012	6.7	7.0	892	919	5.8	6.0	1070	994	6.3	5.8
40-49	739	766	5.1	5.3	768	843	5.0	5.5	635	704	3.7	4.1
50-59	378	527	2.6	3.7	563	561	3.7	3.6	589	570	3.5	3.3
60+	396	664	2.8	4.6	385	691	2.5	4.5	450	619	2.6	3.6
TOTAL	6949	7429	48.3	51.7	7433	7977	48.2	51.7	8262	8792	48.4	51.6
<u>Population</u>	14,378				15,410				17,054			

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

TABLE 64 continued

Population by Age and Sex: 1851-1931

<u>AGE COHORT</u>	<u>1881</u>				<u>1891</u>				<u>1901</u>			
	<u>Numbers</u>		<u>% Pop'n</u>		<u>Numbers</u>		<u>% Pop'n</u>		<u>Numbers</u>		<u>% Pop'n</u>	
	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>
0- 4	1347	1246	7.5	6.9	1320	1296	7.2	7.1	1354	1413	7.2	7.5
5- 9	1107	1167	6.1	6.5	1112	1089	6.1	5.9	1291	1289	6.9	6.9
10-14	}	2014	1.1	1.08	1232	1191	6.7	6.5	1253	1177	6.7	6.3
15-19					894	970	4.9	4.7	925	1018	4.9	5.4
20-29	1333	1637	7.4	9.1	1188	1643	6.5	9.0	1062	1667	5.7	8.9
30-39	991	1244	5.5	6.9	928	1161	5.1	6.3	804	1120	4.3	6.0
40-49	733	844	4.1	4.7	799	963	4.4	5.2	798	898	4.3	4.8
50-59	648	533	3.6	3.0	563	615	3.1	3.4	606	725	3.2	3.9
60+	521	736	2.9	4.1	604	785	3.3	4.3	578	773	3.1	4.1
<u>TOTAL</u>	8694	9357	48.2	51.8	8640	9713	47.1	52.9	8671	10080	46.2	53.8
<u>Population</u>	18,051				18,353				18,751			

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

TABLE 64 concluded

Population by Age and Sex: 1851-1931

<u>AGE COHORT</u>	<u>1911</u>				<u>1921</u>				<u>1931</u>			
	<u>Numbers</u>		<u>% Pop'n</u>		<u>Numbers</u>		<u>% Pop'n</u>		<u>Numbers</u>		<u>% Pop'n</u>	
	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>
0- 4	1526	1474	7.4	7.1	1678	1675	7.2	7.2	1804	1747	7.1	6.9
5- 9	1372	1302	6.6	6.3	1577	1593	6.7	6.8	1741	1721	6.9	6.8
10-14	1352	1329	6.5	7.1	1552	1480	6.6	6.3	1644	1499	6.5	5.9
15-19	1035	1051	5.0	5.1	1102	1136	4.7	4.9	1255	1419	5.0	5.9
20-29	1466	1869	7.1	9.0	1519	2031	6.5	8.7	1804	2016	7.1	8.0
30-39	991	1213	4.8	5.8	1272	1417	5.4	6.1	1187	1436	4.7	5.7
40-49	836	981	4.0	4.7	1033	1126	4.4	4.8	1105	1229	4.4	4.8
50-59	632	738	3.0	3.6	692	776	3.0	3.3	846	896	3.3	3.5
60+	712	870	3.4	2.4	770	961	3.3	4.1	889	1114	3.5	4.4
TOTAL	9922	10827	47.8	51.1	11195	12195	47.8	52.2	12275	13077	48.5	51.9
<u>Population</u>	20,749				23,390				25,352			

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

TABLE 66

Age-Specific Sex Ratios (Males per 1,000 Females): 1851-1931

<u>AGE COHORT</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>1901</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1931</u>
0- 4	937	940	933	1081	1018	958	1035	1001	1033
5- 9	963	1040	996	949	1021	1001	1054	990	1012
10-14	1198	1089	1107	}	1034	1065	1017	1049	1097
15-19	949	881	968	1033}	922	909	985	970	854
20-29	1004	935	793	814	723	637	784	748	895
30-39	948	971	1076	797	799	718	817	898	827
40-49	1047	911	902	868	830	889	852	917	899
50-59	717	1001	1033	1216	915	836	856	892	944
60+	596	557	727	708	769	748	818	801	798
All Ages	935	932	940	929	889	860	916	918	939

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

We are given no subdivisions of the cohort aged 60 and over for the years 1851, 1861 and 1881. The population over 60 saw almost no numerical increase between 1851 and 1871. Between 1881 and 1891, it accounted for two-thirds of the population increase: 202 out of a total of 302. Between 1891-1901, this group declined by 128, although the population grew by 398. This was partly the result of the attrition in younger age cohorts owing to emigration. In 1911, however, there was an increase of 232, or 11.6% of Tobago's increase.

Where gender is concerned, men aged over 60 who, in 1851, constituted only 2.75% of the population while the comparable figure for women was 4.6%, increased their proportion to 3.1% in 1901 and 3.5% in 1931 (Table 67). The proportion of women over 60 fell to 3.6% in 1871, but remained at just over 4% in the five decades following. Thus, as the century after Emancipation progressed, more men enjoyed a longer lifespan, which was an improvement on the demographic patterns of the slavery era.

TABLE 67
Persons Aged over 60 by Gender as Proportion of Population: 1851-1931

		<u>60 - 65</u>		<u>70+</u>		<u>Total >60</u>				<u>60 - 65</u>		<u>70+</u>		<u>Total >60</u>	
		M	F	M	F	M	F			M	F	M	F	M	F
		<u>1851</u>								<u>1901</u>					
No.	N.G.			N.G.		396	664			354	449	224	324	578	773
% Pop'n						2.75	4.6			1.9	2.4	1.2	1.7	3.1	4.1
Sex Ratios						59.6								74.8	
		<u>1861</u>								<u>1911</u>					
No.	N.G			N.G.		385	691			451	541	261	330	712	871
% Pop'n						2.5	4.5			2.2	2.6	1.25	1.6	3.4	4.2
Sex Ratios						55.7								81.7	
		<u>1871</u>								<u>1921</u>					
No.	284	340	166	279		450	619			465	544	305	417	770	961
% Pop'n	1.6	2.0	1.0	1.6		2.6	3.6			2.0	2.3	1.3	1.8	3.3	4.1
Sex Ratios						72.7								80.1	
		<u>1881</u>								<u>1931</u>					
No.	N.G.			N.G.		521	756			532	604	357	510	889	1114
% Pop'n						2.9	4.1			2.1	2.4	1.4	2.0	3.5	4.4
Sex Ratios						68.9								79.8	
		<u>1891</u>													
No.	375	402	229	383		604	875								
% Pop'n	2.0	2.2	1.2	2.1		3.2	4.1								
Sex Ratios						69.0									

NOTE: N. G. means not given. **Sources:** Tobago Population Censuses of given years.

In the absence of a reliable continuous series on births and deaths, a rough estimate of the fertility rate for each decade was derived, by calculating the number of children under 10 alive at each census as a ratio of the number of females in the population aged between 15 to 50, since some censuses give only 10-year intervals for the age cohorts above 20 years old. It is recognized that this measure is subject to changes in the age structure, and that it falls short of the actual number of births, because of high infant mortality rates;¹¹ but it remains the best available estimate.

Table 68 indicates that the females aged 15-50 declined in number between 1871 and 1901. The apparent increase in fertility rates for those decades may therefore be illusory on two counts: firstly, some of the children could have been mothered by emigrants; secondly, the smaller number of females in the denominators would increase the ratios. The number of surviving children fell in the decade 1881-1891, suggesting that it was the decade of heaviest female migration (cf. Table 55); it was also a time of economic hardship, which may have adversely affected the health of children, particularly in the parishes which suffered drought in 1885-86. From 1901, after the period of heavy migration, fertility rates seem to have risen.

¹¹ For example, as late as 1886, there were 675 births, of which 28 were still births. Of the 398 deaths, 37% (147) were of children under 5 years. The News, 14 May 1887, giving Rept. of the Registrar for Births, Marriages and Deaths, 1886.

TABLE 68

Surviving Children under 10 Years Old per Thousand Females
Aged 15-50 at Census Years: 1851-1931

<u>Year</u>	<u>Children</u> <u>< 10 yrs</u>	<u>Females</u> <u>15-50</u>	<u>Rate/</u> <u>1000</u> <u>Females</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Children</u> <u>< 10 yrs</u>	<u>Females</u> <u>15-50</u>	<u>Rate/</u> <u>1000</u> <u>Females</u>
1851	3551	3716	955	1901	5347	4703	1137
1861	3871	3947	980	1911	5674	5114	1109
1871	4486	5313	844	1921	6523	5710	1142
1881	4867	4664*	1043	1931	7013	6100	1150
1891	4817	4737	1017				

NOTE: *The number of women aged 15-19 was estimated from the figure for the cohort aged 10-19 on the assumption of no change in the proportion of males and females in the population between 1871 & 1881, since the proportion of both males and females for the cohort 10-19 was unchanged, and since another estimate assuming these proportions to be the mid-point of those for 1871 and 1891 was too high.

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

Another indicator of these trends in both migration and fertility is a comparison of the annual growth of the population and that of the working force¹² (Table 69). Between 1851-61, the annual growth of the working force was .3%; in the succeeding decade it was .5%, rising to 1.1% for 1871-81. For 1881-91, however, the rate declined to -.02% and further declined to -.25% for 1891-1901. Again, attesting to the slower emigration rates and possibly higher fertility rates after 1901, the population grew by 1% per annum in the 1901-11 decade, with the working force outstripping it with an annual growth of 2%, while in the following decade both rates were the same (1.3%). After 1921, however, both population and working force grew more slowly - less than 1% per annum.

Trinidad was the main destination for Tobago emigrants. There are no records on Tobagonians in Trinidad for 1851-1881. In 1891, there were 3307 (1774 males, 1533 females) Tobagonians in Trinidad, and 16,942 in Tobago. In 1901, the comparable figures were 5334 (2948 males, 2386 females) and 17,241.¹³

¹² In 1844, the compiler of the census examined the persons over 18 years and considered those at work and those 'having no employment.' In the subsequent censuses, the procedure was basically to describe the 'working force', that is, the number of people enumerated in their usual main activity, paid or unpaid. The working force is the concept used throughout this chapter.

¹³ Trinidad and Tobago Census, 1901, p. 19.

TABLE 69

The Growth of the Population and of the Working Force: 1844-1931

<u>Census Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Increase %</u>	<u>Annual Rates of Growth %</u>	<u>Working Force</u>	<u>% Pop'n</u>	<u>Increase/ Decrease</u>	<u>Increase/ Decrease %</u>	<u>Annual Rates of Change %</u>
1844	13208	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
1851	14378	8.8	1.3	8469	58.9	-	-	-
1861	15410	7.0	.7	8761	56.8	+ 292	+ 3.4	+ .3
1871	17054	10.6	1.0	9190	53.9	+ 429	+ 4.9	+ .5
1881	18051	5.8	.6	10210	56.6	+1020	+11.1	+1.1
1891	18353	1.7	.2	10194	55.5	- 16	- .2	- .02
1901	18751	2.2	.2	9934	53.0	- 260	- 2.5	- .25
1911	20749	10.6	1.06	11919	57.4	+1985	+20.0	+2.0
1921	23390	12.7	1.3	13421	57.4	+1502	+12.6	+1.3
1931	25352	8.4	.8	14107	55.6	+ 686	+ 5.1	+ .5

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses of given years.

Thus, between 1891 and 1901, the Tobago-born living in Trinidad increased by 60%, and the proportion of Tobagonians living in Trinidad increased from 16.3% to 23.6%. Expressed another way, the increase of Tobagonians in Trinidad between 1891-1901 was five times the increase of the Tobago population (398 persons). Emigration occurred at a slower rate after 1901, but the number of Tobagonians residing in Trinidad remained significantly large. In 1901, the first year for which we have information, Tobagonians in Trinidad were clustered in the north-eastern ward of Toco (County of St David), the nearest point between the islands, with which there was constant traffic by steamer and small craft, and in Port of Spain, the capital. There were smaller concentrations at Manzanilla on the east coast and in County St George, the urban area relatively near the capital. Over time, however, the migrants to Toco declined numerically and proportionately, while the concentrations in Port of Spain/St George and in St Patrick, the oilfield area of South Trinidad, became more significant (Table 70).

TABLE 70

Tobago-Born Population in Trinidad and in Tobago: 1891-1931

<u>Town and County</u> <u>Divisions</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>1901</u>		<u>1911</u>		<u>1921</u>		<u>1931</u>	
	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
City of Port of Spain	1252	23.5		1161	19.5	1259	20.6	1793	26.0
Borough of San Fernando	84	1.6		72	1.2	139	2.3	71	1.0
Borough of Arima	162	3.0		108	1.8	78	1.3	258	3.7
County of									
St George	577	10.8		609	10.2	615	10.1	1029	14.8
St David	1453	27.3		1878	31.6	1617	26.5	1164	16.8
St Andrew	630	11.8		653	11.0	682	11.2	585	8.4
Nariva	-	-		-	-	117	1.9	136	2.0
Mayaro	107	2.0		233	3.9	230	3.8	258	3.7
Caroni	439	8.2		356	6.0	417	6.8	276	4.0
Victoria	300	5.6		432	7.3	386	6.3	332	4.8
St Patrick	320	6.0		441	7.4	554	9.1	1020	14.7
Total in Trinidad	3307	5324*	99.0	5943	99.9	6094	99.9	6922	99.9
Ward of Tobago	16942	17241		18865		20941		23035	
Stragglers	-	-		-		-		12	
Waters of Colony	-	10		13		16		7	
TOTAL	20249	22575		24821		27051		29976	
Total in Tobago as									
% of Tobago-born	83.7	76.4		76.0		77.4		76.8	

NOTE: * The 1901 total of 5334 probably includes those in the waters of the colony.

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Census, 1931, p. 24.

VI.2.4 Literacy, Religious Affiliations and Conjugal Condition

TABLE 71

Literates as Proportion of Population over Five Years Old
by District: 1871

<u>District</u>	<u>'Can Read and Write'</u>		<u>Pop'n</u> <u>> 5</u>	<u>Literates as</u> <u>% Pop'n > 5</u>
	<u>Can</u>	<u>Cannot</u>		
Windward	930	2201	2653	35
Middle	2404	3510	4959	48.5
Leeward	2904	5105	6838	42.5
Total	6238	10816	14450	43.2

Source: Tobago Population Census, 1871.

The census data are sparse on important aspects of the social condition of the population. Only in 1861 and 1871 were figures on literacy given in the 19th century. For 1861, the numbers of those who could read and those who could write were given, without any indication of whether there was overlap between the two groups. In 1871, the Middle District had the highest literacy rates, followed by the Leeward and Windward Districts, respectively (Table 71). By comparison with Jamaica, where the gross literacy rate computed on the same basis was 16.3% in 1871, the rudiments of education seem to have reached a wide proportion of the population.¹⁴

However, given the low enrolment of girls, and the attendance rate that was below enrolment, particularly on Mondays (washing day) and Fridays, when produce had to be

¹⁴ Roberts [1957:78] shows that the gross literacy rate in Jamaica was 32% in 1891 and 47.2% in 1911.

prepared for market, Table 72 leaves us less sanguine.

The religious affiliations of the population were given for the years 1871 to 1901, as shown in Tables 73 and 74. Tobago was nominally Protestant, although African-derived religious beliefs and practices were maintained by some who attended the Churches. The decline of the Church of Scotland reflects the decline of the Scots, and the absence of a Presbyterian ministry after 1841.¹⁵ The increase of Roman Catholics, mainly from Trinidad, indicates the thrust which that denomination began in the 1880s, which was intensified after the annexation of 1889. The Church of England, to which half of the population claimed affiliation, had congregations in all the Districts, whereas the Moravians were concentrated in the Leeward and Middle Districts, and the Methodists in the Middle and Windward Districts.

¹⁵ WMS: Box 140, File 1841, Ranyell to General Secs., 9 June 1841.

TABLE 72
Children Enrolled in Schools: 1850-1900

<u>Church</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>1860</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>1870</u>	<u>Total</u>		
		<u>Female</u>			<u>Female</u>			<u>Female</u>			
Anglican	379	324	703	384	153	537	317	197	514		
Moravian	261	266	527	407	292	699	513	372*	885		
Methodist	264	160	424	217	214	431	298	220	518		
Total	904	750	1654	1008	659	1667	1128	789	1917		
School Age Pop'n (5-15)	1644	1536	3180	1839	1729	3568	1991	1893	3884		
% School Age Pop'n	55.0	48.8	52.0	54.8	38.1	46.7	56.6	41.7	49.3		
	<u>Male</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>1890</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>1901</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>	
		<u>Female</u>			<u>Female</u>			<u>Female</u>		<u>Attendance</u>	<u>No.</u>
Anglican	553	438	991	444	386	830	683	635	1318	723	54.8
Moravian	333	328	661	451	373	824	466	459	925	520	56.2
Methodist	299	279	578	407	419	826	429	413	842	420	49.9
Roman Catholic	-	-	-	16	23	39	152	126	278	163	58.6
Total	1185	1045	2230	1318	1201	2519	1730	1633	3363	1826	54.3
School Age Pop'n (5-15)	2218	2178	4396	2344	2280	4624	2544	2466	5010		
% School Age Pop'n	53.4	48.0	50.7	56.2	52.7	54.5	68.0	66.2	67.1	36.4	

NOTE: * Includes 42 girls in sewing school.

Sources: CO290 series: Blue Bks. for 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880; CO300/101, /111 for 1890, 1901, respectively; Population Censuses for 1851-1901.

TABLE 73
Religious Affiliations of the Tobago Population by District: 1871-1901 (Numbers)

District	Church of England	Church of Scotland	Moravians	Wesleyans	Roman Catholics	Other Christ.	Non- Christ.	Not Given	Total
<u>1871</u>									
Windward	1895	10	16	942	6	-	1	261	3131
Middle	3453	15	281	1965	27	2	8	163	5914
Leeward	3768	12	3369	360	3	1	-	496	8009
Total	9116	37	3666	3267	36	3	9	920	17054
<u>1881</u>									
Windward	2527	2	27	1416	1	-*	-	55	4028
Middle	2520	8	975	2297	10	7	-	255	6072
Leeward	3818	1	3610	303	2	20	-	197	7951
Total	8865	11	4612	4016	13	27	-	507	18051
<u>1891</u>									
Windward	2696	1	43	1610	38	2	2	31	4409
Middle	2553	13	1189	2268	113	3	-	22	6161
Leeward	3423	5	3884	298	25	1	4	129	7783
Total	8672	19	5116	4176	176	6	6	182	18353
<u>1901</u>									
Tobago	9238	6	4688	3744	794	65**	9	207	18751

NOTES: * For 1881, 'Other Forms of Worship' were put under the heading 'Other Christians'; the persons so enumerated could have included non-Christians, for whom no figures are given.

** 55 were 'Baptists'.

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses for given years.

TABLE 74
Religious Affiliations of the Tobago Population by District: 1871-1901 (Percentages)

Districts	Church of England	Church of Scotland	Moravians	Wesleyans	Roman Catholics	Other Christ.	Non- Christ.	Not Given
1871								
Windward	20.5	27.0	.4	28.8	16.6	-	11.1	28.4
Middle	37.8	40.5	7.6	60.1	75.0	66.6	88.8	17.7
Leeward	41.3	32.4	91.8	11.0	8.3	33.3	-	53.9
Total	53.4	.2	21.5	19.2	.2	.2	.05	5.4
1881								
Windward	28.5	18.1	.6	35.3	7.7	-	-	10.8
Middle	28.4	72.7	21.1	57.2	76.9	25.9	-	50.3
Leeward	43.1	9.1	78.3	9.0	15.4	74.1	-	38.8
Total	49.1	.06	25.5	22.2	.07	.15	-	2.8
1891								
Windward	31.1	5.3	.8	38.5	21.6	33.3	33.3	17.0
Middle	29.4	68.4	23.2	54.3	64.2	50.0	-	12.1
Leeward	39.5	26.3	75.9	7.1	14.2	16.6	66.6	70.8
Total	47.2	.1	27.9	22.7	.96	.03	.03	.99
1901								
Tobago	49.2	.03	25.2	20.0	4.2	.3	.04	1.1

NOTES:

1. See notes to Table 73.
2. Percentages for the districts give the proportion of the persons in the denomination who belong to the district. Percentages in the total rows give the proportion of persons in the island who belong to the denomination.

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses of given years.

We look now at the conjugal condition of the population (Table 75). While the married persons more than doubled numerically and almost doubled proportionately between 1861 and 1871, there was a numerical decline thereafter; the adult population also decreased in the latter decade, again reflecting the effects of emigration.

Tobago, with 37.9% of its adult population married in 1901, was second only to Grenada (39.82%), among the neighbouring islands.¹⁶ The proportion of married persons for 1911, 1921 and 1931, was 39.7%, 40.4%, and 37.2%, respectively. Clarke [1957] shows the high incidence of marriage in peasant communities in Jamaica. Further research should examine whether the apparent increase in marriages was related to the growth of a peasantry in Tobago.

¹⁶ Trinidad and Tobago Census, 1901, pp. 8-9.

TABLE 75

**Conjugal Condition of Tobago Population, 1861-1901,
and Comparison with United Colony, 1891, 1901**

<u>TOBAGO</u>							
	Married	<u>1861</u> Adult Pop'n	% Adult Pop'n		Married	<u>1871</u> Adult Pop'n	% Adult Pop'n
Windward	558	1705	32.7		547	2009	27.2
Middle	755	4115	18.3		1489	3587	41.5
Leeward	668	3987	16.7		2130	4970	42.8
Total	1981	9807	20.2		4166	10566	39.4

<u>TOBAGO</u>				<u>UNITED COLONY*</u>				
	<u>1891</u> Numbers	% Adult Pop'n	<u>1901</u> Numbers	% Adult Pop'n	<u>1891</u> Numbers	% Adult Pop'n	<u>1901</u> Numbers	% Adult Pop'n
Married	3981	35.8	4156	37.9	28850	29.75	37129	30.6
Unmarried	6213	55.9	5937	54.1	60751	62.7	75192	61.9
Widowed	919	8.3	881	8.0	7464	7.6	9174	7.5
Total Adult Pop'n		11113		10974		96965		121495

NOTE: * Excludes East Indians.

Sources: Calculated from Tobago Population Censuses, 1861, 1871; Trinidad and Tobago Census, 1901, p. 9.

VI.3 OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF TOBAGO: 1844-1901

VI.3.1 The 1844 Census

In 1844, the census treated persons 18 years old and above as significant for the analysis of occupations, and divided them into three categories. The first combined 'planters, agricultural labourers and cultivators of land for a livelihood'; the second was those 'deriving a living from trade or other business, profession or employment', and the third was those 'having no employment' (Table 76). Agriculture occupied 4852 persons, 59% of those 18 years old or over and 69.5% of the employed; trade, business and professions occupied 26% and 30.4%, respectively. The unemployed were enumerated as 1201 persons, or 14.7% of those over 18, but these included the aged and infirm; women were 86% (1033) of this group, since domestic duties were not distinguished.

In spite of the withdrawal of women from estate labour, women were the majority among those in agriculture (52%). Since there were no female professionals in 1844, 923 women (43% of the total) were in trade, business, services and craft, with women outnumbering men in these activities in Scarborough (by 23%) and Plymouth (by 7%). Opportunities for trade, business and craft for both sexes were most limited in the windward parishes (St John, St Paul, St Mary), but in all of them men greatly outnumbered women, as was also the case in the leeward parish of St Patrick.

TABLE 76

**Occupational Categories by Gender, Parish and Town,
for Population 18 Years Old and Over: 1844**

<u>Parish/ Town</u>	<u>Planters, Agricultural Labourers & Cultivators of Land for a Livelihood</u>				<u>Living by Trade, Other Business, Profession or Employment</u>				<u>'No Employment'</u>			
	M	F	Total	%	M	F	Total	%	M	F	Total	%
St John	205	229	434	71.6	68	24	92	15.2	11	69	80	13.2
St Paul	212	213	425	70.5	64	43	107	17.7	14	57	71	11.8
St Mary	168	208	376	78.8	40	21	61	12.8	6	34	40	8.4
St George	342	392	734	70.8	123	67	190	18.3	16	96	112	10.8
St Andrew	343	433	776	54.2	254	205	459	32.1	44	153	197	13.8
Scarboro'	49	78	127	15.3	264	325	589	71.0	9	104	113	13.6
St David	629	511	1140	61.6	194	109	303	16.4	45	362	407	22.0
St Patrick	363	417	780	69.8	125	54	179	16.0	19	140	159	14.2
Plymouth	24	36	60	26.4	70	75	145	63.8	4	18	22	9.7
Total	2335	2517	4852	59.3	1202	923	2125	26.0	168	1033	1201	14.7

NOTE: The three categories comprise the total no. of persons 18 years old or over in each locality and the percentages are based thereon.

Source: Tobago Census, 1844.

VI.3.2 Limitations of the Data; Method of Classification

From 1851, occupational titles were given. These are imprecise and say nothing about the relations of production in which the persons are involved. Some occupations were also under-enumerated. For example, metayers were mentioned only in 1891, and the compiler observed that probably in every instance, metayage was a secondary occupation.¹⁷ Perhaps the absence of metayers from earlier censuses reflected this occupational multiplicity, but there may have been persons whose primary occupation was metayage. Again, probably because of occupational multiplicity, 'peasant proprietors' are first mentioned in 1891. Thus, important areas of income earning and opportunity are hidden by the occupational data. Enumerations by gender were also rare before 1891.

Roberts states:

... in analysing occupational data we enter a domain in which census material proves often treacherous and unrewarding. Changing concepts of the working population, changing definitions of its major classes and the persistent attempts to fit the essentially simple occupational pattern of the island into elaborate classifications, more suitable to countries on the road to full industrialization, impose severe limitations on the available data.
[Roberts 1957:85]

As for Jamaica, so for Tobago. In keeping with the simple occupational pattern of Tobago, the occupations were classified into three categories, based on the author's understanding of the social relations at the time. The job titles were understood in their social context; where the

¹⁷ H. H. Sealy, Dep. Registrar Gen. to Hay, 31 Aug. 1891, submitting the abstracts from the census returns.

titles were vague or difficult to interpret, they were placed in the 'Other' category.

In Class I, two main strata were identified: planters, managers and merchants, on the one hand; senior officials, professionals, pharmacists, surveyors and clergymen, on the other. The few hotel keepers who were listed in a few censuses were also placed in Class I.

Class II was deemed to be composed of four main strata. Teachers, petty officials, such as constables¹⁸ and clerks, and merchants' clerks, bookkeepers and shopmen were considered one stratum. Printers were also included here, because it was a trade to which greater prestige was given than to the other manual trades, since it required some formal education. Teachers and petty officials were poorly paid, frequently in arrears; some were smallholders; a few were obliged to depend on a trade of some kind. These occupations, which required some education, therefore allowed a kind of genteel poverty. Overseers and those in lower supervisory positions were considered to be the second stratum within Class II. Shopkeepers and hucksters were considered the third stratum; many of these were regarded as 'respectable', some of the most successful shopkeepers becoming renters of coconut walks and owners of substantial tracts of land (Ch. 4). The fourth stratum is peasant proprietors. No definition of the term is given in the two censuses which use it (1891 and 1901), but it

¹⁸ Constables, usually black, were not usually accorded the prestige given to clerks, bookkeepers etc, many of whom were coloured; but their numbers were too small to make a big difference to the analysis, and their occupation suggests that they belong in Class II.

is presumed that this was the main occupation of the respondents, and that they enjoyed a more comfortable standard of living than that of wage labourers. Photographers, who were few, and mentioned only in 1871, were also placed in Class II, since their work required equipment and skill, and since most of their clientele were from the upper strata.¹⁹

In Class III were placed, first, the skilled tradespersons, including butchers. Dressmaking is separately listed in our tables because, besides baking and making of confectionery, it was the main skilled trade in which women participated. Since only two censuses gave classifications by gender, seamstresses were specially identified throughout, so that female occupational mobility could be more clearly understood. There was a wide range of skills among tradespeople, especially in trades where there were hundreds; and the demand for their services fluctuated with the economic cycles. However, they earned more than field labourers and were among the first freeholders after 1838. Some of the 'bespoke' tailors, seamstresses, blacksmiths, carpenters etc were coloured men and women, whose social status was far higher than that of labourers.

A few of the skilled tradesmen accumulated enough to become planters. Two of the most successful were James Hackett and Luke Toby. An illiterate black carpenter, Hackett became a cart owner and porter, and then owned a bakery and spirit shop. As early as 1854, he qualified to vote in both

¹⁹ One of the 2 photographers was Jason Boxill Thomas (1851-1905), a coloured. Conversation with Mrs Dolores Thompson, a relative, 1 & 9 Apr. 1993.

St Andrew and St George. He first leased Calder Hall estate, then Whim in the 1850s, and Belmont. By 1862, he owned both Les Coteaux, one of the largest estates, and Belmont, as well as a house and land at Morne Quiton, a suburb of Scarborough. He educated his children in the UK and in Barbados at the best schools, and his youngest son, Henry Hackett, was an engineer.²⁰ Toby, a black butcher, owned Hampden, a small leeward estate, by 1897.²¹

Mariners, boatmen and fishermen were placed together in Class III. Many of the mariners on census day worked on ships which happened to be in the harbours, and some may have been commanding officers. 'Fishermen and boatmen' included many who assisted the captains of boats, sloops, droghers etc. Nevertheless, in the absence of more information, mariners, fishermen and boatmen are treated as a stratum near the top of Class III. These are assumed to have been jobs that could have brought upward mobility, since the opportunity for earning from fishing would have placed them above the standard of living of agricultural labourers. Unless specified, when we mention fishermen, mariners are excluded, since many mariners were foreigners.

Many in fishing and skilled trades earned more than those in teaching and clerical work. We therefore have to assume that the line between Classes II and III is not rigid, in

²⁰ CO285/68: Colebrooke to Newcastle, 14 June 1854, Enc. 4, voters' list (Jan. 1854); Vote Book, 1862-1870. Hackett died in Oct. 1885, aged 81½ years. The News, 17 Oct. 1885.

²¹ WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, p. 361.

keeping with the fluidity and ambiguity of the reality itself.²²

Agricultural labourers, general labourers, domestic servants, laundresses, porters and government messengers were placed in the lowest stratum of paid workers. Male domestic workers such as grooms and butlers earned more than field labourers, but in general these were the lowest-paid occupations. Midwives, who were often illiterate and trained by apprenticeship to older midwives,²³ were placed in Class III, as were the nurses enumerated in 1871, since there was then no public hospital, and no training facilities. Unpaid domestic work was placed in Class III; since wives and daughters so employed were paid in kind, it is treated as another form of work for little pay. This category may have included women at all levels of the society, but most of the censuses with this category also enumerated those 'living on private means', which would have included wealthier women.

²² Among teachers, skilled tradesmen and printers, the first labour organizations in the English-speaking Caribbean were formed in the late 19th century [Hart 1982]. Quintero Rivera [1988] also shows that the earliest assertion of proletarian solidarity in Puerto Rico in the 19th century was among artisans.

²³ In 1884, under the 1882 Medical Ordinance, the DMOs examined the midwives and, if found qualified, each midwife was given a license to practise. There were 51 midwives practising in 3 districts, and the no. in the fourth was not given. Some had been practising for 40 years. Administrator's Despatches, 1882-85: Carrington to Browne, 20 Oct. 1884. In 1885, the 2 midwives who attended to Blacky Mamby who died in childbirth, Elizabeth Archer and Daphne Cudjoe, were illiterate (Ch. 5). Midwifery, usually accompanied by a knowledge of herbal medicine, was a skill which, from the days of slavery, had been transmitted as part of the oral, African-based tradition.

This perception of the occupational titles is supported by the jurors' lists. In 1879, the qualifications for jurors were lowered. They were required to have a minimum income of £60, or freehold estate valued over £30; or to be managers of estates minimally valued at £100; or to be paying either a minimum yearly rent of £30 or annual customs duties of £50. The 1880 jurors' list had managers, merchants, professionals, teachers, merchants' clerks, overseers, shopkeepers, blacksmiths, mechanics and carpenters, although the skilled tradesmen were far outnumbered by those in what we call Classes I and II.²⁴ The jurors' lists show, therefore, that persons in Classes I and II, and some in the upper reaches of Class III, had incomes above the basic agricultural wage of 8d per day, equivalent to less than £10 per year. The discussion below (Section VI.3.5) on statutory road labour also gives credence to our classification. Merchants, planters, professionals, clergymen, teachers and clerks consistently refused to work on the roads, because it was demeaning to their station in life. Therefore, in terms of both income and occupational prestige, our classification will serve.

VI.3.3 Main Occupational Trends: 1851-1881

After 1838, there was a redistribution of the population, spatially and occupationally. By 1851, the basic contours of

²⁴ C0289/3: Tobago Gazette, Feb. 1880; cf. the 1875 jurors' list in C0289/1: Tobago Gazette, 27 Mar. 1875; and for 1891, which included tailors, butcher, carpenters, blacksmiths etc. C0289/6: Tobago Gazette, 30 Jan. 1891. From May 1886, all male residents who could read and write were eligible.

the occupational structure were established, and persisted for decades. Between 1851-1881, Classes I and II together accounted for less than 4% of the working force, the remaining 96% being in Class III (Table 77). The data suggest that mobility into Class II occupations via education, shopkeeping, huckstering and landowning was relatively limited before 1891.

Because of internal migration, the concentration of population and economic activity in the Middle and Leeward Districts which had occurred during slavery was enhanced; thus, there were important differences in the occupational distributions according to districts²⁵ (Table 78). In 1851, 75% of the merchants, 92% of the clerks and 71% of the hucksters were in the Middle District, where Scarborough was located. Since many hucksters were itinerant, they may have served the Windward District, where there was only 1, though residing outside of it.

Of the occupations which could have been avenues of upward social mobility for the labouring class, only the skilled trades, in which men predominated, were proportionately represented in the Windward District. The schoolteachers were too few to be significant. Of the seamstresses, only 8% were in the Windward District. Thus, for the labouring population at Windward, where land owning by them was insignificant in 1851, skilled trades for men were the major avenue to social mobility. Even fishing was concentrated in the Leeward District.

²⁵ Since it is uncertain that the district boundaries were the same before 1871 as after it, attempts at comparison before 1871 are cautious.

TABLE 77
Persons in Occupations as Percentage of the Working Force: 1851-1901

<u>OCCUPATIONS</u>	<u>1851</u>		<u>1861</u>		<u>1871</u>		<u>1881</u>		<u>1891</u>		<u>1901</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>CLASS I</u>												
Planters,												
Merchants	123	1.45	97	1.1	79	.8	105	1.0	135	1.3	59	.6
Offic. etc.	38	.4	29	.3	32	.3	47	.5	39	.4	41	.4
Hoteliers	1	.01	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	.03	2	.02
<u>Sub-Total</u>	162	1.9	126	1.4	111	1.1	152	1.5	177	1.7	102	1.02
<u>CLASS II</u>												
Teachers,												
Clerical	102	1.2	128	1.5	126	1.4	139	1.4	153	1.5	214	2.1
Overseers	-	-	-	-	38	.4	-	-	-	-	31	.3
Shopkeepers,												
Hucksters	62	.7	55	.6	51	.5	43	.4	169	1.7	224	2.2
Peasants	10	.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	29	.3	187	1.9
<u>Sub-Total</u>	174	2.0	183	2.1	215	2.3	182	1.8	351	3.4	656	6.5
<u>CLASS III</u>												
Artisans	908	10.7	920	10.5	1178	12.8	1195	11.7	1070	10.5	1033	10.4
Dressmakers	475	5.6	508	5.8	605	6.6	555	5.4	640	6.3	686	6.9
Fishermen etc	185	2.2	209	2.4	239	2.6	219	2.1	314	3.1	252	2.5
Agric. Lab.	5644	66.6	6130	70.0	5721	62.2	6598	64.6	4436	43.5	4082	41.1
Gen. Lab.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	756	7.4	1130	11.4
Dom. Servts.	799	9.4	487	5.5	868	9.4	1099	10.8	754	7.4	729	7.3
Laundresses	-	-	182	2.1	175	1.9	194	1.9	195	1.9	266	2.7
Dom. Duties	112	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	918	9.0	778	7.8
Others	6	.07	13	.2	72	.8	16	.2	504	4.9	11	.1
<u>Sub-Total</u>	8129	95.9	8449	96.5	8858	96.4	9876	96.7	9587	94.0	8967	90.2
Others	4	.04	3	.03	6	.06	-	-	79	.8	209	2.1
<u>TOTAL</u>	8469	99.8	8761	100.03	9190	99.9	10210	100.0	10194	100.0	9934	99.8

Sources: Tobago Censuses, 1851-91; Trinidad and Tobago Census, 1901.

TABLE 78

Selected Occupations by District: 1851DISTRICTSO C C U P A T I O N S

	<u>Planters</u>		<u>Merchants</u>		<u>Schoolteachers</u>		<u>Clerks</u>		<u>Shopkeepers</u>		<u>Hucksters</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Windward	25	24	-	-	4	16	1	2	10	30	1	4
Middle	34	33	15	75	11	44	48	92	14	42	20	71
Leeward	44	43	5	25	10	40	3	6	9	27	7	25
Total	103	100	20	100	25	100	52	100	33	99	28	100

	<u>Misc. Trades</u>		<u>Seam-stresses</u>		<u>Fishermen</u>		<u>Mariners</u>		<u>Labourers</u>		<u>Domestic Serv'ts.</u>		<u>T o t a l</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%*
Windward	150	16	37	8	13	11	2	3	1328	23.5	70	9	1641	19.4
Middle	397	44	278	58.5	22	19	50	72	1992	35	468	58.5	3349	39.5
Leeward	360	40	160	33	81	70	17	25	2324	41	261	33	3281	38.7
Total	907	100	475	99.5	116	100	69	100	5644	99.5	799	100.5	8271	97.6

NOTE: * Percentage of the working force.

Source: Tobago Population Census, 1851.

TABLE 79

Selected Occupations by District: 1881DISTRICTSO C C U P A T I O N S

	<u>Planters*</u>		<u>Merchants</u>		<u>School- teachers</u>		<u>Clerks</u>		<u>Shop- keepers</u>		<u>Hucksters</u>		<u>Misc. Trades</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Windward	22	23	-	-	11	30.5	7	12	3	8	-	-	234	20
Middle	28	30	11	100	14	39	45	79	22	58	5	100	458	38
Leeward	44	47	-	-	11	30.5	5	9	13	34	-	-	503	42
Total	94	100	11	100	36	100	57	100	38	100	5	100	1195	100

	<u>Seams- tresses</u>		<u>Fishermen</u>		<u>Mariners</u>		<u>Agric. Labourers</u>		<u>Domestic Servants</u>		<u>Laund- resses</u>		<u>T O T A L</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%**
Windward	85	15	27	27	5	4	1736	26	168	15	21	11	2319	22.7
Middle	254	46	10	10	64	71	1806	27	542	49	126	65	3405	33.3
Leeward	216	39	64	63	29	25	3056	46	389	35	42	24	4377	42.9
Total	555	100	101	100	118	100	6598	100	1099	99	194	100	10101	98.9

NOTES: 1. * Managers and overseers are not distinguished in the census.
 2. ** Percentage of the working force.

Sources: Tobago Population Census, 1881.

Between 1851 and 1881, there was little change in this pattern. Merchants, clerks, shopkeepers and hucksters remained concentrated in the Middle District. The Leeward District continued to have the majority of fishermen, although they increased in the Windward District after 1871 (Table 79).

Since skilled trades, including dressmaking, and fishing constituted the highest-paid jobs in Class III, Table 80 examines the percentages of these occupations in each district from 1851 to 1891. It shows a relatively stable pattern, with improvement in the positions of the Middle and Leeward Districts by 1871, and decline thereafter.

TABLE 80

**Persons in Skilled Trades and Fishing as Percentage of
Working Force in Each District: 1851-1891**

	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1891</u>
Windward	12.1	15	15	15	17
Middle	20	20	24	21	22
Leeward	18	15	20	18	18

Sources: Population Censuses, 1851-1891.

VI.3.4 The 1891 Census

In 1891, the categories for classifying the data were given by the Registrar General of Trinidad, and modified to suit Tobago conditions. It is thus not always easy to make comparisons with certain categories at previous censuses. Two groups, hucksters and shopkeepers, fishermen and boatmen, who were formerly disaggregated, were combined in 1891. However, for the first time, we are given the gender of the persons in

each occupation.

Metayers were enumerated for the only time between 1844-1901. The total was 798; but the occupational tables gave only the number for the Leeward District and part of the Middle District (503).

The working force numbered 10194²⁶, 16 less than in 1881 (Table 77). Class II increased dramatically from 182 persons in 1881 to 351, or by 93%. In part, this probably resulted from re-classification of some of the people in skilled trades. Skilled men were placed in a general category called 'mechanics and handicraftsmen'²⁷, which probably did not exhaust all the trades, since some of the bakers, for example, must have been females. The classification of bakers, who may have had itinerant or small sales outlets, as hucksters and shopkeepers, is therefore a strong possibility, especially since this group leaped from 43 in 1881 to 169, an increase of 193%, and since 85% of them were females. (Huckstering was female-dominated since slavery.) It is also possible that hucksters were under-enumerated in 1881, when there were only 5; and that in the crisis, waged employment being scarce, many resorted to itinerant vending. In Class II, the teachers also increased, from 36 to 55 persons, or by 53%; and 20 (36%) were women.

In Class III, there was, in keeping with the collapse of

²⁶ The census occupational table gives 10197, which is inaccurate.

²⁷ The previous censuses listed the numbers in each trade or craft, without aggregating them. In 1891, this was not done.

the sugar economy, a dramatic decline in both agricultural workers and domestic servants. In 1881, they numbered 6598 and 1099, respectively, or 75.4% of the working force; in 1891, they were 4436 and 754, or 51% of the working force. The 1891 census gives a new category, 'general labourers, porters etc',²⁸ numbering 756. For the first time since 1851, 'wives and daughters in domestic duties' were enumerated, and these were 918 or 9% of the working force. The lowest-paid workers combined - agricultural labourers, domestic servants and laundresses - constituted 77.3% of the working force in 1881; for 1891, when general labourers are added, they constituted 60.2%; women in unpaid domestic employment increase these lowest categories of workers to 69.2% of the working force.

The number of persons in skilled trades declined from 1195 to 1070; but this may be partially due to changes in the categories used. Similarly, the trend among fishermen is uncertain; but there was a marked increase in fishermen, mariners and boatmen combined, from 219 in 1881 to 314 in 1891. The Windward District had 27% of them; it accounted for 79 of 218 boatmen and fishermen (36%), which suggests that fishing and seafaring became more important as estate agriculture declined.

When the occupations were classified by gender (Table 81), only 6 women were in Class I. They slightly outranked men in Class II (52%) and constituted 58% of Class III. (Women constituted 56% of the working force.)

²⁸ Porters in the 19th century censuses never exceeded 10; therefore most would have been 'general labourers'.

TABLE 81
Occupations by Gender: 1891

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% Working Force</u>
<u>CLASS I</u>						
Proprietors, Managers, Merchants etc.	132	98	3	2	135	1.3
'Public Officers' & Professionals	39	100	-	-	39	.4
Hotelkeepers	-	-	3	100	3	.03
Sub-Total	171	97	6	3	177	1.7
<u>CLASS II</u>						
Schoolteachers, Clerks, & Petty Officials	118	77	35	23	153	1.5
Shopkeepers, Hucksters	25	15	144	85	169	1.7
Peasant Proprietors	27	93	2	7	29	.3
Sub-Total	170	48	181	52	351	3.4
<u>CLASS III</u>						
Skilled Trades	1070	100	-	-	1070	10.5
Seamstresses	-	-	640	100	640	6.3
Mariners	96	100	-	-	96	.9
Fishermen/ Boatmen	218	100	-	-	218	2.1
Agric. Labourers	1843	41.5	2593	58.4	4436	43.5
Metayers*	346	69	157	31	503	4.9
Gen. Labourers	343	45.4	413	54.5	756	7.4
Domestic Servts.	165	22	589	78	754	7.4
Laundresses	-	-	195	100	195	1.9
Wives/Daughters (Dom. Duties)	-	-	918	100	918	9.0
Sub-Total	4081	42	5505	58	9586	93.9
Others	17	21	63	79	80	.8
<u>TOTAL</u>	4439	43.3	5755	56.1	10194	99.8

NOTE: * Only for the Leeward District and part of the Middle District.

Source: Tobago Census, 1891.

In the 'Gender by Occupation' classification (Table 82), agricultural and general labour, and paid domestic work occupied 62.4% of females, with laundresses bringing the figure to 66%; unpaid domestic duties added a further 11%. Therefore, the lowest categories of paid labour and unpaid domestic work accounted for 77% of all female workers, while 53% of the men were in the first three of these categories. In the skilled trades, 24% of the men were employed, but only 11% of the women were seamstresses, the most popular skill for women. Ninety-two per cent of the men and ninety-six per cent of the women were in Class III occupations, but roughly a half of the men were in the lowest-paid jobs, while two-thirds of the women were so located, with another 11% unpaid.

The number of agricultural labourers fell sharply, the decline being most dramatic (44%) in the Leeward District, the heartland of the sugar economy (Table 83).

TABLE 83

Agricultural Labourers by District: 1881, 1891

District	<u>1881</u>		<u>1891</u>		<u>Decline</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Windward	1936	26.3	1430	32	306	17.6
Middle	1806	27.4	1294	29	512	28.3
Leeward	3056	46.3	1712	39	1344	44.0
<u>Total</u>	6598	100	4436	100	2162	32.7

Sources: Tobago Population Censuses, 1881, 1891.

TABLE 82

Gender by Occupations: 1891

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>% Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>% Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>CLASS I</u>					
Proprietors, Managers, Merchants etc	132	3.0	3	.05	135
'Public Officers' & Professionals	39	.8	-	-	39
Hotelkeepers	-	-	3	.05	3
Sub-Total	171	3.8	6	.1	177
<u>CLASS II</u>					
Schoolteachers, Clerks & Petty Officials	118	2.6	35	.6	153
Shopkeepers & Hucksters	25	.6	144	2.5	169
Peasant Proprietors	27	.6	2	.03	29
Sub-Total	170	3.8	181	3.1	351
<u>CLASS III</u>					
Skilled Trades	1070	24.0	-	-	1070
Seamstresses	-	-	640	11.1	640
Mariners	96	2.2	-	-	96
Fishermen/ Boatmen	218	5.0	-	-	218
Agric. Labourers	1843	41.5	2593	45.0	4436
Metayers*	346	7.8	157	2.7	503
Gen. Labourers	343	7.7	413	7.2	756
Dom. Servts.	165	3.7	589	10.2	754
Laundresses	-	-	195	3.4	195
Wives/Daughters (Dom. Duties)	-	-	918	16.0	918
Sub-Total	4081	92.0	5505	95.6	9586
Others	17	.4	63	1.1	80
TOTAL	4439	100	5755	99.9	10194

NOTE: * Only for the Leeward District and part of the Middle District.

Source: Tobago Census, 1891.

Women predominated in the agricultural workforce, particularly in the Leeward District (Table 84).

TABLE 84

Agricultural Labourers by District and Sex: 1891

<u>District</u>	<u>Male</u> (No.)	<u>Female</u> (No.)	<u>Total</u> (No.)	<u>Male</u> (%)	<u>Female</u> (%)
Windward	648	782	1430	45.3	54.7
Middle	539	755	1294	41.6	58.3
Leeward	656	1056	1712	38.3	61.6
Total	1843	2493	4436	41.5	56.2

Source: Tobago Census, 1891.

Of the new category, 'general labourers', 60% were in the Leeward District. If we add agricultural to general labourers for 1891, the level of employment in these two categories was still below the number of agricultural labourers in 1881, the decline again being most apparent in the Leeward District (Table 85).

TABLE 85

Agricultural and General Labourers, 1891, compared with Agricultural Labourers, 1881, by District

<u>District</u>	<u>1881</u> <u>Agric.</u> <u>Labourers</u> No.	<u>1891</u> <u>Agric. & General</u> <u>Labourers</u> No. %		<u>1881-1891</u> <u>Decline</u> No. %	
Windward	1736	1525	29.4	211	12.1
Middle	1806	1502	29.0	304	16.8
Leeward	3056	2165	41.6	891	29.1
Total	6598	5192	100	1406	21.3

Sources: Tobago Censuses, 1881, 1891.

Among the 'general labourers', females exceeded males by over 2:1 in the Windward District, and were 56% of the category in the Leeward; but in the Middle District, males accounted for 56% (Table 86).

TABLE 86

General Labourers by District and Sex: 1891

<u>District</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	
Windward	29	30.5	66	69.5	95
Middle	116	55.7	92	44.2	208
Leeward	198	43.7	255	56.3	453
Total	343	45.4	413	54.6	756

Source: Tobago Census, 1891.

Thus, the collapse of the sugar industry began to alter the occupational structure. Class II increased, mainly through what was classified as shopkeeping and huckstering, which today would be called the 'informal sector'. In Class III, there was a re-distribution from agricultural and domestic labour into new lowly-paid or unpaid categories, especially 'general labourers' and domestic duties; and there was increased seafaring in the Windward District.

VI.3.5 The 1901 Census

The enumerators used the following occupational classification: 'Official', 'Professional', 'Commercial', 'Agricultural' and 'General and Indefinite'. Since this obscures the gradations of rank and income which were integral to the occupational structure, our simple classification was

kept. As in 1891, the gender classification is also given, but there was no distribution by district.

The working force was 9934,²⁹ a decline of 2.5% from that of 1891. Class II grew dramatically, from 351 to 656, an increase of 305 or 87%; it accounted for 6.6% of the working force, by contrast with 3.5% in 1891. The steep increase is owed, firstly, to peasant proprietors, now 187 as opposed to 29 in 1891, a growth of 545%. Secondly, shopkeepers (hucksters were not mentioned in 1901) increased from 169 to 224, the majority (164 or 73%) again being women; and teachers, merchants' clerks and minor officials moved from 153 to 214 (by 40%), with the teachers showing the largest increase - from 55 to 101, or 84% growth. One-third of the teachers (33) were women, as well as 25 (27%) of the clerks.

In Class III were 90% of the working force, a decrease of 4%. This was due partly to the increase in Class II, and also to 209 in the 'Other' category, 31 being 'proprietors not defined' and 157 'living on private means'.

In 1901, the skilled trades were fully enumerated; and for the first time we can see the importance of female participation among bakers and confectioners, 60 of the 66 (91%) being women. Agricultural labourers continued to decline, from 4436 (43%) in 1891 to 4082 (41%) in 1901. General labourers grew from 756 to 1130, an increase of 49.5%, and the proportion of women in this category grew also, from

²⁹ The census occupational tables give a total of 9946 as the working force, when the accurate total is 9934. When the children in and out of school are added, the census accounts for 18,409 persons; the total population was 18,751.

55% to 60%, while the women in domestic duties fell from 918 to 778. The lowest-paid stratum of workers - agricultural labourers, general labourers, domestic servants, laundresses and women in domestic duties - were 7059 or 69% of the workforce in 1891; in 1901, they were 6985 or 70%. There was no change in the better-paid ranks of Class III. Skilled trades, dressmaking and fishing had 1923 or 19% of the working force, roughly the same as in 1891 (Table 77).

When the occupations were classified by gender (Table 87), there was an increase, by 40%, of women in Class II, from 181 to 254; but male penetration of Class II advanced more rapidly than that of females - 170 men in 1891, 402 in 1901, an increase of 136%. Men were 61% of the persons in Class II, but in Class III, the proportions were reversed, with women constituting 61%. For Class III, this was because of the disproportionate sex ratios owing to emigration: men were only 40.5% of the working force. But the over-representation of men in Class II indicates that opportunities for social mobility via landowning, teaching and lower supervisory positions were greater for males than for females, whose major expansion in Class II was in shopkeeping.

Among the lowest-paid categories of workers - agricultural labourers, general labourers, domestic servants and laundresses - males numbered 2257 (36%) and females 3950 (64%); 55.5% of all men were in these jobs, but 67.3% of the women (Table 88). When unpaid domestic duties were added to the figure for females, the proportion of women in the least lucrative occupations was 79% (77% in 1891).

TABLE 87

Occupations by Gender: 1901

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% Working Force</u>
<u>CLASS I</u>						
Proprietors, Managers, Merchants	56	95.0	3	5.0	59	.6
'Public Officers' & Professionals	40	97.5	1	2.4	41	.4
Hotelkeepers	—	—	2	100.0	2	.02
Sub-Total	96	94.1	6	5.9	102	1.03
<u>CLASS II</u>						
Schoolteachers, Clerks & Petty Officials	156	72.9	58	27.1	214	2.2
Shopkeepers	60	26.8	164	73.2	224	2.2
Peasant Proprietors	155	82.8	32	17.1	187	1.9
Sub-managers, Overseers etc	31	100.0	—	—	31	.3
Sub-Total	402	61.3	254	38.7	656	6.6
<u>CLASS III</u>						
Skilled Trades	973	94.2	60	5.8	1033	10.4
Seamstresses	—	—	686	100.0	686	6.9
Mariners	48	100.0	—	—	48	.5
Fishermen & Boatmen	204	100.0	—	—	204	2.05
Agric. Labourers	1662	40.7	2420	59.3	4082	41.1
Gen. Labourers	453	40.0	677	60.0	1130	11.4
Domestic Servts.	142	19.5	587	80.5	729	7.3
Laundresses	—	—	266	100.0	266	2.7
Women in Domestic Duties	—	—	778	100.0	778	7.8
Sub-Total	3482	38.9	5474	61.1	8956	90.1
<u>Others</u>						
Others (specified)	84	40.6	123	59.4	207	2.1
Others (unspecified)	5	38.5	8	61.5	13	.1
Sub-Total	89	40.5	131	59.5	220	2.2
<u>TOTAL</u>	4069	41.0	5865	59.0	9934	99.9

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Census, 1901.

TABLE 88

Gender by Occupations: 1901

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>% Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>% Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>CLASS I</u>					
Proprietors, Managers, Merchants	56	1.4	3	.05	59
'Public Officers' & Professionals	40	1.0	1	.02	41
Hotelkeepers	-	-	2	.03	2
Sub-Total	96	2.4	6	.10	102
<u>CLASS II</u>					
Schoolteachers, Clerks, & Petty Officials	156	3.8	58	1.0	214
Shopkeepers	60	1.5	164	2.8	224
Peasant Proprietors	155	3.8	32	.5	187
Sub-managers, Overseers etc	31	.8	-	-	31
Sub-Total	402	9.9	254	4.3	656
<u>CLASS III</u>					
Skilled Trades	973	23.9	60	1.0	1033
Seamstresses	-	-	686	11.7	686
Mariners	48	1.2	-	-	48
Fishermen, Boatmen	204	5.0	-	-	204
Agric. Labourers	1662	40.8	2420	41.3	4082
Gen. Labourers	453	11.1	677	11.5	1130
Domestic Servts.	142	3.5	587	10.0	729
Laundresses	-	-	266	4.5	266
Women in Domestic Duties	-	-	778	13.3	778
Sub-Total	3482	85.6	5474	93.3	8956
<u>Others</u>					
Others (specified)	84	2.1	123	2.1	207
Others (unspecified)	5	.1	8	.1	13
Sub-Total	89	2.2	131	2.2	220
<u>TOTAL</u>	4069	100.0	5865	99.9	9934

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Census, 1901.

In the skilled trades and fishing, 29% of the men were employed, but only 13% of the women were dressmakers and bakers, the two trades in which women are recorded.

Thus, women remained the backbone of the working force, constituting 60% of those in general labour, 59% of those in agricultural labour and over 80% of the domestic servants. Almost 80% of all women were either lowly paid or unpaid.

Female participation rates also exceeded those for men in 1891 and 1901. In 1891, 71.5% of males, and 78.5% of females, over 10 years old, were in the working force; the comparable figures in 1901, were 67.5% and 79.5%, respectively.

One final area in which women participated, was in road repairs. The Road Act (Amendment) of 1849 obliged all males aged 16-50 to labour on the roads or to provide a substitute, and to be paid 6d per day; the penalty was 4s for each day defaulted. Planters, merchants, professionals, senior officials, clergymen, teachers and clerks consistently refused to perform such labour; they often paid women to do so. Many labouring men sent their wives to the roads. There were changes to the Act over time, but statutory labour and penalties continued. By 1885, the workforce on the roads was mostly women, who were accused of 'bickerings and brawlings and quarrellings'.³⁰ The system was abolished in 1887.³¹

Chapter 4 showed that women were usually among the smallest freeholders. The 1901 census indicates that land

³⁰ The News, 31 Jan. 1885, Leader, p. 3.

³¹ CO321/103: Sendall to Holland, 25 Mar. 1887, enc. Llewellyn's minute, 17 Feb. 1887.

owning was the least favourable Class II occupation for women, who constituted only 17% of this group (Table 87).

The beach-head which women sustained among hucksters and shopkeepers is therefore noteworthy. The statistics, which probably reflect those who vended full-time, are likely to have under-estimated the hundreds of women who vended and bartered at the weekly markets, and who were reported in the 1880s as bartering from village to village in the Windward District. Even in settlements where there were shops, itinerant female vendors found a niche.³²

VI.4 CONCLUSION

Tobago was a society with a relatively homogenous population, mainly of African descent, Creole by birth, with small numbers of Europeans and native Africans by 1901. In 1881, those of mixed race were 16% of the population.

The agrarian crisis led to a remarkable exodus of both males and females, but moreso males of working age, particularly after 1871, and particularly from the Leeward District, the epicentre of sugar cultivation. Migration affected the composition and growth of the population and the working force, fertility rates, family life, incomes, and the ethos of the society. It also contributed to population growth in Trinidad, and to the cementing of family, trade, religious and other ties between the people of the united colony, as the Registrar General observed on the 1901 census.

The majority of the people lived in small settlements

³² The News, 26 May 1888.

off, but close to, the estates; clusters of villages of more than 300 persons, flanked by smaller hinterlands, developed in the Middle and Leeward Districts, where smallholding was most concentrated, by 1891. By 1881, settlement patterns which continued into the 1950s were firmly established [Niddrie 1961]; only very small settlements existed on the north coast, connected by an overgrown bridle path [Hooper 1887:5]. Scarborough and its suburbs eclipsed Plymouth to become the sole urban, commercial centre.

Nearly all the houses were detached and undivided, which gives further significance to the observations in Chapters 3 and 4 on home ownership as the first step in the quest for autonomy of the ex-slaves, and on the salience of houses and homesteads in the pattern of property ownership. Tobago had little 'barrack' housing, which loomed large in the formation and culture of the Trinidad proletariat.

By 1851, an occupational structure was established, whereby 96% of the working force remained, for the next three decades, in occupations which we have designated as Class III (Table 77). The major avenues of mobility for the labouring class, as revealed in the occupational statistics, were skilled trades, dressmaking, fishing, and 'shopkeeping'; and these opportunities varied from district to district, with the Windward District being least favoured.

By 1901, there was a steep decline in agricultural labourers and a redistribution of the lowly-paid into 'general labour' and unpaid domestic duties. The disproportionate sex ratios resulting from emigration meant that women constituted

59.5% of the working force in 1901. Women were the backbone of the agricultural, general and domestic workforce at the end of the century. They had also been the majority in agriculture in the 1830s (Ch. 2) and in 1844 [cf. Higman 1979], and the majority of road workers from the 1840s to 1887. Throughout the period surveyed, the opportunities for both males and females were limited, but moreso for females, 79% of whom in 1901 were in the most menial occupations, whereas 56% of men were so placed. All of the skilled trades, except baking and dressmaking, were exclusively male.

By 1901, a significant breach into Class II occupations was made, largely by males who became 'peasant proprietors', teachers and clerks. Women, whose participation in teaching and clerical work also increased, predominated in 'shopkeeping' which was in unbroken continuity with their roles as hucksters and market vendors during slavery.

Chapter 4 showed differential access to the ownership of land by gender. The census data confirm that gender was a significant factor differentiating the population and affecting its life chances, and is vital in analysing the social structure.

There was a clear division of labour according to gender. At the top of the occupational ladder, women were rare. In part, this reflects the vision of the enumerators since missionaries' wives, for example, laboured alongside their husbands, but were not mentioned. In the middle ranks, women were not usually employed as petty officials, and most teachers were men. In 1845, there were 3 female teachers out

of 19; in 1880, there were still only 3, out of 21.³³ By 1901, women had stormed the citadels of education and 'respectability' to become a third of the teachers³⁴ and 27% of the store clerks; and they dominated petty trading. At the base of the occupational ladder, women predominated in all the least-paid occupations, while most of the skills that were valued were male preserves.

Max Weber warned that interpretive understanding of the actors' meanings - '*verstehen*' - is a necessary though not sufficient condition of all sociological explanation, strong though the statistical data may be [1964:99-102]. To avoid 'reading back' into the past the concerns of the present, firmer conclusions must await a clearer understanding of the meaning of gender roles in 19th century Tobago, in the context of class, status and family relationships, and of other sources of income which are not reflected in these data.

This chapter is consistent with the argument of this thesis. It buttresses the analyses of Chapters 3 and 4 on the

³³ CO290/29: Blue Bk., 1845. All the female teachers were paid lower wages than the males in 1880. CO290/64: Blue Bk., 1880. They were usually responsible for teaching infants and sewing classes in the day schools.

³⁴ A few of the female teachers at the turn of the century were the relatives of former sugar planters who had become bankrupt or who had died; they started small schools, teaching music and other subjects to the children of the upper and middle strata. One such private school was run by a Mrs McCall, of the foremost planting family before 1884; another by Miss Prince, daughter of Mitchell J. Prince, a black Methodist schoolmaster (Ch. 8). Interviews with Miss Isabelle Dalrymple, retired seamstress, 15 July 1992, and with Mrs Irma Crosby, retired store clerk and bookkeeper, 20 July 1992. Thus, some degree of the expansion in Class II was owed to the downward mobility of women of the dominant class, and to the descendants of teachers, clerks etc.

smallholders, their location, the importance of home ownership, and the relatively late emergence of a peasantry. The expansion in Class II after 1891 supports our view that the crisis of the 1880s led to a restructuring of production and social relations, and to relative gains for the labouring class after 1889 (Ch. 8).

CHAPTER SEVEN

SOCIAL CLASS, COLOUR AND POLITICAL CONFLICT IN TOBAGO: 1838-1886

VII.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses the class/colour configuration of Tobago society between 1838 and 1884, and relates it to the definitive collapse of the sugar economy and of the government as a separate entity in the mid 1880s. It argues that the fate of the colonial state was closely associated with that of the resident plantocracy which emerged in that period. It examines the development of a near monopoly over credit, production and trade by the McCall/Gillespie combine, and the intra-class conflicts which this engendered. It discusses the ideological and political orientations and strategies of the classes and fractions, located in the metropolis and in Tobago, which were the major historical actors. Drawing on the insights of previous chapters, it confirms our hypothesis, that Tobago's crisis in the 1880s is accounted for by the source and deployment of capital, and by its social structure; all of which were affected by the outcomes of inter- and intra-class struggles.

VII.2 THE CLASS/COLOUR CONFIGURATION OF TOBAGO: 1838-1884

VII.2.1 The Dominant Class

In 1842, the majority of white merchants and some of the 'upper class of planters' collapsed.¹ They had borrowed too heavily to stock their shops to cater for the increased consumption of the freedpeople.

The large quantity of goods stocked by the merchants was bought by estate managers, who established shops on or near the estates, so initiating the truck system which remained significant until the end of the century (Ch. 5). As an increasing number of estates fell into local hands after 1848, the Tobago plantocracy became a planter/merchant oligarchy. On the one hand, the control by a few British merchants grew tighter over the decades; on the other, shopkeeping by the resident planters was very common.

This planter/merchant oligarchy was no longer almost exclusively white. Chapter 2 showed that a few of the leading whites had begun from the 1830s to marry, usually, the wealthiest and most educated coloured women. In 1847, Lt.-Gov. Graeme commented on the changing complexion of the élite:

In no Island have I seen the distinction
[between white and coloured] more completely overcome, than in Tobago; Upon my arrival I was waited upon by several families of coloured extraction, the females of which, were visited by, and received into the best society this Island affords; nor is it confined to a mere interchange of civilities, for in many cases marriages have taken place between the European and coloured races ... I found that in every case these happy re-

¹ CO285/51: Grey to Stanley, 5 Sept. 1842, enc. Darling to Grey, 26 Aug. 1842.

sults were brought about, solely by superior education: Most of the Ladies and Gentlemen of African descent who have intermarried with Europeans or are freely received into their Society, have been ... resident and educated in Europe ... [They] do not indiscriminately associate with others of the same origin, and are as exclusive in the choice of their companions as the most fastidious could desire.²

The coloured presence was equally marked among the senior officials in the 1850s. The Treasurer was Dougald Yeates, a planter and civil engineer trained in Scotland, the son of the late President Yeates, an Englishman. The Collector of Customs, Joseph T. Comissiong, of Grenada, was transferred to Sierra Leone in 1850. The Deputy Treasurer and Superintendent of Police was J. H. Roche, who was succeeded in 1854 as Inspector of Police by Robert Crooks, a planter. These were all coloured.

In the 1840s, many coloureds and blacks became lessees and managers of estates. Davy observed:

When I was in Tobago [in 1848], a property was pointed out to me, that had nearly ruined its proprietor ... which was then let to a colored man, at £100 a year, - a rent regularly paid; and another property, that was returning to its proprietor (an absentee,) on an average three or four per cent. of invested capital, under the direction of an intelligent coloured manager.

[Davy 1854/1971:251 fn]

Lt.-Gov. Shortland stated that by 1855, there were joint efforts by blacks to rent estates or estate works:

I am aware of offers having been made to proprietors by the negroes to rent estates, and to repair the works at their own cost;

² CO285/56: Reid to Grey, 18 May 1847, enc. Graeme, Separate and Conf., 1 Mar. 1847.

indeed, in one instance, three negroes have taken the lease of an abandoned sugar works, and have repaired both the mill and the boiling house. Several other instances might be adduced of equal enterprise.³

Among these lessees and managers was James Hackett, an illiterate black carpenter who began as lessee of 3 estates, and who owned Belmont, and Les Coteaux, one of the largest estates, before 1862. Brutus Murray, also illiterate, was one of the first metayers; in 1862, he was manager of Belle Garden and part-proprietor of Pembroke; by 1870, he was Pembroke's sole owner. Craig Castella, a black clerk, became manager of Pembroke in April 1852, on behalf of James Ewing and Co., Glasgow merchants; from December 1852, he managed, then leased, Providence, also owned by the Ewings, and by 1862 owned it.⁴ In 1884, blacks and coloureds owned 21 estates and leased at least another 11 (Tables 92, 93).

The dominant class of planters, merchants, senior officials and professionals was composed of both whites and coloureds by 1855, but the alliance between them was still an uneasy one. In 1855, Dougald Yeates was suspended from the post of Treasurer, because the local Privy Council found him guilty of irregular bookkeeping and appropriating funds owed to him by the government, without due authorization. A coloured barrister from Dominica, S. H. Frederick Abbott, a leader in the Assembly, led a militant protest of coloureds, accusing Shortland of being influenced 'by complexional

³ CO285/73: Hincks to Labouchere, 7 July 1856, enc. 1855 Blue Bk. Rept.

⁴ Vote Book, 1862-1870; Met. Com. Rept., 1891, W. Sladden's evidence, p. 34; Castella's evidence, pp. 30-4.

distinctions' and of not wanting coloureds and blacks in public office. Abbott and the 'Coloured party' called a meeting in Scarborough which gained them popular favour. Shortland's description of what followed, though not disinterested, is useful: 'Another public meeting was convened with the expressed intention of compelling me to leave the island.' Scarborough was 'literally filled with persons of all classes and colours, but to the dismay of my opponents the objects the negroes had in view were not at all in unison with those of Mr Abbott and the friends of the Treasurer.' The black labourers, instead of backing the demands of the coloured professionals for access to public office, used the occasion,

to pronounce against a contemplated reduction of wages. Mr Abbott observing this, made an effort to adjourn the meeting till the following Tuesday, but could not prevent a strong expression of opinion both respecting the question of wages, and the intended attack on myself.⁵

The protests occurred in July and August 1855. Late in August, Shortland appointed Abbott to the Privy Council. His co-optation silenced the coloureds, although they and the blacks of the middle strata continued to be concerned about the appointment of natives to the Civil Service.⁶ In 1857, Abbott was appointed Attorney General, after acting briefly as Solicitor General. The Lords Commissioners of the UK Treasury exonerated Yeates in 1856, and Henry Taylor minuted that he

⁵ CO285/71: Colebrooke to Molesworth, 2 Oct. 1855, & Encs., esp. Privy Council minutes & App., 4 Aug. 1855; Shortland to Colebrooke, 22 Aug. 1855.

⁶ CO285/79: Hincks to Newcastle, 28 July 1860, & Encs.

had met with 'less than justice in the Colony', although his books had not been properly kept.⁷

By 1871, the coloured presence was firmly established among the senior officials. Only the Lt.-Governor, the Chief Justice, Joseph Wattley, and the Postmaster, James Hamilton, were white. Besides Crooks (Inspector of Police and Provost Marshal) and Yeates (Stipendiary Magistrate who had acted as Colonial Secretary on several occasions), there were Samuel Hill, Colonial Secretary; Charles Berkeley, Treasurer since 1856; also Stipendiary Magistrates Samuel Titzck, from the Danish Virgin Islands, and Simon Fraser, from Dominica.⁸

The planters, merchants and senior officials (some of the latter were also planters or large landowners) moved in the same social circles. They (including the black planters) attended the Lt.-Governors' balls; their wives and daughters were pillars of the churches, particularly the Church of England and the Methodist Church, where, at concerts, bazaars etc., there was scope for their musical and other talents. The whites and coloureds in the dominant class had, by the 1880s, ties of intermarriage, friendship, interests and predicaments.

Although the leading blacks were jurors and Justices of the Peace, none of them sat in the Assembly or in the Legislative Council during Tobago's existence as a separate colony. There was also little intermarriage between whites or coloureds, and blacks. The black planters and lessees must

⁷ CO285/73: Trevelyan to Merivale, 29 Feb. 1856; Taylor's minute, 3 Mar. 1856.

⁸ CO285/89: Rawson to Kimberley, Conf., 5 May 1871, enc. Kortright to Rawson, Conf., 8 Apr. 1871.

therefore be seen as a segment of the dominant class; with the smaller coloured planters and merchants, they also constituted a subordinate stratum within that class.

Two other groups, located in the metropolis, were connected to the dominant class. Firstly, the Colonial Office Ministers and officials were key actors in the local power struggles. Although they were determined to curb the power of the planters, after the 1840s, there were few attempts to overrule the planters in the labourers' interests. The senior officials, most of whom were British aristocrats, with common backgrounds in public schools and Oxbridge [Young 1961; Blakeley 1972], were, in spite of their conflicts with the planters, objectively their allies on most matters of policy.⁹

Secondly, the British merchants who owned or financed most of the estates were an overseas segment of the dominant class, using their influence and that of their organization, the West India Committee, to press for their demands at the Colonial Office, in Parliament and in the colony. However, there were fundamental conflicts of interest between them and some of the planters, especially the smaller ones.

⁹ The senior civil servants effectively shaped the decisions taken by the Secretaries of State. Henry Taylor, Senior Clerk in the WI department for 47 years (1824-72), 'ruled not only his department of the Office but the British West India colonies' [Morrell 1969:28]. The influence of H. M. Merivale, Sir Frederic Rogers, Robert Herbert, successive Perm. Under-Secs., and of Edward Wingfield, head of the WI dept. from 1878 to 1897, is striking.

VII.2.2 The Middle Strata

The majority of the coloureds, in spite of their cultural identification with the whites and aspiration to social intercourse with them, were not part of the top Tobago families. They constituted a large part of what we call the middle strata [cf. Post 1981, 1:24-6].

The coloureds were careful of their social status. They normally aspired to marry whites or other coloureds. The result was considerable intermarriage and inbreeding among coloured families, often between first cousins. Some of the coloureds were closely related to the wealthier whites. For example, James Henry Keens (English planter) married Frances Collier. All John McCall's children were coloured; his daughter, Agnes Rubenia McCall, married Albert Collier; William McCall, John's brother, married Martha Keens, daughter of James and Frances Keens.¹⁰

The coloureds filled a range of occupations. Many were merchants' clerks and clerks in the Civil Service; a few were teachers; several were artisans and boat captains, overseers and estate managers and, as Chapter 4 shows, a significant number were shopkeepers, owners of sizeable tracts of land and lessees of estates. Some coloured women worked as itinerant seamstresses, often for an exclusive clientele; some made preserves and confectionery; a few were store and shop owners.

From the 1840s, there were stringent reductions in the

¹⁰ Conversations with Mrs Dolores Thompson, who is studying three Tobago coloured families from which she is descended, 1 & 9 Apr. 1993; interviews with Isabelle Dalrymple (1896-) and her daughter, Aldith Cameron (1912-), Scarborough, 15 July 1992.

salaries of overseers, and such positions were increasingly filled by blacks. By 1853, the Stipendiary Magistrates observed that the Scots overseers were being replaced by 'uneducated negroes & other persons equally ignorant'.

These gentry on £20 or £25 a year, ride their horses or mules, dress handsomely, buy land at £15 an Acre - some of them erect thereon handsome houses; - but, of course, nothing of this appears in the Annual Estates accounts.¹¹

Thus, there was upward mobility for some coloureds and blacks, for whom the first step in the process of accumulation was usually the skilled trades, shopkeeping, metayage or supervisory roles.

We have demonstrated that there was significant differentiation among the blacks. Tradesmen and mechanics, who had been the most valued of the slaves, emerged as the first black freeholders (Ch.3). In Chapter 6, we placed those in skilled trades at the top of Class III, given the possibility of greater accumulation for the exceptional. Chapter 5 showed that there was differentiation among the metayers, noting a stratum of 'large metayers', who employed others to cultivate their metayer holdings. Chapter 4 showed that, by the 1880s, there was a small but important stratum of black shopkeepers becoming petty landlords and renters of coconut walks. There was also (Ch. 6), a rising group of black petty officials and school teachers, many of them lay readers and catechists, whose salaries were low, but whose 'respectability' was high. The black segment of the middle strata was drawn from these

¹¹ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1853, Child; cf. Consol. Tables.

groups. Some of the tradesmen identified with the labouring class and signed their petitions; many did not.

The 'middle strata' are therefore seen as comprising two major blocs, each having persons from the intermediate strata we have described. One bloc comprised the coloured petty bourgeoisie (small landowners, shopkeepers, smaller merchants) as well as coloured clerical and supervisory workers and successful artisans; the other was of upwardly mobile blacks in similar positions.

VII.2.3 Class-Oriented Organizations

There was organizational expression to the groupings we described.

Agricultural and Chemical Societies were formed by the planters in 1844, but failed by 1850 owing to 'want of zeal' [Davy 1854/1971:256]. In November 1881, a Merchants and Planters Association was formed, but it was not very active. An Agricultural Society was formed by the leading planters and officials in December 1882, and a Chamber of Commerce in 1883¹²; the latter was defunct in 1888. These organizations overlapped considerably in membership.

Lodges, however, were popular.¹³ There were three main

¹² Colin Gillespie, a partner of A. M. Gillespie & Co., urged the formation of the Agric. Soc. and Admin. Carrington invited the merchants to form the Chamber.

¹³ Hobsbawm [1968:69] states that they sprang up all over the north of Britain after 1815; Hyam, that the importance of freemasonry in building up the empire has been underrated. In the English and Scottish form, the freemasons were a society with secrets, not a secret society. Lodges were formed in the WI from 1739 [1976:152-5].

lodges in Scarborough. The Freemasons were composed of leading officials, including in 1872 Lt.-Gov. Kortright, the top merchants, planters and a few of the clerks. Good Templars (Excelsior Lodge), started in August 1877, was largely coloured, with a sprinkling of middle strata blacks. Its members were small planters, merchants, shopkeepers, clerks, butchers etc., and it had female members as well as a juvenile section. In 1884, when the Tobago Defence Association (TDA) was formed, it drew many members from Excelsior. One Excelsior member, J. A. P. Bowhill, a coloured merchant's clerk, was reported in 1883 as being 'sorry to find that persons in the upper walks of life were loath to cast in their lot among them and join their ranks.' By 1884, Bowhill was secretary to the Freemasons, while continuing as an officer of Excelsior.¹⁴ The third lodge was Odd Fellows (Alpha Lodge), which was started in August 1882. It too had coloureds and blacks of the middle strata, and was closely connected to Excelsior and the TDA. There were also Rechabites, of whom only the name survives in the records.¹⁵

Late in 1884, the TDA was formed. Its pillars were the smaller planters, lessees, and the coloured and black clerks, shopkeepers, teachers and artisans. The TDA was the voice of the middle strata and the smaller coloured and black planters, for a few years thereafter.

The black segment of the middle strata had a penchant, at

¹⁴ The News, 18 Aug. 1883; Hay [1884, App.].

¹⁵ The News, 11 Aug. 1883. The Freemasons were defunct in 1888 [ibid., 21 Apr. 1888].

times exaggerated, for the social ideals of the whites and the coloureds, and for benefit societies as both social gatherings and a hedge against misfortune.

The first known organization of upwardly mobile blacks was the Charitable Union Society, formed in 1850, with 40 members, all male tradesmen residing in and near Scarborough, the majority of whom were 'of pure unalloyed African descent'. A friendly society, it was also concerned with upright conduct among its members. Members were fined for attending meetings and funerals 'in déshabillé', the costume of the society being 'a Suit of Black Cloth with blue Silk Aprons and scarves with rosettes, the Office bearers to be distinguished by carrying a wand.' The subscription was 10s to join and 2s monthly, which was prohibitive for most labourers. Lt.-Gov. Graeme looked to such people for 'the formation of a respectable middle class.'¹⁶

Another association, mainly of blacks but with a few coloureds, was the Tobago Mutual Benefit Society (TMBS), established in August 1883. They were self-styled 'loyal and law abiding men', concerned to assist members with sickness, death and 'pecuniary distress'. The membership fee was 4s on entrance and 2s per month, again prohibitive for labourers.¹⁷

The people of the middle strata, along with the coloured merchants and planters, and supported by many from the labouring class, started a Penny Savings Bank in 1881, given

¹⁶ CO285/63: Colebrooke to Grey, 17 Sept. 1850, Encs. 1 & 4.

¹⁷ CO321/88: Robinson to Derby, 29 Jan. 1885, Enc. 3. Tobago Archives: Rules of the TMBS, 1883.

the absence of any bank since the commercial crisis of 1847. The bank opened on 22 March 1881 in the store of Thomas Blakely jun., a coloured merchant and planter. At the request of the depositors, the Government took over its funds as the nucleus of a state-run Government Savings Bank, under an Act passed in September 1882.¹⁸

VII.2.4 The Labouring Class

The labouring class - the majority of metayers, agricultural and general labourers and others in the lower occupational ranks - was black. It cannot be called a proletariat, because of the remarkable occupational multiplicity and the importance of metayage. Apart from benefit societies, formed under the auspices of the churches, it appears to have had no known organizations, although its rebellions (1852, 1867, 1876)¹⁹ reveal a high degree of underground organization.

From the mid 1850s, Benjamin Blake, the self-styled 'Labour Agent General', a black tailor, wrote sundry letters and petitions on behalf of the labourers, for which he charged a fee, or accepted payment in kind. Blake was not very literate; but he was a juror, and he often illegally wrote legal documents for fees. His commitment to the labourers' cause is doubtful, for in 1890 he applied for a government

¹⁸ The News, 9 July 1881, 29 Apr. 1882, 30 Sept. 1882. In 1883, it closed and a Govt. Savings Bank was started in 1893.

¹⁹ The Land Tax riot, 1852 (Ch. 3); the Mason Hall riot against the dog tax, 1867 (below); the Belmanna riot, 1876 (Ch. 4 and below).

job, declaring publicly that, since many of his clients did not pay, 'I have had enough of them.'²⁰

However, the undercurrent of protest to which Blake responded should not be minimized. He was suspected by Lt.-Gov. Kortright of instigating the Mason Hall riot of 1867, but Kortright admitted that Blake was 'occasionally the means of exposing abuses'.²¹ His office was a little hut in Scarborough, 'The Shanty' (he was denied the use of the Court House, where the functions of the dominant class and the lodges were held), where labourers would discuss their grievances, particularly on market days; and his sphere of influence was within a radius of 10 miles from Scarborough. He participated in the protest at Studley Park estate in 1889, after the court sessions held by Sir John Gorrie (Ch. 5).

The first of Blake's addresses on record, signed by him and 43 others, was written in 1856, on behalf of 'us the Blacks', expressing their gratitude for several improvements, including the change in the magisterial system (magistrates were no longer to hold courts in the planters' or managers' homes), the introduction of an Appeal Court and a Chief Justice, the review of the Treasury, better jail discipline, and the 'promised extension and improvement of the present Franchise Bill'.²²

In 1864, Blake sent another memorial, signed by 63

²⁰ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, Blake's evidence, pp. 143-9, & petition, p. 174.

²¹ CO285/83: Walker to Cardwell, 15 Feb. 1865, enc. Kortright to Walker, 7 Feb. 1865.

²² CO285/73: Hincks to Labouchere, 12 July 1856, Enc. 1.

persons, of whom 29 were illiterate, complaining that taxes were enforced, but there was no public institution for destitutes, no hospital and no sailors' home. They drew attention to two instances of people dying destitute, to the high Coroner's fees for the inquests into such cases, and pleaded:

May Your Majesty improve this sort of things in this benighted Colony, and we find those two Individuals to be the Blacks too, and the Coroners White & Mullotoe [sic].

They complained of the high fees for taking cases to the Stipendiary Magistrates who had fixed salaries ('it matters not whether Civil or Criminal no Money no justice'), of the arbitrariness of the metayage system, of wages not paid promptly on estates, and of high taxes. Drysdale, whose recall they demanded, described them as 'ignorant labourers intermingled with ... Tailors, tradesmen, and fishermen', the annual value of the property owned by all of them being less than £100.²³

Only two of Blake's subsequent letters survive, the first on a personal grievance, the other supported by more than 70 signatures of people who were too poor to qualify for the vote, protesting on the increase in the license on entire horses from 20s to 30s, which they deemed a 'Self pleasing Tax', because it was instituted at the wish of one white man, who had been injured by an entire. One Colonial Office

²³ CO285/82: Walker to Newcastle, 29 Mar. 1864, & Encs.

official minuted that the tax was 'unfair & hard'.²⁴

Blake's letters displayed a keen awareness among labourers of all the major public issues. There was also a common theme: that the black labouring class was oppressed and received no justice at the hands of whites and mulattoes.

Although the ideology and organization of the labouring class are seldom found in the written record, they were expressed in folk songs, folk theatre, and in village yards. The surviving fragments again show plainly that some labourers were keen observers of local affairs.

Walter Sladden, a white planter, testified in 1890 of mock trials which took place over two decades in the Leeward District. John Horsford, a metayer, called himself 'Sir John', and wrote letters, addressed from 'Chambers Office'.

Down in that district they have mock trials where they try their cases. One person represents Mr. Cadiz, who was the former Attorney-General, and Horsford is "Sir John". Someone else represents Mr. Fraser, and another person Mr. Abbott. Horsford was formerly "Chief Justice Whately," but now he is "Sir John." The house they hold their trials in is called "Parliament House."²⁵

Surviving folk songs also suggest a continuing commentary on the dominant class. For example, when James Kirk jun., white planter, member of the Executive Council, and Inspector of Inland Revenue officers and of the police, who had arrested

²⁴ CO285/85: Walker to Carnarvon, 25 Mar. 1867, Encs. & minutes. Entirets or stallions are male horses not castrated.

²⁵ Met. Com. Rept., 1891, Sladden's evidence, p. 163; allusions are to Sir John Gorrie, then Chief Justice, S. J. Fraser, Stip. Mag., and C. L. Abbott, barrister.

the former First Revenue Officer for embezzlement in 1879, was himself jailed in 1885 for embezzlement, a folk song remarked on his descent to equality with the blacks:

Granderry wall, high wall
Granderry wall, Granderry wall
Granderry nuh buil' for me one [alone]
White darg [dog] ah go - Jim Kirk
Black darg ah go
White darg ah go - backra Jimmy
All a' we ah one, Oh!²⁶

The crash of 1884 and the calamities of the planters' families were also proclaimed in song:

Yard Oh, yard Oh!
Bell ah ring a' yard Oh! (Repeat)
Massa dead, he nuh lef' no money
Missis got fuh wuk she _____
Oh, Oh, Oh, Bell ah ring a' yard, Oh!²⁷

Since the culture of the labouring class cannot be separated from its political consciousness and self-assertion, a few remarks are made thereon. As had occurred during slavery, the processes of cultural retention, of interculturalisation and of creation continued simultaneously in the post Emancipation years within the labouring class.

Obeah and other African-derived religious beliefs and practices persisted, though driven underground, both by the missionaries, and by the law, which provided for the prosecution of obeah practitioners. There was continued evidence of syncretism, not only of elements from different African cultures, but also of African and European magical

²⁶ As told by Mrs Eileen Guillaume (1917-), who learned it from a woman aged 95 in the 1950s; conversation, 22 Apr. 1983. The first lines refer to the high walls around the jail.

²⁷ As sung by Dr J. D. Elder (1914-); interview, 24 May 1983.

beliefs and rites.²⁸

Churching and schooling were a powerful influence, promoting acculturation to European norms, particularly in the young. In 1854, Dr William Allen Purser, doctor, lay preacher and gifted musician, arrived in Tobago. Purser, from about 1856, and Bro. Voullaire, a Moravian missionary, in the 1860s were among the musicians who trained the children and young people in the churches and schools to sight read music. Church and village choirs, to which the highest prestige was given, remained established in the music making of Tobago well into the twentieth century [Elder 1972a:22-25].

But the subtle process of interculturalisation is well illustrated in the fact that, while Purser brought European song and speech traditions to the folk, his life and work were interwoven into the African-derived folk traditions, and are 'fixed forever in the folklore' [Elder 1972b:18]. A legend, known throughout Tobago, describes his encounter with a 'fairy maid'; and at least two folksongs in the vernacular record his battle for good hygiene and against cholera.²⁹

The schools hired sewing mistresses who taught the girls. Many of the missionaries' wives contributed to this and some of the finest Scandinavian embroidery ('hardanger' etc.) was learnt from them, these skills becoming important female

²⁸ T. L. Badham, Periodical Accts. 17 (1844):193.

²⁹ 'The Legend of Pica'ny Moma Water' [Elder 1972b:17-20]. 'Fairy maids' were half human, half fish. Elder's acct. includes a song on Purser; another is No. 116 of the songs by Tobago migrants in Toco, Trinidad, collected by M. J. Herskovits in 1939. I am grateful to Lise Winer for the latter.

accomplishments.

Language and speech patterns were transformed. Rev Badham, a Moravian missionary from 1844-49, returned in May 1863 and observed, from his cultural standpoint:

Another striking and pleasing feature was the remarkable improvement in the language of the people. No doubt they still understand, and among themselves make use of their uncouth patois; but formerly they spoke nothing else, and it was most difficult to teach them to read English properly. Now, however, we were astonished to hear addresses and prayers, the language of which was ... really chaste and elegant English. Those whose attendance thus gratified us were chiefly such as I recollected as little children in the schools.³⁰

African languages by 1844 were no longer publicly used, and they were not significantly revived by the Liberated Africans arriving in 1851 and 1862. Badham researched this subject, but his results were 'very meagre'.³¹

As Mintz and Price [1992] have rightly argued, loss of retentions did not mean loss of the ancestral heritage, but rather the complex and creative selection, transformation and interweaving of African elements with European-derived norms and forms, and with new cultural elements, as the African culture became what Mintz called an underlying 'grammar', that informed the idioms of everyday life [cf. Klass 1961/1988: xxx]. There were differing degrees of orientation to, and practice of, African traditions, depending on religion, family history, personal ambitions, social status and residence.

³⁰ 'Retrospect of the History of the Brethren's Church in Tobago ...', Periodical Accts. 30 (1876-78):89-90.

³¹ Periodical Accts. 18 (1846-48):257.

VII.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF MONOPOLY IN PRODUCTION AND TRADE

VII.3.1 Factors Affecting the Tobago Sugar Economy

The BWI sugar industry entered the era of free labour with several factors militating against the smaller planters. The West India lobby had lost ground in the UK Parliament, owing to the reforms of 1832 and their loss of power relative to East India merchants and planters and to British industrial interests [Hall 1971]. The mercantilist system which protected West Indian sugar in the British market was gradually dismantled from 1844-45, with the first reduction of the discriminating duty against foreign sugar, followed by The Equalization of Duties Act (1846); by 1874, all sugars entered the UK market on equal terms. The British financial crisis of 1847-48, which led to the failure of several important banks, made credit difficult to obtain, especially for West Indian properties with heavy encumbrances. Green argues:

The combination of free trade and international economic crisis sealed the fate of the old West Indian plantocracy ... The eclipse of the British West Indian sugar industry which had begun in the late eighteenth century was finally consummated by 1850.

[Green 1973:463]

Tobago, additionally, was hit by a disastrous hurricane in October 1847.

Capital investment, precisely the factor needed to improve the cultivation and manufacturing processes, was the perennial want. In most BWI colonies, there was no loan market. In Tobago, although merchants could advance small sums, they were unable to make advances on the scale needed to sustain and modernize the sugar industry. This, combined with

the established dependence on merchant houses in Britain, left the planters entirely dependent on British capital and vulnerable to extortionate charges [Root 1899]. In the 1850s, absentee owners either sold their Tobago holdings and concentrated their investments in more profitable sugar colonies, or made minimal advances while cutting costs.

The 1860s were a relatively prosperous decade for the ailing sugar industry (except in Jamaica), but competition from European beet sugar, subsidized by export bounties, caused the London price of sugar to fall sharply, especially in the decades after 1872 (Table 89). Between 1881 and 1896, prices fell by 50%; and between 1882-1891, imports of sugar from the BWI and British Guiana to the UK fell from 200,000 tons to 50,000 tons per annum, while beet sugar imports rose from 400,000 tons to over 1 million tons per annum [Shephard 1940:61-63]. Amalgamation of holdings, central factories and technological upgrading were the usual means whereby the industry was made more competitive. For Tobago, these improvements were possible on a very limited scale; so the primary, systematic causes of its unviability as a sugar producer were aggravated by the depression of the 1880s, when only the most competitive could survive.

TABLE 89

Price of Raw Sugar in London: 1872-1904

<u>Year</u>	<u>Per Cwt</u> <u>s d</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Per Cwt</u> <u>s d</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Per Cwt</u> <u>s d</u>
1872	25 6	1883	19 0	1894	11 3
1873	22 6	1884	13 3	1895	10 0
1874	21 6	1885	11 9	1896	10 9
1875	20 0	1886	11 9	1897	9 3
1876	21 6	1887	11 9	1898	9 6
1877	24 6	1888	13 0	1899	10 6
1878	20 0	1889	16 0	1900	11 3
1879	19 0	1890	13 0	1901	9 3
1880	20 6	1891	13 0	1902	7 3
1881	21 3	1892	13 6	1903	8 6
1882	20 0	1893	14 0	1904	10 3

NOTE: Cwt = hundredweight (112 lbs); s d = shillings and pence.

Source: Deerr [1950, 2:505].

In Tobago, there were few technological advances in cultivation. The plough had been introduced since the turn of the 19th century, and its more extensive use in the 1840s was the only significant agricultural improvement.³² But it was difficult to use, especially in the Middle and Windward Districts, because of the topography and because of deep drains intersecting the cane pieces; few estates could afford the necessary covered sub-soil drains. To replace human

³² CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 Sept. 1845, 30 June 1847.

labour, wheelbarrows were frequently used in the 1840s,³³ and machines for weeding the canes were used on a few estates. After 1838, guano was frequently imported. In 1843, Betsy's Hope, one of the finest estates, installed a railway to convey wet megass from the mill to the megass house. But most estates had few of these improvements; the basic implements of cultivation remained the hoe, the cutlass and the bill.

On the manufacturing side, Tobago fared better. Tobago had been in 1808, one of the first West India colonies to import a steam mill, which was the most efficient and reliable source of motive power for crushing the canes.³⁴ Most of the 20 steam mills used in 1840 had been erected after 1834; however, the less efficient cattle, wind and water mills continued to be much used (Table 90). From about 1869 to 1873, there was investment in new water wheels.³⁵

By 1850, advanced sugar factories used vacuum pans ('the chief factor in the production of refined sugar') for the evaporation of the water in the cane juice, instead of open tayches (coppers) in which there was loss of sugar by burning on the copper walls; and multiple-effect evaporation to

³³ CO285/56: Reid to Grey, 18 May 1847, enc. Graeme's 1846 Blue Bk. Rept.

³⁴ Trinidad and British Guiana were the first to import in 1803 and 1805, respectively [Deerr 1950, 2:553]. The Tobago importer was Geo. Morrison, Les Coteaux estate. Nat. Lib. of Scotland: Rennie Papers, Inglis, Ellice & Co. to John Rennie, 21 July 1809, & Encs. Jamaica also imported its first steam mill in 1808.

³⁵ The value of machinery imported rose from £2009 in 1869 to £5801 in 1870, £8958 in 1871 and tapered thereafter to £1196 in 1872, £1697 in 1873, £804 in 1874, £2334 in 1875. The extraordinary imports occurred before 1873. CO290 series: Blue Bks., 1869-75.

produce crystallized sugar [Manington 1925:285-6]. The scale of the Tobago estates inhibited investment in vacuum pans and centrifugals (for separating the molasses from the crystals). The cost of this equipment was so great that it was not considered for estates making less than 500 hogsheads per year [Green 1973:460-1], whereas most Tobago estates produced one-tenth of that. Only one estate, Betsy's Hope, had centrifugals by 1870, but it produced centrifugal muscovado, not crystal sugar. The most that the planters could manage was to upgrade the clarifying process (separating impurities from the cane juice before it is converted to sugar). They used new combinations of lime and alumina, and by 1870, steam clarifiers were installed on all the estates using steam power.

TABLE 90
Sugar Mills in Tobago: 1840-1897

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>STEAM</u>	<u>STEAM/WIND</u>	<u>STEAM/WATER</u>	<u>WIND</u>	<u>WATER</u>	<u>CATTLE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1840	20	-	-	28	26	3	77
1845	25	-	-	24	16	5	70
1850	26	-	-	16	23	5	70
1855	24	-	-	15	20	7	66
1861	19	4	1	10	21	7	62
1865	20	4	1	12	20	5	62
1869	20	4	7	13	15	6	65
1875	20	4	7	13	16	6	66
1882	23	-	6	10	11	5	55
1888	18	-	2	6	3	3	32
1897	19	-	2	6	2	2	31

Sources: C0290 series: Blue Books for 1840-88; C0300/109 for 1897.

TABLE 91

Average Annual Sugar Production in Tobago: 1824-1886

<u>Years</u>	<u>Production</u> (Tons)	<u>Years</u>	<u>Production</u> (Tons)
1824-33	5202	1857-66	2820
1834-38	4363	1867-76	3764
1839-46	2731	1877-86	3463
1847-56	2540	1887-96	Unified with Trinidad.

Source: Deerr [1950, 2:377].

Confined to muscovado production, Tobago growers lost 16% of their sugar through drainage during shipping.³⁶ Table 91 gives the figures on sugar production.

In spite of greater managerial economy from the 1840s, the system was wasteful in its use of capital and labour. In 1849, there were 70 sugar factories producing a crop of only 4000 hogsheads; given that a good wind or water mill could produce 250 hogsheads per crop, only 16 sets of works were necessary.³⁷ But there was little division of labour between cultivation and manufacture, and few estates were amalgamated.

From the 1850s, sugar planters world-wide increased economies of scale by establishing central factories to serve several estates, linked by railways. Trinidad was the first in the British Empire to do so at Usine Ste Madeleine in 1874; in Tobago the subject was considered, since the Gillespies wanted

³⁶ CO321/13: Rept. of Mr A. Chapman upon the Scheme of a Central Sugar Factory, Tobago, 1876.

³⁷ CO285/60: Colebrooke to Grey, 31 March 1849, enc. Graeme's 1848 Blue Bk. Rept.

it for their leeward estates. But they were unwilling to fund and guarantee the investment, and the Colonial Office refused to risk the falling revenues on that venture.

As regards rum stills, by 1843, Tobago producers had introduced some of the latest, and made an improved quality of rum [Porter 1843:169]. The records say nothing on the distillery technology thereafter, and because of heavy taxation under Crown rule after 1877, most distilleries were closed.

To sum up, by 1880, although such enhanced technology as the planters could afford had been installed,³⁸ cultivation and manufacture were both labour-intensive and wasteful. Green states that the 'availability of labour and the degree of its discipline remained the crucial factors determining the capacity of the estates to hold down costs' [1973:462].³⁹ Want of capital after 1846 made the Tobago planters depend on metayage, which allowed them little control over production. Since the metayers bore almost all the costs of production, the majority found it expedient not to cultivate more than 4 acres, because of the scarcity and expense of labour. Thus, estates were under-utilized and cultivated in small sub-units. Metayage was resorted to because of the lack of credit and surplus on the planters' account, but it contributed to the inability of the planters to extricate themselves from both of

³⁸ The Tobago sugar works were 'very superior' to those of Grenada and St Vincent. Evidence of Admin. Laborde, Rept. from the Royal Com. . . ., 1884, p. 409.

³⁹ Cf. PP. 1878-79, Vol. XIII, Rept. from the Select Committee on Sugar Industries, evidence of G. H. Chambers, merchant concerned with over 300 WI estates, p. 248.

these conditions (Ch. 5).

By 1870, Tobago was a backwater within the Caribbean. Its production crisis led to its marginality, by comparison with nearby colonies. From 1874, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. made only one monthly trip to Tobago, though two trips were made to all other BWI colonies. Down to 1888, in spite of several petitions 'influentially signed', the Company consistently refused to alter its schedule, because the freight and passenger traffic was too small to render a second service profitable, while the imperial Treasury refused to pay the costs, which Tobago could not afford.⁴⁰ Tobago was also marginalized by its inability to pay for telegraph lines, laid down in the BWI in 1871/72, and upgraded in 1875/76.⁴¹ Much of the sea traffic bypassed the island.

VII.3.2 The Rise of a Resident Proprietary

In 1855, there were 71 cultivated estates; 28 absentee owners had 52 properties, while 16 residents owned 19 properties.

The largest absentee landholders were merchants: the heirs of the wealthy planter, shipowner and merchant at the turn of the 19th century, Joseph Robley (6 estates); James Ewing and Co., Glasgow merchants (4 estates); Ellice, Kinnear

⁴⁰ CO321/88: Robinson to Derby, 10 May 1885; CO321/92: GPO to Under-Sec. of State, 9 July 1885, & Encs.; CO321/109: Sendall to Knutsford, 27 Oct. 1888, & Encs.

⁴¹ Hobsbawm [1975:60] argues that the telegraph widened the gap between the places with and without it. By 1897, only Fiji, Brit. Honduras, St Helena, the Falklands, Turks Is, Papua and Tobago were without it in the Empire [Hyam 1976: 108].

and Co. (London merchants) and Hon. Edward Ellice (British MP) (3 estates, and the former joint owner of a fourth); the Ellice company was consignee for 3 other estates. Robert Gordon was the largest resident planter with 3 estates, followed by John and James Leith, owning 2.⁴²

After 1855, there was a rapid transfer of estates to local owners, as properties were abandoned and sold cheaply. In 1863, of 71 cultivated estates, 58 (82%) were owned by residents, white, coloured and black, 'no less than 21 Estates having passed from Absentees to Resident owners during the last 7 years.'⁴³

By 1884, of 80 estates worked singly or jointly, 28 were owned by absentees and at least 50 by residents. The number of leased estates had also risen from 7 in 1855 to 22 (with 22 lessees) in 1884, with at least half the lessees being coloured or black (Tables 92, 93). In 1884, there was a remarkable degree of concentration into a few hands, which surpassed that of any earlier period in Tobago's history, the leading figures being the partnership between A. M. Gillespie and Co. (London merchants) and John (d. 1879) and James McCall (residents), with 25 estates.

As late as 1862, the McCalls and Gillespies had not yet established their economic dominance. In 1862, James and John Leith owned, singly or jointly, 11 estates. John McCall owned only Irvine Hall (not an estate), while A. M. Gillespie (then

⁴² CO285/73: Hincks to Labouchere, 7 July 1856, App. to 1855 Blue Bk. Rept.

⁴³ CO285/82: Walker to Cardwell, 23 May 1864, enc. Drysdale's 1863 Blue Bk. Rept.

and in 1869) was part-proprietor of Green Hill and Friendship estates. By 1869, McCall was part-proprietor of Betsy's Hope, Richmond, Glamorgan and Goldsborough. Many of the leeward estates later owned by the Gillespies and McCalls were still in the hands of the Ellices, Edward Ellice being the owner listed for 6 estates.⁴⁴ What, then, accounts for the spectacular control of the McCalls and Gillespies by 1880?

Firstly, A. M. Gillespie had been consignee and creditor to Tobago estates since 1850 and in 1863 enjoyed a consignee's lien over 20 estates.

I am and have been for nearly 30 years past acquainted with the business of a West India Merchant and for the last fifteen years have been particularly connected with the Island of Tobago as Consignee and Correspondent of Several of the Principal Owners of the Plantations and Estates ... I know by repute almost all the Estates in the Island of Tobago⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The Ellice estates, with Prospect, were formerly owned by John Balfour, who had in the 1790s been financed by Alex. Ellice and his merchant house, Inglis, Ellice & Co. After 1853, Wm. Ellice ran the estates at a loss; they were sold in the Encumbered Estates Ct. Nat. Lib. of Scotland: Ellice Papers, Ellice to Thruff & Dixon, 19 May 1868. Vote Bk., 1862-70.

⁴⁵ CO441, 5/9: Affidavit of A. M. Gillespie, 8 July 1865, for quotation. CO441, 18/1, Pt. 2: Affidavit of A. M. Gillespie, 21 July 1885. Cunningham and Co., UK merchants, had for 50 years previously been consignees for most of these estates.

TABLE 92

Tobago Estates: Ownership by Residence and Colour,
1855 and 1884

<u>Race/Colour and Residence of Owners</u>	<u>1855</u>		<u>1884</u>	
	<u>No. of Owners</u>	<u>No. of Estates</u>	<u>No. of Owners</u>	<u>No. of Estates</u>
Absentee Whites	28	52 (49)	9	28 (24)
Resident Whites	15	18	13	28 (25)
Resident Coloureds	1	1	8	16
Resident Blacks	-	-	4	5
Race/Colour Unknown	-	-	3	3
<u>TOTAL</u>	44	71 (68)	37	80 (73)

NOTES: 1. Estates owned by 'heirs of' someone or by companies were counted as having one owner. Some of the owners whose race/colour are unknown were residents.

2. Numbers in brackets indicate that some estates were worked together.

Sources: C0285/73: Hincks to Labouchere, 7 July 1856, App. to 1855 Blue Bk. Rept.; Hay [1884, App.].

TABLE 93

Lessees of Tobago Estates by Colour: 1884 and 1881/82

1884

<u>PARISH</u>	<u>N U M B E R O F L E S S E E S</u>				<u>No. Estates Leased</u>
	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Coloureds</u>	<u>Blacks</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	
St George	1	1	1	1	4
St Andrew	1	2	-	2	5
St David	-	2	3*	3	7
St Patrick	2	1	1**	1	6
TOTAL	4	6	5	7	22

1881/82

<u>Lessees</u>	6	5	5*	9	
<u>Estates</u>	7	7	5	9	28

No. of lessees = 25

NOTES:

1. * Includes 2 joint-lessees.

2. ** Leasing 2 estates.

Sources: Hay [1884, App.]; Assessment Roll, 1881/82.

Secondly, in 1858, Tobago entered into the jurisdiction of the Encumbered Estates Court, established to give indefeasible parliamentary titles to West India properties, many of which could attract no investment because of heavy encumbrances. Critics of the Court argued that it facilitated the concentration of West Indian estates in the hands of the British merchant consignees, through its recognition of the consignee's lien. In fact, British merchants owned and controlled many West India properties long before the Court was established (Ch. 2), and the consignee's lien, which was peculiar to sugar colonies, had also been recognized in courts of law long before 1858.⁴⁶ However, the Court, by realizing insolvent estates and putting them on a footing for receiving credit, strengthened the position of the merchants, who acquired properties cheaply. James Fleming, Chief Commissioner of the Court, saw the Court as a means of continuing the association between the West Indies and the London merchants.⁴⁷

Owing to the 'passing' of moribund estates through the Court, and the operation of the consignee's lien, the McCalls and Gillespies swiftly became the leading planters in Tobago. The Ellice estates and 2 of the Leith estates became the property of the McCalls and Gillespies by 1880, the Gillespies

⁴⁶ PP. 1831-32, Vol. XX, Rept. from the Select Committee on the Commercial State of the West India Colonies, pp.18-19; cf. Rept. ... on the West Indian Incumbered Estates Ct. ..., 1884; Further Corr. resp. the West Indian Incumbered Estates Ct., 1884; Cust [1865; 1874].

⁴⁷ CO285/90: Rawson to Kimberley, 2 May 1871, enc. Fleming to Herbert, 14 July, 30 Aug., 1871.

buying on the McCalls' behalf estates for which the Gillespies were consignees or creditors; the McCalls, on the other hand, bought properties which John McCall had worked as attorney or manager for several years.

The transition to a near monopoly took place between 1863 and 1875. Eleven British merchants 'interested' in Tobago had petitioned the Colonial Office for a loan after the 1847 hurricane.⁴⁸ By 1884, there were only the Gillespies⁴⁹ (13 estates worked as 9), Thomas Reid (5 estates), the Davidsons (4 estates), and Daniels and Co. (1 estate) [Hay 1884, App.]; most of their acquisitions had been made through the Encumbered Estates Court.

Tobago estates did not undergo the diversification made possible by the granting of clear titles, as happened in Grenada and Jamaica. Its experience was akin to that of St Vincent and Antigua where, with a concentration of holdings in the hands of a few merchants, the controlling businesses reduced expenditure and refused to invest in major improvements [Beachey 1957:37-8]. With few exceptions, the estates which grew minor crops in 1884 were owned by residents (Table 94). However, these crops were insignificant in the exports down to 1888 (Table 46).

⁴⁸ CO285/57: Colquhoun to Grey, 13 Dec. 1847, & Enc.

⁴⁹ Table 44 showed that the McCall estates cannot be separated from the Gillespies'.

TABLE 94

Tobago Estates: Ownership and Crops by Parish, 1884

<u>PARISH</u>	<u>No. of Estates</u>	<u>O W N E D B Y A B S E N T E E S</u>						<u>O W N E D B Y R E S I D E N T S</u>						<u>R E S.</u>	<u>UNKNOWN</u>
		<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>VI</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>VI</u>	<u>I</u>	
St John	4 (3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	
St Paul	8	2	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	
St Mary	6 (4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	
St George	13	3	-	-	-	1	-	6	-	-	-	2	-	1	
St Andrew	11 (10)	4	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	1	
St David	20 (18)	5	1	-	-	-	-	9	-	1	1	1	-	-	
St Patrick	18 (17)	4	-	-	-	1	-	7	-	2	-	1	2	-	
<u>TOTAL</u>	80 (73)	18	1	-	-	2	2	33	3	4	1	4	3	2	

Total Absentee Owned: 23Total Owned by Residents: 48Owners' Residence
Unknown: 2NOTES: 1. Key to symbols:

I Sugar; II Sugar and Cocoa; III Coconuts; IV Cocoa and/or Other Minor Crops;
V Provisions/Pasture; VI Abandoned.

2. Numbers in brackets indicate that some estates were worked together.

Source: Compiled from Hay [1884, App.].

VII.3.3 The Struggle for Control of Shipping

A critical aspect of the dominance of McCall and Gillespie was their control of the carrying trade, facilitated by the new British Navigation Act (1845), which maintained British supremacy in colonial shipping [Schuyler 1966]. In 1880, the main Scarborough merchants were the companies of John McCall, S. B. Isaacs, Edward Keens, Ebenezer Henderson, Thomas Blakely jun., Angus Collier, James Robertson, Henry Panting, George Agard, with all except Robertson importing directly from the UK. All except Collier, Isaacs and Panting were planters, and all except McCall and Isaacs (whose descendants were coloured) were coloured. Between 1879 and 1882, the struggle for control over shipping revealed a marked cleavage within the dominant class between the McCall/Gillespie combine and the smaller merchants and planters.

By 1880, Gillespie owned four vessels (in partnership with McCall) and chartered four or five annually. For several years, they shipped four-fifths of the island's produce to the UK, charging 3s 6d per cwt for freight, while in nearby islands freight ranged from 2s 6d to 1s 9d per cwt. Lt.-Gov. Ussher commented in 1873:

The advantage to the merchant-planter, combining his speculation in Sugar estates with a private fleet of his own, and the disadvantage to small producers unable to ship except at high prices will be tolerably apparent.⁵⁰

In the late 1870s, C. E. Dunn and Co., London West India

⁵⁰ CO285/91: Rawson to Kimberley, 13 Aug. 1873, enc. Ussher's 1872 Blue Bk. Rept.

merchants, who gave advances on a small scale to Tobago planters, began sending ships to Tobago and charging lower rates for freight than Gillespie. In response, in January 1880, McCall lowered the freight on sugar and its by-products to 3s, but they doubled the charges on freight from the UK, as well as on coconuts shipped to the UK.⁵¹ Dunn was the only competitor in the steamship trade between the UK and Tobago.

While the transatlantic trade was almost exclusively controlled by McCall/Gillespie, the inter-colonial trade, particularly with Barbados, the entrepôt for US and British goods, had been, from the 1830s, controlled by the smaller local merchants. S. B. Isaacs and Co. and James Keens and Co. were two of the firms owning the three sailing vessels which plied between Tobago and Barbados.

The food supply, American breadstuffs, fish, lumber, oil ... are all brought from Barbados in three small schooners each about 40 tons burthen and 40 years old. A steamer from New York affording regular communication is greatly needed, but as the principal importers own these small vessels they will not encourage such a change, as they will lose the profit of the freight ... The result is that all the refuse flour and lumber of Barbados finds it [sic] way to Tobago, is retailed at high prices,⁵²

The local merchants wanted to retain their inter-colonial monopoly, while competing with McCall/Gillespie in the transatlantic trade. The latter tried to eliminate the trade with Barbados, by bringing more shipping directly to Tobago from Europe and North America. In 1882, Gillespie introduced

⁵¹ CO321/41: Gamble to Kimberley, 24 July 1880, & Encs.

⁵² Rept. on the Blue Bk. for 1887, p. 6.

Hoult's Line from Liverpool and Scrutton Sons and Co. from London, and in 1884 McCall brought an American line of steamers.⁵³ From 1880, recognizing the growth in trade and migration between Tobago and Trinidad, McCall also ran a cutter as a passenger vessel between them.

The smaller Tobago merchants and planters, among them Edward Keens (James Keens' son, whose firm became Edward Keens and Co. after the father's death in 1878)⁵⁴, Gordon Macdougall, attorney for Dunn and Co. and planter, and James Hackett, planter, formed in 1880, with Dunn and Co., The Tobago Steamship Co. Ltd., to build a 100-ton steamer, *The Dawn*, to ply between Tobago, Grenada, Barbados and Trinidad. The intention was to consolidate their hold on the inter-colonial trade. *The Dawn* began to trade in October 1881. In February 1882, she was shipwrecked.⁵⁵

Another contender in the carrying trade was the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. (RMSPCO). Starting in 1840, its vessels carried passengers, mail and freight from the UK, and were a major link between the British colonies. In 1880-81, James McCall, backed by Gillespie and the West India Committee, militantly fought for the ending of the privileges granted to

⁵³ PP. 1881, Vol. LXIV. II, 1880 Blue Bk. Rept.; The News, 22 March 1884.

⁵⁴ The Keens stores had been the best, but declined after 1878. Judicial Inq. Com. Rept., 1892, evidence of D. B. Horsford, Edward Keens' brother-in-law, p. 192.

⁵⁵ CO321/50: Dawson, Man. Dir., Tobago Steamship Co., to Kimberley, 10 Jan. 1881; Dawson was also a principal of Dunn & Co. The Times (Bridgetown), 1 March 1882, quot. The News (Scarborough), 18 Feb. 1882. The wreck was bought by Goodridge and Good (the Anderson brothers; Ch. 5).

the RMSPCO vessels (which were exempt from harbour, pilotage, light and other dues), for the abolition of tonnage dues, and for Tobago to be a free port. The ostensible reason was that more transatlantic ships would call, and freight would be reduced. Dunn and Co., McCall's competitors, also wanted exemption for *The Dawn* from tonnage and other port dues.⁵⁶

However, McCall's demands were intended, not only to decrease the competitiveness of the RMSPCO, but to eliminate the sailing vessels trafficking with Barbados. The smaller merchants vacillated. On the one hand, their shops would have benefitted from lower shipping dues; on the other, those in the shipping trade, according to James McCall, 'very frankly expressed their dread of too free competition.' But McCall was adamant. Even after the wreck of *The Dawn*, he pressed for the abolition of tonnage dues, to strengthen their hold on the shipping business, given the near bankruptcy by 1880 of most of the estates under their control.⁵⁷

But the revenues of Tobago, of which customs dues formed a large part, would have suffered greatly by foregoing £500 per year to the merchants, who were not likely to reduce retail prices. It was also unlikely that Tobago, with a small market, and without the telegraph, would have attracted many transatlantic vessels. Administrator Laborde railed at the 'selfishness' of James McCall, Duncan McGillivray (a partner

⁵⁶ CO321/50: McCall to Kimberley, 14 Dec. 1881. Dawson to Kimberley, 10 Jan. 1881, 2 May 1881, 14 Oct. 1881, 14 Nov. 1881.

⁵⁷ CO321/59: Robinson to Kimberley, 6 Jan. 1882, Encs., esp. McCall & Co. to Kimberley, 22 Dec. 1881.

of the McCalls and attorney for the Gillespies), Colin Gillespie, and the West India Committee, all of whom pressed for the abolition of tonnage dues. He argued that such a policy would be 'a handsome present' to 'the wealthy Merchants'. But finally, the Government exempted steam vessels (the local merchants had sailing ships) from harbour, pilotage, wharfage and light dues, and halved the duty on cargo inwards and outwards; dues on registered tonnage were abolished. The London officials agreed that within a year all tonnage dues should be abolished.⁵⁸

VII.3.4 The Galling Yoke

The wreck of *The Dawn*, following hard on the collapse of Dunn and Co. early in 1882, symbolized the failure of the smaller planters and merchants to extricate themselves from the yoke of the McCall/Gillespie combine. L. G. Hay, the Treasurer, told the 1883 Royal Commission:

Dunn and Co. failed at beginning [*sic*] of 1882 and affected all the planters. They tried to cut out Gillespies and failed.

In the absence of local or regional sources of capital, another small metropolitan merchant house was the leverage used against the Gillespies. The root problem was capital. Hay continued:

The monopoly of the Gillespies is bad;
what the islands want is capitalists; all

⁵⁸ CO321/70: Robinson to Kimberley, 3 Jan. 1883, 8 Jan. 1883, 25 Jan. 1883, & Encs. Quot. is from the last despatch, Enc. 2, Laborde to Robinson, 30 Oct. 1882. CO321/59: Robinson to Kimberley, 27 May 1882, enc. Amendment to Tonnage Dues Ord. The Rept. from the Royal Com. . . ., 1884, p. 331, saw the dues as 'excessively high'.

planters have to ship by the Gillespies' bottoms, and the advances they do give are paltry, compared with what is needed.⁵⁹

Whether because they invested more heavily elsewhere in the Caribbean or, as The News⁶⁰ argued, in the coffee trade of the East, or because they could not afford the central factory and expensive equipment needed to modernize the Tobago estates, or because their commissions on advances, freight, supplies, sales and consigneeship were sufficiently lucrative, Gillespie deliberately kept the Tobago estates at a minimal level of investment, while tying them to sugar. The planters and merchants were unable to stop it.

Thus, by 1884, there were open conflicts of interest within the dominant class. The control of the monopolists over credit, production, and shipping engendered opposition from the smaller planters and merchants. A resident proprietary able to generate profits sufficient to allow them more freedom from the sugar merchants did not emerge before 1884.

The failure to diversify away from sugar was due to the lack of capital and the close dependence on small sugar merchants for meagre advances. Because Tobago was a minor producer, it did not interest larger investors, attracted to the newer, larger colonies. And since the smaller merchants, 'principally those financing muscovado estates in the smaller islands' were the most vulnerable [Beachey 1957:59], it is no

⁵⁹ Rept. from the Royal Com. . . ., 1884, pp. 407-8; emphasis added.

⁶⁰ 3 May 1884, Leader, p. 2.

accident that the three main Tobago investors, Gillespie⁶¹, Reid and Dunn, all failed in the Depression of the 1880s. Further, the extent of diversification and the level of technological advance determined the degree to which the colonies succumbed to the crisis [Beachey 1957:60]; the near monopoly of Gillespie inhibited both. Thus, the sugar planters, as if caught in pincer moves from the merchant houses without, and the metayers within, were doomed.

VII.4 SOCIAL CLASS, COLOUR AND STATE POWER: 1838-1876

VII.4.1 Introduction

The political process mediates, and is mediated by, the alliances and conflicts of groups in society. In Tobago, control over the state was crucial to the interests of all classes. Firstly, the constitution and the franchise determined access to the levers of power, and reflected the relative weight of classes, blocs and alliances in the social and political process. Secondly, the policies of the state on land, taxation and immigration were vital to the power of planters and labourers. All of these issues are interrelated, and indispensable to understanding both the process of

⁶¹ The Gillespies were not personally bankrupt. Colin and William Gillespie reopened in the 1880s as Gillespie Bros & Co. at the same Crutched Friars address, London; Alex. M. Gillespie, their father, left real and personal estate, with instructions that his funds be invested. Somerset House: Bk. of Wills No. 1/1905, Will of A. M. Gillespie, dd. 18 July 1898. Salmon [1888:167] states that 'the monopolists' in Tobago 'transferred their capital to other places where this cultivation pays better.' In 1896, the Gillespies still had 'business relations' with most of the BWI: Colin Gillespie, WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, App. C, Pt. 1, p. 185.

accumulation and the dynamics of intra- and inter-class relationships. Therefore, they are now examined. The role of the Colonial Office, which pursued 'imperial interests', distinct from, and often opposed to, the interests of both metropolitan and resident planters and merchants, is shown to have been critical to, but also dependent upon, the struggles between the dominant and labouring classes.

VII.4.2 The Struggle for Executive Control: 1838-1863

By 1838, the West Indian Assemblies were entrenched in their fight for autonomy from executive control. The erosion of their power in the conflicts over slavery had increased their intransigence. The Jamaican Assembly, angry at what it saw as the highhandedness of the UK Parliament in imposing emancipation, revolted when, in July 1838, Parliament passed The West India Prisons Act, since prison conditions and the treatment of blacks were closely related. The Jamaican Assembly refused to transact business; it was prorogued by Gov. Smith and dissolved 'for contumacy', but after new elections, most of its old members were returned and Smith had to prorogue again until February 1839 [Ward 1976:117-121].

Henry Taylor, Senior Clerk in the West Indian department of the Colonial Office, wrote a Cabinet Minute, in which he argued that no West Indian Government could be trusted to rule responsibly in respect of the ex-slaves. The ascendancy of the planters might be replaced by a worse ascendancy of coloureds or blacks, which 'would change the complexion of the

evil to be dealt with, but not reduce its magnitude'.⁶² Therefore, he wanted all Assemblies abolished, to be replaced either by a legislative commission to visit the West Indies and make the necessary laws, or by Crown Colonies with wholly nominated legislatures (as obtained in St Lucia and Trinidad); he preferred the latter, which would place initiative and control in London. Taylor was adamant that popular constituencies were out of the question: the Crown was 'the only possible representative of the people.'⁶³ Glenelg, his Minister, vacillated. The Cabinet was divided. The Government attempted to persuade the House of Commons to suspend Jamaica's constitution for five years, but won by a narrow majority of 5, and the Whig Government had to resign. Eventually, a policy of conciliation with the Jamaican Assembly was followed, the UK agreeing to co-operate in allowing state-assisted immigration. The Jamaican case provided a framework for dealing with the other Assemblies.

After 1840, therefore, with the decline of the anti-slavery lobby in Britain, there was little interest in the welfare of the freedpeople.

Their advocates in Exeter Hall made representations from time to time on immigration policy and other matters to the Colonial Office, the clerks in the Colonial Office read the reports of the stipendiary magistrates; and policy there was none. ... the conventional view was still that there was every reason to be satisfied with their condition.

[Morrell 1966:162]

⁶² Taylor to Stephen, 24 Oct. 1838, in Taylor [1885, 1:257].

⁶³ Taylor to Fairfield, 26 March 1871, in Higham [1926:94].

Thus, while the franchise needed to be broadened, the executive was seldom willing to press for it, except where they hoped to constitute a new legislature, more amenable to their own wishes.

In Tobago, the leading attorneys continued to control the Assembly. Alexander Macdougall took up this mantle from Alexander Gairdner (Ch. 2) in the 1840s, James Leith and Chief Justice Sanderson in the late 1850s and 1860s; after 1870, John McCall (until his death in 1879), succeeded by his brother, James, were the influential brokers of power between the executive and the planters.

Between 1846-48, when supplies were withheld for two years, the Gov.-in-Chief, Grey, realizing that a dissolution would probably result in a more intransigent Assembly, considered extending the franchise. But the London officials refused to do so. To widen the franchise would grant more power to the coloureds, a few of whom were already Assemblymen; therefore the whites had to be upheld in power. James Stephen minuted:

Our choice ... lies between the maintenance of Oligarchies, like those we have at present, and the creation of democracies, in which the coloured will ere long, triumph over, exclude, and persecute the White or European settlers. The latter may be a right choice, but it is not a choice to which any one would willingly be reduced.⁶⁴

New elections were held in September 1847, with 110 voters; and a Bill to widen the franchise was abandoned in 1849,

⁶⁴ CO285/55: Grey to Gladstone, 2 July 1846, & Encs.; minutes, esp. Stephen's, 10 Aug. 1846.

because the Assembly found it 'unpalatable'.⁶⁵

The deadlock between the executive and the planters continued. In 1852, after the Land Tax Act (Ch. 3) provoked a riot, Administrator Henry Yeates' intervention led to yet another constitutional crisis. By January 1853, the Privy Council, tired of recommendations to the Assembly being ignored, put pressure on Yeates to seize the initiative, rather than allow the Assembly to frustrate good government. Sanderson, the Chief Justice, said:

I attribute the disastrous state of the Colony, its bankrupt exchequer, and its legislation, in which it is behind all other Colonies ... to the course which has been invariably adopted by the Executive ... of remaining perfectly inactive, awaiting measures to be originated by the Council and Assembly

The answer to the 'degraded condition' of Tobago was executive initiative and well-prepared laws.

The Colonial Office supported the Privy Council. But Yeates, with the support of Gov. Colebrooke, backed away from what he saw as a collision course with the Assembly.⁶⁶ Yeates later complained to the legislature of the emasculation of the executive by the Assembly:

The state of our Roads, the state of our Public Buildings, the condition of our Jails, the Bankrupt state of our Exchequer, all indicate a want of power in the Executive ... principally attributable to the deficiency of its pecuniary means ... centralization of power ... has been ...

⁶⁵ CO285/57: Reid to Grey, 8 Sept. 1847; CO285/60: Colebrooke to Grey, 28 March 1849, enc. Graeme (quoted) to Colebrooke, 14 Mar. 1849.

⁶⁶ CO285/66: Colebrooke to Newcastle, 2 May 1853, & Encs.; Enc. 7, Privy Council minutes, 18 Jan. 1853.

lost, the Executive power weakened ...,
and the character of the Government ...
superseded by an Oligarchy. ... [E]very
thing within this Colony betokens
retrogression.⁶⁷

In response, the Assembly declared that it was not willing to give up any of its prerogatives, but intimated that it would co-operate with an Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee, the brainchild of the Jamaican Assembly, was the middle ground between the two real options in the constitutional deadlock: either responsible government with the legislature controlling the executive, or executive control [Wrong 1963/1969:63-4]. First introduced in Jamaica in 1854, it was intended to improve the machinery of government by having at least one spokesman for the executive in each House, and vesting all initiative on money votes in the executive.⁶⁸ It was the most feasible option to officials committed to the view that only white minorities should rule.

The Bill authorizing the Executive Committee passed both Tobago Houses, but the initiative for money Bills was not vested in the executive; instead, the Assembly decided to restrain money votes by annual standing orders. The Legislative Councillors, previously appointed 'during pleasure', were to hold office for life; the franchise, however, remained the same.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ CO285/67: Colebrooke to Newcastle, 14 June 1854, Yeates' Address, 13 Sept. 1853.

⁶⁸ As a *quid pro quo*, the UK guaranteed £500,000 of Jamaica's debt, and advanced a further £50,000 [Wrong 1963/1969:63].

⁶⁹ CO285/70: Colebrooke to Grey, 7 March 1855, & Encs.; cf. Morrell [1969:389-390].

The view from below was different from that of the planters and the Colonial Office, each wanting their own rule. Following a memorial from the Assembly asking for the removal of Shortland, 93 persons, 'principally mechanics and labourers', sent a counter-memorial, calling for the removal of the Assembly, for the widening of the franchise, and 'the elevating of men who may be more usefully acquainted' with the people's affairs.

"Assembly" can, as stands now, produce nothing good, for the use of the Colony, in its present state, without a Change in the present enfranchisement, and let a new one be made so, as to reduce the ... qualification for Membership, ...

These labourers felt that both the candidates and the voters should include the less wealthy. The London officials concurred, but did nothing about it.⁷⁰

The Executive Committee began in 1856, under Drysdale's administration, and both Houses again agreed to widen the franchise. (The Franchise Act was passed in 1858.) But by December 1859, the weaknesses of the Executive Committee had become apparent, particularly on the issue of taxation for immigration, which the planters wanted, as a means of ending the metayage system.

The Executive Committee and Drysdale proposed to raise funds for immigration by a property tax which would fall mainly on the estates. The Assembly promptly voted no confidence in the Committee, and Drysdale was obliged to appoint a new Committee led by James Leith, the leader of the

⁷⁰ C0285/70: Colebrooke to Sec. of State, 5 Apr. 1855 (2 despatches), & Encs.; authors' emphases.

Assembly. The new Committee, with the agreement of both Houses, proposed to raise funds for immigration by a tax on exports, including the produce of metayers. Gov. Hincks asked that the loan also requested (£30,000) be not sanctioned.⁷¹

The loan was refused, but the executive was put in the anomalous position of not agreeing with the policy of its Executive Committee. The problem, ultimately, was the unrepresentative basis of government. Drysdale concluded:

The true basis of all forms of Responsible Government must be Representation, but Representation in so far as it concerns the people of Tobago, is a mere fallacy, twelve at least of the whole sixteen Members of the Assembly being the nominees of one single individual.⁷²

In 1860, the executive capitulated to the same interests in the legislature that the Executive Committee had been designed to overrule. Hincks' counsel to Administrator Baynes, to avoid the stoppage of supplies, was that 'the policy of the Government must take its line in a great degree from the Executive Committee', except where 'imperial interests' were involved. The Colonial Office agreed, and this became the official position.⁷³

⁷¹ CO285/78: Hincks to Newcastle, 4 Jan. 1860, & Encs. The Bill was lost because it was tied to an imperial loan. In 1862, a revised Export Duty Bill failed because, though it was passed by the Assembly, it was opposed by James Leith, on the grounds that he had not been consulted. CO285/80: Hincks to Newcastle, 14 Feb. 1862. After that, because of the cost, another Bill was not passed until 1870.

⁷² CO285/78: Hincks to Newcastle, 5 May 1860, Enc. 5, Drysdale to Hincks, 4 Apr. 1860.

⁷³ CO285/78: Hincks to Newcastle, 12 Oct. 1860, Hincks to Baynes, 11 Oct. 1860; Newcastle to Hincks, 11 Dec. 1860.

In 1862, new elections were held under the 1858 Franchise Act. The Act lowered the qualifications for the vote to persons owning or renting land or buildings worth £10, but raised those for candidates to £200 annual income (from £100 annuity or £150 salary). The elections made no difference to the composition of the House. Representative Government, said Drysdale, was 'a mere fiction'; and he deemed it 'no surprise ... should class legislation be found to dominate over the interests of all.' Except for one constituency, the elections were uncontested, the new members having been returned through the influence of a few prominent planters. To crown it all, 2 members were elected in 1 parish by an illiterate.⁷⁴

The Assembly, having regained control of the Government, asked that the Executive Committee be abolished.⁷⁵ On 27 March 1863, the Assembly carried without division a motion that the rule giving initiative for money grants to the executive be expunged [Woodcock 1867/1971:133].

To sum up, the Executive Committee was 'a strange contrivance' [Wrong 1963/1969:66]. It was difficult to find people who would not oppose the executive, that would also be acceptable to the legislature. The Committee became a game of musical chairs, as it were, with frequent resignations, removals, dissolutions and reconstitutions; 11 changes were made in 8 years and, on one occasion, 4 months elapsed before

⁷⁴ CO285/80: Walker to Newcastle, 30 June 1862, enc. Drysdale's 1861 Blue Bk. Rept.; 30 July 1862, & Encs.; CO285/81: Walker to Newcastle, 17 June 1863, enc. Drysdale's 1862 Blue Bk. Rept.

⁷⁵ CO285/80: Walker to Newcastle, 14 & 29 Nov. 1862, & Encs.

3 persons could be found to serve. In 1863, Drysdale confessed that only 'the interchange of addresses' had been achieved. Nothing major was accomplished before his departure in 1865.⁷⁶

Financial policy returned to the old patterns, marked by lateness of supplies, deficiency in appropriations, private money votes and reckless expenditure. The executive did not oppose, for fear of the capricious refusal of supplies. In such circumstances, 'There need be no surprise ... that colonial exchequers ... were chronically close to bankruptcy' [Rogers 1970:47]. Tobago was an apt example of this.

VII.4.3 The Making of a Crown Colony: 1863-1876

After the fiasco of 1839 and the failure to bring to heel the Jamaican Assembly, the Colonial Office played a waiting game with the West Indian Assemblies, expecting that their errors would lead to chaos, which would force them to become Crown Colonies. In 1865, the Jamaican Assembly, following on the Morant Bay rebellion, was pressured into surrendering its constitution and accepting a wholly nominated Crown Colony legislature.⁷⁷

The British strategy after 1865 was to urge on its administrators the introduction of simplified legislatures - single chambers with a nominated majority, the balance of power favouring the Crown. In the Leeward Islands, through the energy and skill of Gov. Benjamin Pine, this was

⁷⁶ CO285/81: Walker to Newcastle, 24 Mar. 1863, Sub.-Enc. 1.

⁷⁷ For Henry Taylor's account of his role in this, see Taylor to Fairfield, 26 Mar. 1871, in Higham [1926:93-4].

accomplished in St Kitts, Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat and Dominica, and in the Virgin Islands with Pine's backing, between 1866 and 1867 [Morrell 1969:436-8]. None of these Assemblies dissolved themselves voluntarily [Rogers 1970:4].

In the Windward Islands, the abolition of the Assemblies was slower, the opposition greater. The first breach in the Old Representative System was in St Vincent, where riots in 1862, exposing the class and colour divisions, made the Assembly willing to follow the Jamaican example; in 1867, under pressure from Lord Carnarvon, on Taylor's advice, a casting vote in the single-chamber legislature was given to the Crown [Morrell 1969:438; Marshall 1983].

In 1868, the famous Circular Memorandum of the Earl of Buckingham and Chandos, then Secretary of State, summed up the Colonial Office position on this movement to Crown Colony status, while protesting that it was done 'voluntarily and without any suggestion from Her Majesty's Government.' The object was to establish a system of government whereby 'the financial condition of the Colonies should be improved and their commercial interests be promoted, crime repressed, and the welfare of all classes be better provided for.' The UK was also willing to provide imperial grants, once adequate powers were given to the Crown. It was deemed evident that the Crown had to be given control, since the uneducated blacks 'were incapable of contributing to the formation of any intelligent public opinion'. Where the chambers were partly nominated, only the elected members could oppose the Crown, but their protest had to be sent through the Governor to the

Secretary of State; all other members, including elected officials, were expected to co-operate with the Crown.⁷⁸

In the mid 1860s, it was agreed at the Colonial Office that there should be a federation of the Leeward and Windward Islands. In 1869, Gov. Pine was instructed to combine the Leeward Islands into one colony with one legislature. By 1871, his mission was accomplished [Morrell 1969:442-446].

In 1869, Governor Rawson Rawson was also instructed to federate Barbados and the Windward Islands. But the opposition to Confederation in those islands, where single-chamber legislatures had not yet been introduced (except in St Vincent), was formidable, since nominated majorities would deprive the planters of their control over finance.⁷⁹

The difference in population and resources between Barbados and the Windwards would have given Barbados a disproportionate share of councillors in a federal Council. Rawson therefore felt that the matter should be approached in stages, with each colony having a single-chamber legislature and Crown Colony status first. He also thought that the economic advantages were likely to be 'illusory', since the Leeward Islands federation had increased costs. Kimberley, the Secretary of State, unwillingly conceded in November 1871

⁷⁸ Barbados Archives: CSO: Buckingham and Chandos to Gov.-in-Chief, 17 Aug. 1868.

⁷⁹ Rawson's successor, J. Pope-Hennessy (1875-76), sought by gradual means to bring about co-operation between the Windward Islands, with federation as the ultimate goal. Bidding for public support, he spoke on the social conditions in Barbados on 3 March 1876. When the Barbados labourers rioted at Easter 1876, all prospects of Barbados' participation in a Windward Islands federation were dead [Hamilton 1956; Levy 1980].

that the matter could be approached in stages, but when there was no further action by August 1872, he stepped up the pressure, insisting on single-chamber legislatures for Barbados, Grenada and Tobago.⁸⁰

Rawson's strategy was to seek the support of the most influential planters in the Assemblies. John McCall, the rising man after the death of James Leith in 1867, was pivotal to the conversion of Tobago to a Crown Colony.

In 1871, Tobago's Lt.-Gov. Kortright proposed widening the franchise to include those possessing property with an annual assessed or rental value between £5 and £10. He did it because the Assembly had been in existence more than 8 years, and a new election would have produced the same House by the 'same ridiculously small constituencies.'⁸¹

Both Rawson and Kortright immediately ran foul of the Colonial Office. The sole concern of the UK Government was to convert the BWI to Crown Colonies. Widening the franchise to embrace more of the black segment of the middle strata, though likely to increase support for the Lt.-Governor against the planters, was counter to 'imperial interests'.

The views of the British officials on this are particularly revealing. Henry Taylor argued:

Whichever franchise tends most to the conversion of Tobago into a Crown Colony shd

⁸⁰ Barbados Archives: Rawson to Kimberley, 8 Sept. 1871; Kimberley to Rawson, 2 Nov. 1871, 30 Aug. 1872; Rawson to Kimberley, 26 Sept. 1872, The West Indian, 22 Sept. 1876. Kimberley to Rawson, 1 May 1873; Carnarvon to Hennessy, 25 Jan. 1876, The Gazette, 6 Mar. 1876.

⁸¹ CO285/89: Rawson to Kimberley, 29 Apr. 1871, & Encs.; 15 Aug. 1871, Enc. 4, Kortright to Rawson, 1 Aug. 1871.

be regarded as the best.

Kimberley told Rawson in strong terms that Tobago 'should be well advised in following the example of Jamaica and becoming a Crown Colony ...', or in default, like the Leeward Islands, have a single chamber with a Crown majority.⁸²

The London officials were clear, both about their objectives and about the divisions in West Indian society which made it opportune to press for Crown Colony régimes.

It was Taylor who outlined their strategy:

Till about 8 or 10 years ago the W.Indian Assemblies were so jealous of any interference with their rights, that if anything was wanted of them, the Secy of State was studiously kept out of sight. I believe this jealousy exists still except in such instances, & in so far forth, as it has been supplanted by another jealousy, - the jealousy, not unmixed with fears, of the Blacks, which has lately taken possession of the White & Coloured Classes. In some Colonies the White & Coloured Gentry were in danger of being ousted from political power by the increasing influence of the Blacks in the elections. In others there was the danger of Black insurrections, as exemplified in Jamaica in 1865. It is to these fears & jealousies, skilfully, but not perhaps very overtly, worked on by Sir B. Pine, ... that we owe the conversion of the Leewd Islds into quasi Crown Colonies. The part taken by the Secy of State has been to stand aside, & when applied to, to say that the crown would have no objection to undertake the responsibility of governing the Colony if invested with adequate power ...; & adequate power meant a casting vote in the Legislature.⁸³

Rawson, under pressure to accomplish the mission of his

⁸² CO285/89: Rawson to Kimberley, 29 Apr. 1871, & minutes; Kimberley to Rawson, 15 June 1871.

⁸³ CO285/89: Rawson to Kimberley, 15 Aug. 1871; Taylor's minute.

masters, went to Tobago in August 1871 for talks with Kortright. Both felt optimistic about changing the constitution to at least a single chamber, to be effected by publicizing Kimberley's views, dissolving the present House without any change in franchise, and inducing a sufficient number of 'respectable gentlemen' to contest and sit for a few sessions, 'for the express purpose of ... establishing a single chamber.' Rawson recognized that it would be impossible to convert Tobago to a Crown Colony immediately. There was public suspicion that a single chamber would lead to Confederation and increased taxes. Therefore, he suggested that Confederation be kept 'out of sight', the Franchise Act disallowed, and an effort made to get the lesser change (single chamber) as the first step towards the greater. Rawson also suggested ways of inducing, bribing and flattering those whose support would be needed.⁸⁴

By then a backwater of little imperial significance, Tobago was often called in the Colonial Office minutes, 'a miserable little Colony'. When Kortright was replaced by Lt.-Gov. Ussher in 1872, the Colonial Office reduced the Lt.-Governor's salary from £1300 to £1100.⁸⁵

Initially, Ussher recognized that only the biggest planters supported the move towards Crown Colony status, and was chary of broaching any constitutional issues:

I think the Single Chamber must be kept
out of sight at present ... There is a

⁸⁴ CO285/89: Rawson to Kimberley, Conf., 26 Aug. 1871.

⁸⁵ CO285/90: Law to Herbert, 19 July 1872; minutes by Wingfield and Herbert.

strong feeling amongst the better Classes for it. - But a portion of the Lower House will feel that they will be extinguished at once.⁸⁶

However, by March 1873, Ussher strongly urged 'a thorough and speedy change in the Constitution of Tobago.' He wanted some of the principal officials removed because they were indebted to locals, owing to their small salaries, often paid in arrears; and they were caught in the pervasive atmosphere of 'corruption and lethargy'. He described the lack of executive control and the absence of checks on public expenditure, resulting in a bankrupt Treasury. Ussher suggested a single chamber, to be accomplished by dissolving the House, substituting 'one or two better men', and getting the House to vote for his measure.

The Colonial Office welcomed Ussher's analysis. However, Kimberley refused to transfer inefficient officials, in the hope that the situation would so worsen as to require the imposition of a Crown Colony régime. He minuted:

This nest of corruption and lethargy must ... grow more & more foul, and where the colony cannot pay its way, which seems to be a proximate event we shall have sufficient ground to propose to Parliament a bill to sweep the whole of the present system away. Meantime in order to lay the ground for this action, we should first give the Tobago Legislature ample opportunity to reform itself.⁸⁷

Keenly contested elections were held in October 1873,

⁸⁶ CO285/91: Rawson to Kimberley, Conf., 10 Jan. 1873, enc. Ussher to Rawson (Extract), 7 Jan. 1873.

⁸⁷ CO285/91: Rawson to Kimberley, Conf., 23 Apr. 1873, enc. Ussher to Rawson, Conf., 14 Mar. 1873; Kimberley's min., 25 May 1873, & Kimberley to Rawson, Conf., 30 May 1873.

under a new Franchise Act, with £5 worth of real property as the minimum qualification, producing an Assembly more amenable to Ussher. In May 1874, through John McCall's influence, the House voted to convert the legislature to a single chamber of 6 nominated and 8 elected members; its life was to be 3 years, under the same franchise. The Act was welcomed in the Colonial Office as a step in the right direction.⁸⁸

The constitutional issue revealed, as Ussher had perceived, that the political interests of the larger planters were not identical with those of the smaller planters and lessees, and of the middle strata. Many of the latter, having recently acquired the vote with the lower franchise, saw the immediate contraction of their power under the new constitution, which reduced the elected members from 16 to 8, so giving disproportionate weight to the more sparsely populated (the Windward) of the 7 parishes.

On the Assembly floor, Robert McEachnie, a coloured land surveyor and auctioneer, gave a spirited defence of the interests of the middle strata against those of McCall. The Bill's supporters had justified it on the principle of giving greater weight to property than to numbers. McEachnie argued:

Numbers in this sense means property also. Each one of the many Electors possesses real property, varying in amount, but no case less than, will rent for, £5 per annum. Property, in their case certainly widely distributed and not in the condition of monopoly. That is the difference. ... we have among us a law-abiding people, in the middle class which has sprung up, and is springing up ... For over 100 years we had a constitution which was, to them,

⁸⁸ CO321/3: Rawson to Carnarvon, 15 June 1874, & Encs.

a dead-letter. It is but fourteen years now, since we brought down the franchise to £10, just within their reach. We have since seen the need of further reducing it to £5 ... Has [sic] any evil results followed these concessions?

McEachnie also argued that, since most of the indirect taxes were paid by 'the people', while the plantations enjoyed 'numerous exemptions', 'representation should keep pace with taxation.'

Robert Crooks, the Speaker, resigned his office, stating that under the new constitution, he was 'deprived of all my political rights'. But excepting McEachnie, S. B. Isaacs, a Jewish merchant with populist leanings, and John Kitson, a small planter, all of whom wanted an adjournment of 6 months, the other members, because of their allegiance to McCall or to Ussher, supported the measure.⁸⁹

In a memorial, 190 persons from among the smaller planters and merchants and the middle strata objected to the smaller House, fearing that 'the dominant party will be more free to unite, and in almost every case secure the Single Seat.' The thrust of their protest was that the new legislature would erode their political gains. Referring to the 1794 constitution under which only wealthy whites could vote, and rehearsing the comments of Graeme, Keens, and Drysdale on the narrow franchise (Table 95), they argued:

... the change brought about by the accumulation of property in the hands of the people since, [is] made of no account - 1874, is in the eyes of its [the Bill's] promoters as 1794 ...

⁸⁹ CO288/26: Assembly minutes, 23 May 1874.

Ussher protested that McCall, 'the mover and promoter' of the Bill, had 'really divested himself of the greater part of his power; and distributed it between the Government and the Electors.'⁹⁰ In fact, McCall had calculated that his power would have been undiminished by the movement towards Crown rule; he therefore sacrificed the interests of the smaller planters and merchants, and of the middle strata and labouring class, wanting greater access to power, for his closer personal and corporate alliance with the Colonial Office.

TABLE 95

The Tobago Electorate: 1837-1876

<u>Year</u>	<u>Qualified Voters</u>	<u>Voters</u>
1837	129	101
1847	153	110
1855	122	93
1857	102	66
1862	216	89
1873	215	166
1876*	301	144

NOTE: * Voting for a single-chamber legislature.

Sources: CO285/80: Walker to Newcastle, 30 June 1862, enc. Drysdale's 1861 Blue Bk. Rept., for 1837-1857; CO290 series: Blue Bks. for subsequent years.

⁹⁰ CO321/3: Rawson to Carnarvon, 24 July 1874, enc. Memorial, and Ussher to Rawson, 4 July 1874. One of the movers of the Bill, J. G. Anderson, was from 1884 to oppose the Crown Colony régime he had helped to promote (Ch. 5).

The Belmanna riots at Windward in May 1876 finally provided the opportunity awaited by the Colonial Office. The riots (Ch. 4) displayed both the strength of class antagonisms and the vulnerability of the dominant class, who discovered, in the words of the Privy Council, that they had been living on 'a half extinct volcano' which 'only slumbered to awake to meditated destruction.'⁹¹ Having no telegraph, the Lt.-Governor had to send by boat to Grenada to ask for a telegram to Barbados requesting troops. The riots also revealed serious limits to the personal influence of McCall, who 'thought he could depend upon the people upon his own Estate, as well as by his influence assist in keeping quiet those inclined to be riotous. Your Excellency will perceive how mistaken he must have been'.⁹²

Thus, on 23 May 1876, the Assembly met, and James Kirk jun., white Creole planter from the Windward District, resolved that they ask Her Majesty to devise such a form of government as in her wisdom might seem most conducive to Tobago's welfare. The large landowners 'strenuously supported'⁹³ the Bill. R. B. Anderson who, with his brother, had been chased from the Windward District during the riots, wanted the powers of government 'so increased, that the law might once more be held in ... awe.'

⁹¹ CO321/13: Hennessy to Carnarvon, 5 Sept. 1876, enc. Privy Council minutes, 17 May 1876.

⁹² CO321/13: Hennessy to Carnarvon, 11 May 1876, & Encs., esp. Harley to Hennessy, 9 May 1876.

⁹³ CO321/13: Hennessy to Carnarvon, 10 June 1876, Attorney-General's rept.

McEachnie predicted bitter regret, arguing that the House could vote funds for its better protection, rather than surrender the right of decision on heavy taxation. T. M. Sealy, a white Barbadian planter, implored the House not to act rashly, since the real meaning of Crown Colony was heavy taxation without representation.⁹⁴ In spite of the dissenting voices, now including Gordon Macdougall, the motion was moved by C. L. Abbott⁹⁵, seconded by William McCall, and passed on 26 May.

Thus, the Colonial Office gained its objectives at no cost to the Crown. The constitution given to Tobago, Grenada and St Vincent in 1876 provided for a wholly nominated Legislative Council, with 3 nominated unofficials besides the Lt.-Governor and 3 officials sitting *ex officio*. Three members and the Lt.-Governor constituted a quorum; only the Lt.-Governor could initiate money votes and only he could allow a member, who had to apply in writing, to propose any law, resolution or vote affecting the revenue.⁹⁶

The biggest planters surrendered their powers in the hope that there would be better military protection against the labouring class, and investment in the central factory which neither Gillespie nor they could finance. But these were not

⁹⁴ Barbados Globe, 13 July 1876, quo. People (Scarborough), 24 June 1876; cf. CO288/26: Assembly minutes, 23, 26 & 27 May 1876.

⁹⁵ A young barrister, son of S. H. F. Abbott, who in 1870 was the first local man to be called to the Bar. The professionals (Drs Buhôt, Anderson; Abbott), the officials (H. Byng), the 3 McCall brothers, J. Kirk and R. Pile (Windward planters) supported the measure.

⁹⁶ CO321/24: Strahan to Carnarvon, 29 Jan. 1878, & Encs.

the objectives of the Colonial Office in the impending crisis of the economy and the state.

VII.4.4 Public Policy: 1838-1876

The public business was conducted capriciously. The Supply Act, whenever passed, was usually for the year (or years) preceding. The revenue was usually partly of fixed revenues for the current year and funds raised to meet the expenses of the previous one; expenditure was of fixed liabilities of the current year and contingent expenses of the previous one. Shortland complained: 'In reality the Revenue is first spent and afterwards appropriated'; and appropriations often exceeded the revenue.⁹⁷

There was little concern for public institutions and works. The Assembly refused to establish an almshouse until one was started by Lt.-Gov. and Mrs Graeme in 1848 after the 1847 hurricane; it was supported by private donations, but remained starved of public funds.⁹⁸ There was no hospital or public dispensary until 1876, and the sexes were not separated at the new hospital. The 1883 Royal Commission described it as the worst in the West Indies. The insane were sent to the Grenada asylum or to the local jail. The administration of justice, for the most part in the hands of planters who served as Justices of the Peace and local magistrates, was wanting, as the history of metayage amply illustrates. The schools,

⁹⁷ CO285/70: Colebrooke to Russell, 7 Aug. 1855, Shortland's 1855 Blue Bk. Rept.

⁹⁸ CO290/4: Stip. Mag. Repts., 30 June 1853, enc. Rept. of Sub-Committee of Assembly on Alms House, 23 May 1853.

including the Free School in Scarborough, were run by the Churches, with the Moravian schools usually the best. The entire record of reports on the schools is one of insufficient government grants, resulting in minimal facilities, and teachers' salaries too low (at times equal to a labourer's wage) and too often paid in arrears, to attract well qualified persons. There was no school for those who could afford to go beyond the rudimentary teaching at primary level. The roads were repaired by a particularly wasteful system, whereby unpaid waywardens (usually planters, attorneys or managers) supervised compulsory male labour, or the labour of ageing or female substitutes (Ch. 6), and spent large sums without accountability. Jetties, public buildings and every public service were likewise starved of funds. The pattern of expenditure is shown in Table 96.

Recommendations on all these issues were urged upon the Assembly by the executive at the start of each legislative session; but little was done. Legislation and administration remained in permanent derangement.

Apart from the franchise (discussed above), and land (Chs. 3, 4), taxation and immigration were the most important areas of public policy. These are now briefly discussed.

TABLE 96

Tobago Government Expenditure: 1845-1886 (Pounds Sterling)

	<u>1845</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1855</u>	<u>1860</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1870</u>
Civil Service	1545.12. 3	2052. 7. 2	2014.14. 1	2038. 0.10	2170. 0. 0	2185. 7.11
Ecclesiastical	1133. 5. 5	1060. 0. 0	921.17. 0	1022.18. 1	960. 0. 0	1060. 0. 0
Judicial	700. 0. 0	987.18.11	650. 0. 0	800. 0. 0	1430. 8. 4	1475. 5. 2½
Police & Jail	794. 5. 5	1256.13. 9	2271. 8. 4¾	1809. 9. 8	1594.14. 4	1902. 7. 7
Militia	67.19. 6	82. 5. 0	25. 0. 0	-	-	-
Education	-	-	84. 7. 6	359.10. 8	300. 0. 0	300. 0. 0
Hospitals/ Health	-	-	-	-	-	-
Paupers	45. 9. 0	76. 8. 4	19.12. 0	227. 3. 1	264. 1. 5	464.17. 0
Public Works	303. 4. 8½	553. 4. 8	86. 1.11	337. 4. 4	200. 0. 0	323. 2. 6
Coroners	68. 3. 6	139.19. 6	168.12. 9	102.10. 0	186. 5. 6	236. 3. 3
Road Labour	614. 1. 8	828. 1. 6	348.11. 2	856. 3. 3	663. 2. 1	999.16. 3
Printing	-	-	-	150. 0. 0	278.18. 0	268.13. 0
Immigration	410. 0. 0	-	-	-	-	893. 9. 4
Hurricane	-	-	-	-	-	-
Loan	-	-	621.14. 6	117. 0. 0	-	691. 9. 0
Land Tax	-	-	243.12. 4	-	-	-
Tariff Officers	-	441.14. 0	-	-	-	-
Misc.	898.19.10	1341. 2. 3	264.15. 6	1190. 7. 0½	517.18. 8	855. 0. 8
Arrears of Expenditure	-	-	834. 1. 0¾	17.10. 0	1494.18. 4	1088. 0. 5
<u>TOTAL</u>	£6581. 1. 3½	£8819.15. 1	£8581. 8. 2½	£9027.16.11½	£10060. 6. 8	£12473.12.1½

TABLE 96 concluded

Tobago Government Expenditure: 1845-1886 (Pounds Sterling)

	<u>1875</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>1884</u>	<u>1886</u>
Civil Service*	1770.12. 2	2485.14. 7½	3621.10. 1	2416. 9. 5
Ecclesiastical	1060. 0. 0	971.13. 4	1060. 0. 0	794.19.10
Judicial	1330. 0. 0	1777.15. 4	1650.10. 6	1243. 2. 4
Police & Jail	2058.11. 2	1918.14. 5	2339. 0. 1	1500. 4. 3
Militia	-	113.11. 9	148.13. 8	-
Education	300. 0. 0	444.11. 2	770. 0. 0	500. 0. 0
Hospitals/Health	321.18.10	573. 9. 0	892.15. 2	592. 6.10
Paupers	367.14. 3	-	153.17. 4	157.18. 2
Public Works	341. 9. 1	1165.15. 6	1339.15. 9	371.10.11½
Coroners	213.16. 6	-	-	-
Road Labour	765.12. 9	-	-	-
Printing (inc. stationery)	206.13. 4	219. 3.10	360. 2. 8	143.12. 5
Tariff				
Officers	117. 6. 5	-	-	-
Misc.	771. 5. 9	599.12. 1	1144.12. 9	1808.17. 7½
Arrears of Expenditure	1859.10. 0	3244. 7. 8	-	-
<u>TOTAL</u>	11484.10. 3	13514. 8. 8½	13480.18. 0**	9529. 1.10

NOTES:

* Includes medical officers after 1876.

** Blue Book gives £13481 18s 0d as total.

Sources: CO290 series: Blue Books for given years.

During slavery, most of the revenue was raised directly; but after 1838, most of the colonies reduced the share of the revenue from direct taxes, and raised the contribution of duties on imports, exports and tonnage. Within the Windward Islands, until 1850, Tobago was exceptional in reducing the customs and increasing the direct taxes, which, as Colebrooke observed, 'have for the most part been levied on the productive industry of the labouring classes'.⁹⁹

Yeates noted:

Many of the assessed taxes are unequal, and press more heavily on the labouring class than is perhaps advisable. A labourer's dog is taxed only 1s less than his employer's hogshead of sugar, and more than the tax on a puncheon of rum; his cottage is assessed 5% on its presumed rental value, while plantation buildings and dwelling houses are untaxed altogether; if he presume to own, or even to use, a gun, he is charged 1£; his employer, who keeps a gun for sport only is charged no greater sum. Even fishing boats pay a heavy tax ...¹⁰⁰

However, the Colonial Office, particularly in the tenure of Earl Grey (1846-1852), regarded high direct taxes as a stimulant to 'industry' (meaning wage labour for the estates); Grey saw it as 'just & expedient' that a high 'proportion of the public burthens should be thrown upon the Labouring Classes'.¹⁰¹

In the recurrent political deadlock between the Assembly

⁹⁹ PP. 1851, Vol. XXXIV, Colebrooke to Grey, 27 Aug. 1851, p. 55.

¹⁰⁰ PP. 1851, Vol. XXXIV, 1850 Blue Bk. Rept., p. 71.

¹⁰¹ CO285/62: Grey to Colebrooke, draft, 6 June 1850; cf. Grey [1853, 1:54-84].

and the executive, even taxes of which the Colonial Office disapproved were sanctioned, so as not to delay or jeopardize the Supply Act. Over the years, however, although the policy of high direct taxes continued, a larger share of the revenue was contributed by customs dues, especially after 1865, when a 40% *ad valorem* duty was imposed on imports. Declining imports, exports and trade in the 1880s therefore posed a grave danger to the viability of the Government, since its major revenue base was eroded. (Tables 97, 98).

TABLE 97

Tobago, Sources of Government Revenue: 1830-1850
(Pounds Sterling)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Customs Duties</u>		<u>Tonnage</u>	<u>Assessed/ Other Taxes</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>Imports</u>	<u>Exports</u>			
1830	1073	-	-	-	-
1835	910	-	754	174	1838
1840	-	2413	795	2805	6013
1845	2920	1285	562	1733	6500
1850	1001	-	453	7362	8816

Source: PP. 1851, Vol. XXXIV, Colebrooke to Grey, 27 Aug. 1851, p. 57.

The undercurrent of discontent about the high direct taxes exploded in 1867 in a riot at Mason Hall, a populous village in the Middle District, when an attempt was made to enforce what Walker, the Governor, called 'some obnoxious penalties under the Dog Tax Act.' The Act required that 6s be paid by May each year for each dog, and 20s plus costs imposed on those convicted of having a dog, regardless of size or age, without license, within 60 days after the time fixed by the

Act. To make matters worse, costs plus half of the penalty were paid to informers, who were usually police constables.

Several villagers, who had refused to pay the tax, resisted the police when they tried to execute the magistrates' warrants. Finally, on 17 September, such a concerted opposition was offered to the police by villagers armed with bludgeons, cutlasses, sticks and stones, that the officers, beaten and shaken, were forced to retreat to town. Inspector Crooks reported:

I was ... told to inform the Governor that they would not pay Dog License, fine or costs [,] that they would not go to Gaol - that they would not pay any Taxes at all - that he might bring Soldiers and kill them all and if he came there they would give him some [blows] too.¹⁰²

Kortright was conciliatory, but sent for troops.

The Mason Hall riot, which embarrassed the Government, exemplified the weakness of the executive *vis-à-vis* the Assembly. The executive had regarded the dog license as excessive, but it was nonetheless sanctioned. In 1868, dogs under 6 months were exempted, and the tax reduced to 4s, with penalty subject to the Court's discretion.¹⁰³

¹⁰² CO285/85: Walker to Buckingham and Chandos, 3 Oct. 1867, & Encs., esp. Sub-Enc. 5, Crooks to Hill, 17 Sept. 1867.

¹⁰³ In 1878, the tax was reduced to 2s 6d because it was ignored by both taxpayers and collectors.

TABLE 98
Tobago Government Revenue: 1855-1886 (Pounds Sterling)

	<u>1855</u>		<u>1860</u>		<u>1865</u>		<u>1870</u>	
<u>Customs</u>								
Import Duties	3609. 4. 5½		4484.16. 7		5194. 8. 3		6675.17. 8	
Tonnage Dues	312. 8. 7		333. 9. 0		267.12. 0		575.10. 0	
Lighthouse Dues	58. 8. 3		79.14. 0		61.14. 3		160. 9. 0	
Wharfage Dues &c	-		-		-		165. 7.10	
<u>Sub-Total</u>	3980. 1. 3½	(45.8%)	4897.19. 7	(63.1%)	5523.14. 6	(63.0%)	7577. 4. 6	(62.3%)
<u>Excise</u>								
Export Duty	-		-		-		1061. 9. 0	
Rum Duties	262.13. 0		-		-		20. 8. 0	
Stamp Rev.	-		-		-		-	
<u>Sub-Total</u>	262.13. 0	(3.0%)	-	-	-	-	1081.17. 0	(8.9%)
<u>Licenses</u>								
Liquor	90. 0. 0		226.19. 0		164. 0. 0		271.10. 0	
Stills	-		-		-		405. 6. 8	
Animals	696. 4. 0		615.16. 0		641. 2. 6		505. 1. 6	
Guns	99. 0. 0		57. 0. 0		65. 5. 0		45. 5. 0	
Boats	106.15. 9		51. 7. 6		44. 3. 1		52. 9. 3	
Hucksters	30. 8. 0		9.12. 0		1.12. 0		2. 8. 0	
Other	25. 0. 0		-		4. 0		-	
<u>Sub-Total</u>	957. 7. 9	(11.0%)	960. 5. 6	(12.4%)	916. 6. 7	(10.5%)	1282. 0. 5	(10.5%)
<u>Taxes</u>								
Land & Bldgs.	2545. 3. 3		1367. 7. 6		2026. 1. 9		1849.12. 1	
Road Tax	-		-		89.16. 0		71. 2. 0	
Incomes	722.15. 8		-		-		-	
<u>Sub-Total</u>	3267.18.11	(37.6%)	1367. 7. 6	(17.6%)	2115.17. 9	(24.1%)	1920.14. 1	(15.8%)
<u>Other</u>								
Incidental &c	213. 7. 3		532.13. 8		202.16. 6		297. 5. 2	
In Aid of Revenue	-		-		-		-	
<u>Sub-Total</u>	213. 7. 3	(2.4%)	532.13. 8	(6.9%)	202.16. 6	(2.3%)	297. 5. 2	(2.4%)
<u>TOTAL</u>	8681. 8. 2½	(99.8%)	7758. 6. 3	(100%)	8758.15. 4	(99.9%)	12159. 1. 2	(99.9%)

TABLE 98 concluded
Tobago Government Revenue: 1855-1886 (Pounds Sterling)

	<u>1875</u>		<u>1880</u>		<u>1884</u>		<u>1886</u>	
<u>Customs</u>								
Import Duties	6927. 8. 2		6108. 6. 1		4700. 8. 8		3562.17. 3½	
Tonnage Dues	755.17. 6		510.17. 6		480.15. 4		175.10. 0	
Lighthouse Dues	193. 2. 0		155.16. 6		137. 9. 0		106. 8. 0	
Wharfage Dues &c	174. 5. 9		281. 2. 4½		197.15.10½		145.14. 3½	
<u>Sub-Total</u>	8050.13. 5	(70.2%)	7056. 2. 5½	(50.4%)	5516. 8.10½	(48.2%)	3990. 9. 7	(44.7%)
<u>Excise</u>								
Export Duty	-		-		-		-	
Rum Duties	-		1387.14. 9½		1181.14. 0		1014. 6.10	
Stamp Rev.	-		353.14. 3		224. 5. 0		266. 5. 6	
<u>Sub-Total</u>	-	-	1741. 9. 0½	(12.4%)	1405.19. 0	(12.3%)	1280.12. 4	(14.4%)
<u>Licenses</u>								
Liquor	186. 0. 0		216.10. 0		231. 5. 6		160. 0. 0	
Stills	432.13. 4		107.10. 0		76.13. 4		18. 6. 8	
Animals	562.11. 6		1163.13. 9		893. 4. 0		688.15. 0	
Guns	24. 0. 0		51. 5. 0		31.10. 0		26.10. 0	
Boats	49. 2. 3		41.12. 6		42.15. 0		45.17. 6	
Other	-		-		-		-	
<u>Sub-Total</u>	1254. 7. 1	(10.9%)	1580.11. 3	(11.2%)	1275. 7.10	(11.1%)	939. 9. 2	(10.5%)
<u>Taxes</u>								
Land & Bldgs	1717. 5. 2		2731. 1.10		1861.15. 7		1899.17.11	
Road Tax	79. 0. 0		169.13. 0		234.14. 0		62. 0. 0	
<u>Sub-Total</u>	1796. 5. 2	(15.7%)	2900.14.10	(20.7%)	2096. 9. 7	(18.3%)	1961.17.11	(22.0%)
<u>Other</u>								
Incidental &c	368. 3. 3		40.14. 3		492.17. 1½		307. 7. 4	
In Aid of Revenue*	-		683.10. 4½		665. 8. 8½		436. 7. 6	
<u>Sub-Total</u>	368. 3. 3	(3.2%)	724. 4. 7½	(5.2%)	1158. 5.10	(10.1%)	743.14.10	(8.3%)
<u>TOTAL</u>	11469. 8.11	(100%)	14003. 2. 2½	(99.9%)	11452.11. 1	(100%)	8916. 3.10	(99.9%)

NOTE: * Usually loans.

Sources: CO290 series, Blue Bks. for given years.

Immigration policy, important to both planters and labourers, likewise favoured the planters, whose consistent strategy was to tax the labourers in aid of immigration. The 1852 Land Tax and the export duty on sugar and its by-products in the Drysdale administration had this intent. In 1870, the Assembly passed an Act to raise a duty on the major exports and to apply all the revenue so raised to immigration. The House wanted two-thirds of the expenses on immigration to be paid by funds raised under the Act, and one-third to be paid from the general revenue. Thus, immigration to undercut the metayers was to be wholly financed by the public. Kortright, more amenable to the planters' wishes than Drysdale, who had opposed such legislation, willingly took what he acknowledged to be a financial risk in sanctioning it, in spite of the public debt.¹⁰⁴

But after the Liberated Africans arriving in 1862, Tobago received no further foreign immigration. For officially sanctioned immigration, the planters had to compete with more influential colonies, and would have had to pay for medical and other facilities, which they were unwilling to do. When, in 1872, the Assembly requested captured Africans from East Africa, Rawson said that Tobago was incapable of using their services.¹⁰⁵ The request was not entertained.

An important matter for all classes in the 1870s was the establishment of a central factory. Gillespie and Co. were the

¹⁰⁴ CO285/88: Rawson to Granville, 31 May, 29 June 1870, & Encs.; Rawson to Kimberley, 31 Oct. 1870.

¹⁰⁵ CO285/90: Rawson to Kimberley, 14 June 1872, & Encs.

authors of the plan, but Ussher wanted government intervention to promote more than one factory, or to guarantee 5% or 6% to the company. Alfred Chapman, a senior engineer from Fawcett, Preston and Co., Liverpool engineers, did a feasibility study for the Government in 1876; but the matter was overtaken by the Belmanna riots, and the officials ignored it, since their sole priority was the conversion of Tobago to a Crown Colony.¹⁰⁶

Thus, although the planters had their way on most matters of state policy before Crown rule in 1877, they failed to achieve state support and guarantees to private capital for the crucial central factory, since this was not an 'imperial interest'.

VII.5 THE FISCAL CRISIS OF THE STATE: 1877-1886

VII.5.1 Tobago under Crown Rule: 1877-1884

The relative power of the dominant class *vis-à-vis* the executive continued to be tested under the Crown Colony régime. The first taxes passed by the Gore administration in 1877 increased the burden on larger properties from 10% to 15% of the rateable value, and removed the traditional exemptions on estate animals. However, Gore sought the help of Gillespie and Co. to get Chinese labourers, asking if Gillespie would, on the security of the general revenue, advance to the Government £5000 or £6000 for immigration. Gillespie declined

¹⁰⁶ C0321/3: Hennessy to Carnarvon, 12 Apr. 1876, enc. Chapman Rept.; minutes, 12 July.

to lend.¹⁰⁷ The importation of Chinese never occurred.

The combination of drought, short crops, falling sugar prices and declining imports meant declining revenue, while the expense of suppressing the Belmanna riots left the treasury with a deficit in 1878 of £3386. At the beginning of 1879, the Government had to borrow £1000 from the Keens firm. In spite of rigid cuts, by July a second loan of £1000 was needed to meet the growing deficit.

So intractable was the situation that Gore proposed annexation to Trinidad, and abolition of most major public posts, to a saving of £2655 per annum.¹⁰⁸

In the meantime, the administration was beset by scandal after scandal, exposing the purloining of public funds and property by the senior officials of the Treasury and the police service; in addition, the senior police sergeant had kept a mistress in the barracks for several months. Gore himself was reprimanded for allowing the state to pay for his piano. Pregnancies in the prison were disclosed soon after, and the jailors were fired. In all, the administration was embarrassing to the Crown.¹⁰⁹

At the beginning of 1880, Meade at the Colonial Office, reporting to the UK Treasury on the financial condition of the Windward and Leeward Islands, indicated similar problems

¹⁰⁷ CO289/2: Gore to Gillespie & Co., 7 Aug. 1878, & reply, 31 Aug. 1878, Tobago Gazette, 31 Jan. 1879.

¹⁰⁸ CO321/31: Dundas to Hicks Beach, 6 Feb. 1879, & Encs., esp. Gore to Dundas, 1 Jan. 1879.

¹⁰⁹ CO321/31: Strahan to Hicks Beach, 30 Apr. 1879, & Encs. (2 despatches), 8 July, 29 July, 25 Nov., 5 Dec. 1879, Encs., & minutes.

throughout, but stated that Tobago was

in a worse financial position than any other of the Windward Islands. There is at present a deficit of more than £1,250, without taking into consideration a loan of £1,000 which will have to be paid off before 1882. Apart from this, the existing revenue of the Colony barely suffices for its expenditure, and to withdraw the Lt. Governor's Salary would plunge Tobago in hopeless bankruptcy.¹¹⁰

But in March, the Treasury ceased to pay for the Lt.-Governor.

The situation required increased taxation and further retrenchment. Gore proposed higher import duties, higher land taxes on all properties; and he reimposed the export duty, for general purposes and not for immigration. The unofficials in the Legislative Council, themselves planters and merchants, refused to support the export tax, for so long imposed when immigration was hoped for, but now unacceptable if it was to be applied to the general revenue. They embarrassed Gore by proposing to cut his salary from £1100 to £500, and only agreed to £600 as a compromise.¹¹¹

James McCall and Robert Gordon entered a 'most decided protest' against the export tax:

For the last two years not one Estate of those under our Control realised any profit. These Estates ... form two thirds of the Sugar Plantations ... and the Majority of them have sustained enormous losses.

... even without additional burdens and with the most careful management it is very doubtful whether Sugar Cultivation can be much longer carried on in

¹¹⁰ C0321/33: Meade to Sec. to Treasury, 10 Jan. 1880.

¹¹¹ Gore was the last Lt.-Gov. In June 1880, the Leg. Co. voted to abolish the post and to have an Administrator/Col. Sec. at £800 per annum.

this Colony.¹¹²

On the taxation issue, all classes were united. The planters, lessees, merchants and shopkeepers protested. Gore backed down, giving up the export tax, while the Legislative Council agreed to increased property taxes and new taxes on imports.

The pressure from the planters and merchants for tax reliefs continued. As we saw above, in 1882, McCall and Gillespie waged a militant struggle for the abolition of tonnage dues. Colin Gillespie also went to the Colonial Office to complain of the evils of Tobago's administration. Gillespie opposed a water scheme proposed for Scarborough, seeing such expense as unwarranted, because 'it is chiefly a question of inconvenience. No epidemic has ever arisen from bad water, and we have never heard of serious scarcity'.

Like McCall, he provided an accurate view of the sugar economy: '... the position of nearly all the Estates is most critical. Every Estate in the Island (excepting two) has lost heavily this crop and it is a serious question with many whether to go on or not.'¹¹³

Administrator Laborde analysed the statistics to show that the tax burden on estates was far less than that on the rest of the population, and that planters could not with reason 'cry to be "relieved from taxation"'.

Mr Gillespie as a non resident proprietor

¹¹² CO321/40: Strahan to Hicks Beach, 23 Apr. 1880, Sub-Enc. 1 to Enc. 2.

¹¹³ CO321/60: C. M. Gillespie, 'Memo. as to Tobago's Finances', 6 Nov. 1882; author's emphasis.

knows nothing of "serious scarcity" of water in Scarborough, recognizes no necessity for raising a revenue for keeping up the public buildings, owns no obligation to raise and improve the condition ... of the classes by whose labor he expects to derive his profits, but he simply looks to see in what manner, and by what influences, he can make his expected profits come to him in larger measure.¹¹⁴

But Laborde was forced to abandon the water scheme and other needed public works.

Thus, Crown Colony government did not diminish the influence of the large planters and merchants over public policy. The administrators were obliged to bow to their wishes, while the smaller (mainly coloured and black) planters, lessees and merchants, the middle strata and the labouring class had far less influence. In 1883, a 'deputation of coloured gentlemen from Scarborough' complained to the Royal Commission:

Practically we have no voice in the legislative affairs of the Colony ... and we note particularly, that any Government measure, however opposed to our interest, ... may pass the Legislative Council by the casting vote of the Governor¹¹⁵

Many of them, organized in the TDA, later called for a return to the 1874 constitution, which they had opposed, with the elected members chosen by the whole electorate and not by parish, which would have strengthened their position as urban voters against that of the McCalls. But the Colonial Office was determined not to return to elections in 'this miserable

¹¹⁴ CO321/70: Robinson to Kimberley, 3 Jan. 1883, enc. Laborde to Robinson, 5 Dec. 1882.

¹¹⁵ Rept. from the Royal Com. ..., 1884, p. 422.

little island.'¹¹⁶

The labouring class, in all their many complaints to the 1883 Royal Commission, spoke of burdensome taxation, official disregard and general distress. For them, there was little relief, except via emigration.

VII.5.2 The Fall of the Sugar Planters: 1884-1886

By 1883, James McCall, Colin Gillespie and Duncan McGillivray, Gillespie's attorney, had warned that the estates were on the verge of bankruptcy. Gillespie, efforts at procuring immigrants having failed, decided in 1882 to move from what McGillivray called 'the ruinous metayer system' to paid rental of the land, with the labourers selling the canes, after carting them to the mills. But the scheme was not popular; and McGillivray's contract was described by Sydney Olivier at the Colonial Office as 'iniquitous'.¹¹⁷

The drought of 1884-1886, the sugar depression and the collapse of Gillespie combined to make the raising of adequate revenue impossible. The failure of the Gillespie and Reid companies in April 1884 caused advances to the estates to cease, in a situation where production by metayage had reached an impasse (Ch. 5). The middle strata and the labouring class exported their horses and other animals to avoid paying the licenses, and also to convert their assets to cash since, in

¹¹⁶ CO321/88: Robinson to Derby, 11 Mar. 1885, enc. Resolutions of TDA; Wingfield's minute.

¹¹⁷ CO321/70: Robinson to Kimberley, 8 Jan. 1883, Enc. 1, McGillivray to Robinson, 9 Oct. 1882; Olivier, 20 Feb. 1883. Rept. from the Royal Com. ..., 1884, Laborde's testimony, p. 409.

the absence of a bank before 1881, investment had been in property. Wage labour was virtually non-existent and little cash circulated. Imports, exports and revenue fell. There were further retrenchment in the Civil Service, and cuts in expenditure.

The only hope perceived by the planters who wished to continue in sugar was, through the Colonial Office, to get loans for their estates. Their requests were usually tied to requests for loans in aid of the revenue. The first proposal was for £10,000 for roads and public buildings and £10,000 for planters. In the Colonial Office, Wingfield's position prevailed: since the planters were 'bankrupt' and their business 'fading', it was better to wait.¹¹⁸ Within months, the Legislative Council passed the Tobago Public Loan Ordinance, 1885, for £30,000, of which £15,000 would be an advance to sugar growers and £15,000 for public works. Sendall, the Governor, disapproved, and Wingfield again prevailed: any loan to the planters should be 'peremptorily negatived'; for public works, there must first be additional taxation, cuts in expenditure, or both.¹¹⁹

The TDA, the voice of the smallest planters and the middle strata, requested a loan of £50,000 for farmers wishing to diversify, which was ignored. The executive then dropped the request for a planter's loan and asked for a loan of £1000 from Grenada and a further £15,000 for public works. Only the

¹¹⁸ CO321/88: Robinson to Derby, 17 Jan. 1885, & Encs.; minutes by Harris, Wedgwood, Wingfield, Derby.

¹¹⁹ CO321/88: Sendall to Stanley, 13 July 1885, & Encs.; minutes & reply, 12 Nov. 1885.

former was granted.

Two requests for loans in 1886 were refused. The London officials were unwilling, both to grant a loan and to seek a grant-in-aid. They advised further retrenchment, although they knew, as Wingfield put it, that the effect would be 'to leave Govt more or less in abeyance ... in a year's time we shall have to come to the Treasury for help'.¹²⁰

By May 1886, when further cuts were impossible, Llewellyn reported:

The collapse of Tobago has been so rapid that it has been impossible to keep pace with it ... I need not say any more; the picture is too sad. Civilized Government is at an end ... I cannot undertake to carry on the present form of government with any further reductions. Taxes cannot be raised when no wages are being paid and there is no money in circulation. The only step now left ... is a complete and thorough change of the Constitution.

He recommended annexation of Tobago to a neighbouring colony, preferably Trinidad.¹²¹

Thus, the sugar planters, who had rushed to the Colonial Office in their desire for investment and for protection against the labourers, were deliberately denied both credit and imperial aid, were removed from their bastion in the state, and allowed, with the state, to wither away.

¹²⁰ CO321/98: Sendall to Stanley, 4 Feb. 1886, & minutes; Sendall to Granville, 29 Mar. 1886, & Encs.; minutes by Wingfield and Harris.

¹²¹ CO321/98: Sendall to Granville, 19 May 1886, enc. Llewellyn to Sendall, 6 May 1886.

VII.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the colour/class configuration of Tobago after 1838. There was, firstly, a dominant class of planters, merchants, professionals and officials (some of the latter being also planters), mainly white and coloured, but with a growing number of blacks owning and leasing estates. Secondly, there were the middle strata, comprising two blocs of upwardly mobile blacks and coloureds, who were managers, overseers, shopkeepers, small landlords, large metayers, teachers, clerical workers, and successful artisans. Thirdly, there was the labouring class of agricultural and general workers, domestics, metayers, fishermen and artisans, who were mainly black.

Within these contours of class and colour, gender was constitutive of the structuring of access to land, income and occupations. It is significant that the decisive accomplishments of the upwardly mobile appeared in the censuses after 1881, suggesting that the collapse of the sugar economy allowed greater mobility for the labouring class and, in the process, for women who became shopkeepers etc. (Ch. 6).

A resident proprietary arose, but swiftly succumbed to the monopolistic tendencies of the McCalls and Gillespies after 1863. The conflicts within the dominant class, between the larger planters in alliance with Gillespie, and the smaller planters and merchants, have been discussed in both their economic and political dimensions.

The economic crisis of production and trade helped to produce the fiscal crisis of the state; combined, they brought

the plantocracy to its knees in the 1880s. The sugar planters, ensnared by the development of monopoly over credit, production and shipping, and having to rely on metayage, were unable to escape from the McCall/Gillespie yoke. The planters' success at diversification was remarkably small, therefore, because of their dependence on Gillespie, who did not invest enough to make them efficient sugar producers, while tying them to sugar. The wreck of *The Dawn*, following the collapse of Dunn and Co. in 1882, was a fitting metaphor for the shipwreck of the attempts by the smaller merchants and planters to consolidate their monopoly over the inter-colonial trade, and to 'cut out' Gillespie in the transatlantic trade. By 1882, the planters were trapped on two fronts: externally by Gillespie, internally by the metayers.

In spite of the divisions within the dominant class, they were agreed on land, taxation, immigration, and on their need to keep the labourers in subjection. Thus, for the smaller planters and merchants, their alliance with McCall and Gillespie was two-edged: their existence as planters and their social power were tied to that of the monopolists; but they were also being swallowed up by the combine, as minnows by whales, both economically and politically. Moreover, their future existence as planters depended on their cutting loose from Gillespie, which they were unable to do.

Control over the state was integral to the class strategy of the planters, particularly with regard to the franchise, land, taxation and immigration. In spite of the relative autonomy of the state, all these issues clearly mirrored the

interests of different classes and strata.

The planters' continuous emphasis on immigration demonstrates the centrality of control over labour to their survival. But the Tobago revenues, partly because of the abuses of planter rule, were never sufficient to support immigration policies on the scale and with the continuity that were needed to break the power of the metayers and force a return to wage labour alone.

The twin struggle, of the planters to usurp executive functions, and of the Colonial Office to remove the planters from power, was analysed. Conflicts between the executive and the Assembly were resolved, after the Executive Committee proved futile, by a policy of *laissez-faire*: the Assembly was allowed its way as long as 'imperial interests' were not at stake, while the Colonial Office, discerning the times and the latent power of the labouring blacks, played a waiting game, intending to sweep away the Assemblies and to convert the BWI to federated Crown Colonies. Thus, while responsible government was being granted to the colonies with white majorities, in the Caribbean, to prevent black rule, representative institutions were being withdrawn [Knaplund 1942]. Therefore, widening the franchise, important though it was to the middle strata and the labourers, was never a priority for the Colonial Office, though some administrators used it to strengthen their hands against the planters.

The first stage in the conversion to Crown Colony (a single-chamber legislature) was accomplished through the influence of John McCall, the leading planter, who entered a

rapprochement with the executive, once his influence over policy was assured. The Belmanna riots of 1876, exposing the precariousness of life and property amid such gross class antagonisms, propelled the larger planters to surrender their formal power over the state to the Crown. They miscalculated how greatly 'imperial interests' would prevail against their own. There was no reason for the UK to prop up indigent planters with moribund estates in a marginal colony, at the high financial costs which would have been necessary, once they no longer had any bargaining power. And to secure without effective opposition the constitutional arrangements which they desired, the Colonial Office officials watched the administration collapse and government 'set in abeyance', before they sanctioned imperial aid for public works.

This chapter reinforces the findings of Chapter 4, and confirms our hypothesis in two important ways.

Firstly, our hypothesis emphasized the source and deployment of capital as a critical factor distinguishing Tobago, a moribund sugar economy, from other equally dependent colonies (Trinidad, British Guiana) in which greater investment and technological advance were made. Although all West India merchants demanded extortionate commissions and charges, another pattern of investment or increased diversification would have led to different consequences for the Tobago sugar economy. To put it more generally, within the matrix of dependency or the capitalist mode of production, the proximate causes of socio-political change must always be sought.

Having analysed the international factors affecting the BWI sugar industry, and the endemic problems faced by planters seeking to modernize in an era of scarce capital, this chapter shows that want of capital was important for five reasons. It made the planters highly vulnerable to the merchant houses investing in small muscovado estates, which tied them, by meagre advances, to operating at low technological levels; this fettered their accumulation, and put them increasingly in need of credit; it made them resort to metayage, which lowered efficiency and profitability; this vicious cycle made them particularly vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the market; finally, lack of capital subjected the planters to the stratagem of the Colonial Office officials, who allowed them to succumb politically and economically.

Secondly, we show that the social structure is a vital key to understanding the crisis of the 1880s, since there was no class, stratum or fraction able to diversify the economy and prevent the collapse of the state.

The coloured and black planters, merchants and lessees tried unsuccessfully to 'cut out' Gillespie. Politically, their power was tied to that of the leading planters, and they were unable to avoid the surrender to the Colonial Office.

The petty shopkeepers, landowners etc of the middle strata had little organizational strength. The coloureds protested in 1855 (the Yeates affair) about employment in the public service; but it was not until 1874 that they and the upwardly mobile blacks again took a clear public position, this time over the single-chamber legislature which eroded the

electoral gains they had made. From the surviving newspapers, there does not seem to have been a press militantly espousing their specific interests in a consistent way over the years.¹²² Their organizations - benefit societies, lodges and the Defence Association - were defensive; but they succeeded in defending neither their political gains nor any clear economic strategy by 1884. For economic success, they would have needed a sounder financial base, such as had the rising class of coloured merchants and professionals of Grenada, who bought up abandoned estates after 1858 and diversified them [Brizan 1984:201-2, 215]. For greater political gains, without greater economic strength, they would have had to treat the labouring blacks as part of the political constituency which, to most of the middle strata throughout the BWI, was unthinkable until the 1930s when, through the labour rebellions, the working class thrust its way into the formal political arena [Lewis 1938/1977].

The labouring class, although without formal political recognition, was not without power. They organized in subterranean but effective ways. Their greatest strength lay in staving off a general system of wage labour, and in their control of the terrain of production, so converting metayage from a narrowing of their options in the 1850s to a broadening of their possibilities by the 1880s (Chs. 3, 5). They succeeded in preventing the planters from achieving their

¹²² In continuity with the pre-1838 period, the Tobago coloureds were less aggressive and articulate than their counterparts in Jamaica [Will 1970], Barbados [Hamilton 1956] or Grenada [Brizan 1984].

economic goals; but they themselves did not for the most part become independent of the estates, although most of the diversification of the economy came from their initiatives. A viable peasantry did not emerge before 1884, because of the land and taxation policies of the planters; but, as the export data reveal (Ch. 4), they benefited quickly from the collapse of sugar, and were responsible for most of the exports between 1884 and 1900. We have thus shown how and why neither Option 1, the upgrading of the sugar industry, nor Option 2, the successful diversification of the economy, was accomplished.

Our hypothesis placed no specific weight on intra- and inter-class struggles. Our data show, beyond a doubt, that these are crucial in explaining the collapse of both the sugar economy and the state. By counting on the divisions in the dominant class and on the weakness of the middle strata in 1874, the executive effected the partial surrender of representative institutions, which made a complete surrender easier in 1876.¹²³ Inter-class conflict was central to the two-pronged collapse of the planters. The failure of production was partly the failure of metayage to allow capitalist accumulation for most planters; the loss of the planters' political power was fostered by their fear of the black labouring class, which made them rush into the waiting, but crushing, embrace of the Colonial Office.

¹²³ By contrast, the Barbados planters, merchants and middle strata were able to resist the Crown and to compromise on their own terms, because they were stronger financially and their exchequer not bankrupt [Hamilton 1956; Karch 1981]. Conrad Reeves, a coloured barrister, who later became Chief Justice, was also instrumental in devising their strategy.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE RESTRUCTURING OF SOCIETY IN TOBAGO: 1884-1900

VIII.1 INTRODUCTION

Between 1889, when Tobago was annexed to Trinidad (but with distinct Treasuries), and 1900, the year after the complete union of the two colonies, three major issues came to the fore. First was the intervention of Judge Gorrie, the Chief Justice of the united colony, which took the struggle between the planters and the metayers from the terrain of the estates to that of the courts (Ch. 5). Second was an appropriate development strategy for Tobago: whether to focus on advances to planters and investment in estates, or to promote smallholders. Related to this was, thirdly, whether Tobago should return to having a separate administration, continue in partial union with Trinidad, or become more closely united with Trinidad. This chapter focusses on the second and third of these issues. It argues that they had profound implications for the class structure of Tobago, and that by 1900, the Union of the two colonies completed the erosion of the sugar plantocracy, while enhancing the potential of the emerging peasantry.

VIII.2 THE CROWN LANDS QUESTION

The economic crisis, compounded by the heavy exodus of labourers, led the planters, through their Agricultural Society, to demand an urgent policy of selling the Crown lands. After much discussion in 1884 and 1885, it was decided to have two Ordinances, one vesting in the Crown 13,000 unoccupied acres; the other providing for the sale of the land.

The planters pushed for their interests. They insisted that Crown land be sold as an incentive to labour to remain, but not to establish an independent peasantry. They tried to prevent persons from buying more than 10 acres, by making it an offence punishable by a fine and imprisonment for up to 3 months to purchase under another person's name. They wanted payments in 5 yearly instalments, so that buyers unwilling to cultivate in the required manner could be evicted. They even wished to dispossess buyers who did not maintain the roads leading to the plots. But the penal enactment proposed and the requirement about the roads were disallowed.¹ The 1887 Crown Lands Ordinance provided for conditional grants and payment in five instalments, with title being recorded after satisfactory occupation for five years.

Demands other than those of the labouring class were made

¹ C0321/89: Sendall to Stanley, 24 Aug. 1885, Encs. & minutes; C0321/98: Sendall to Stanhope, 31 Aug. 1886, & Encs; Holland to Sendall, 26 Jan. 1887; Sendall to Stanhope, 9 Dec. 1886, enc. Agric. Soc. resolution recording regret at delay in selling Crown lands. C0321/103: Sendall to Holland, 29 Mar. 1887, & Encs.; Wingfield's minute & Holland to Sendall, 4 May 1887; Sendall to Holland, 23 June 1887, enc. Crown Lands Ord.

for the Crown lands. W. Sanger Tucker, a Trinidad planter, protested against sales to labourers for cocoa cultivation. Instead, to attract 'persons of Capital', he wanted the land sold in blocks of 'not less than 500 acres at a very low valuation' - 2s 6d to 4s per acre, depending on size and location. The Tobago executive offered him two contiguous blocks of 500 acres each, at 4s per acre.

Fortunately for the aspiring peasantry, Wingfield, Olivier and Sir Henry Holland (later Lord Knutsford), the Secretary of State, disapproved of further sales in large blocks, which would defeat the purpose of the Ordinance.²

Thus, the planters, were forced, after 50 years, urgently to reverse their policy of keeping the labourers off the unoccupied lands, much of which they had 'annexed' to their estates (Ch. 3). However, their desire for a landowning proletariat was to prove self-contradictory.

VIII.3 THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR UNION WITH TRINIDAD

The annexation of Tobago to Trinidad was viewed with anxiety by the major interest groups in both colonies, especially as it followed hard upon the British attempt to unite the Windward Islands into a Confederation. After the Barbados fiasco in 1876 (Ch. 7), the 1883 Royal Commission recommended a federal government for Grenada, St Vincent, St Lucia and Tobago. However, all these islands decisively

² CO321/103: Sendall to Holland, 12 Dec. 1887, & Encs., esp. Tucker to Llewellyn, 17 May 1887, W. Tucker & W. S. Tucker to Llewellyn, 27 Oct. 1887; Holland to Sendall, 16 Dec. 1887; minutes by Wingfield, Olivier; Sendall to Holland, 8 Dec. 1887, & Enc.

rejected the 1884 proposals of the Earl of Derby, then Secretary of State.³

Wingfield wanted an arrangement whereby Tobago would be 'separately governed & have its own Treasury [,] taxation and legislature - but ... have the use - for a consideration - of the Judges and Auditor General of Trinidad and in case of need of the Police Force.' Although Sir Robert Herbert, the Permanent Under-Secretary, was doubtful that Trinidad would 'undertake this charitable & unprofitable obligation', they agreed on that objective.⁴

Sir William Robinson, by then promoted to Governor of Trinidad, treated the matter with astonishing flippancy:

Tobago should ... be incorporated with Trinidad and thus become part and parcel of this Colony. ... A Magistrate and Collector of Customs with a couple of Clerks in Scarborough and a Sub-Inspector of Police and twenty constables would I think be sufficient for the Executive Administration of the Island. ... I would further suggest that [the Tobago people] be invited to transfer themselves and their effects to Trinidad, ... at the cost of the Tobago Treasury, and that I should be authorised ... to offer them one acre of Crown Land for every man, woman and child who responded ... in the neighbourhood of Moruga ... By means such as I propose the Tobago difficulty would easily be settled.⁵

Sendall, the Windward Islands Governor, also agreed with 'complete incorporation', though not on Robinson's terms. But

³ Papers Relating to the Proposed Union ..., 1885.

⁴ CO321/98: Sendall to Granville, 19 May 1886; minutes by Wingfield, 30 June, and Herbert, 1 July 1886.

⁵ CO321/98: Sendall to Stanhope, 28 Sept. 1886, Enc. 1, Robinson to Sendall, 20 Aug. 1886. Moruga was in the remote south of Trinidad.

it was Llewellyn, the Tobago Administrator, who had worked on the arrangement between the Turks and Caicos Islands and Jamaica, who, sensitive to local preferences, made the most realistic proposals. Llewellyn suggested that revenue, expenditure and debt should be kept separate from those of Trinidad, though the customs, tariff and shipping laws of Trinidad would apply to Tobago. The Trinidad Legislative Council would legislate for Tobago on all matters except direct taxation. Vessels between Trinidad and Tobago should be considered coasting vessels. Articles of native growth and manufacture except rum could be traded duty free, while foreign products would pay import duties in the colony where they were consumed. The proposal would require the abolition of the Tobago Executive Council and the formation of a Legislative Board in place of the Tobago Legislative Council, with full powers over local affairs, except for customs, shipping, excise or matters clashing with the jurisdiction of the chief legislature. Llewellyn foresaw that Port of Spain, Trinidad's capital, would become the entrepôt for Tobago, replacing Barbados.

At the Colonial Office, there was preference for 'complete incorporation' over Llewellyn's proposal, although no clear formula was proposed for the former, and although Wingfield wanted separate Treasuries. All opposed Robinson's plan to depopulate Tobago. Both options were publicized for the wishes of the inhabitants of both Colonies to be

ascertained.⁶

Llewellyn was clear that any plan to 'incorporate' Tobago with Trinidad would meet with the same opposition as had Confederation: 'The great objection is to the Common Treasury.'; and only distinct revenues would be acceptable.⁷

Llewellyn was right. Sendall reported on his meeting in January 1887 with the Tobago unofficals:

I found that the question was practically one of money. The people of Tobago were apprehensive that if they were wholly incorporated with Trinidad the revenue collected here would be absorbed in the general revenue of the united Colony, and would be employed in maintaining a scale of public expenditure altogether too costly for either the needs or the resources of the smaller Island.⁸

Sendall had to use much persuasion, both privately and in a large public meeting, to neutralize the opposition to what he called 'complete union' which, by then, was a compromise, along the lines proposed by Llewellyn.

On 19 January 1887, the Tobago Legislative Council agreed to the annexation, to common external tariffs, to free trade between Tobago and Trinidad, but with internal taxes imposed 'with strict reference to local circumstances'. The Council proposed a Financial Board of 3 unofficals (1 nominated, 2 elected) and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), which would 'advise the Governor in all matters relating to the internal

⁶ C0321/98: Sendall to Stanhope, 28 Sept. 1886, & Encs., esp. Llewellyn to Sendall, 1 Sept. 1886. C0289/4: Tobago Gazette, 17 Dec. 1886.

⁷ C0321/98; Sendall to Stanhope, 3 Oct. 1886, enc. Llewellyn to Sendall, 28 Sept. 1886.

⁸ C0321/103: Sendall to Stanhope, 20 Jan. 1887.

taxation and expenditure'. The Council also agreed that

all revenues collected in and on account of Tobago should be wholly expended in the administration of the Island, and should not be absorbed in the General revenue of the United Colony; that no part of the public expenditure of Trinidad should be chargeable upon the Revenues of Tobago and no part of the public expenditure of Tobago upon the revenues of Trinidad, except so far as the two Islands may by mutual consent and upon terms to be mutually agreed upon enter jointly upon any public enterprise for the benefit of both.

The Tobago unofficials agreed with the motion, with the exception of Ebenezer Henderson, by then a leading merchant. Henderson laid before the Council a petition, by 'certain Mercantile Firms and others', rejecting annexation. He and Edward Keens (merchant) also moved a resolution, the revised version of which was adopted:

That inasmuch as the wish of the people of Tobago for union with Trinidad has principally been based on the representations of the Government and the assurances given to the people that material benefit will result to Tobago from such union, the Secretary of State for the Colonies be respectfully asked ... to afford the people of Tobago a pledge that should it prove disadvantageous to this Colony, or otherwise undesirable to the majority of the inhabitants; this Colony shall on petition have granted back to it the form of self Government which now exists here.⁹

By May 1887, in spite of the objections of Keens and Henderson, this resolution was withdrawn by the Council.¹⁰ Moreover, since the Colonial Office refused to sanction the

⁹ CO289/5: Leg. Co. minutes, 19 Jan. 1887, Tobago Gazette, 28 Jan. 1887.

¹⁰ CO289/5: Leg. Co. minutes, 11 May 1887, Tobago Gazette, 13 May 1887.

control of taxation and expenditure by a majority of unofficials, the Financial Board had equal numbers of officials and unofficials, with a casting vote by the CEO, who was to be called the Commissioner for Tobago.

The resolution proposing the annexation passed the Trinidad Legislative Council with little dissent. The unofficials were sceptical about the benefits to Trinidad; but 12 members voted for, and only G. Townsend Fenwick against.¹¹

The strongest opposition to annexation came from the Tobago merchants. They, the London and local officials, all perceived that the knottiest problems would surround the loss of customs duties, both from the conversion of Port of Spain to an entrepôt for Tobago, and from the freedom of trade between the islands, which rendered the exports to Trinidad, rapidly becoming the majority of Tobago's exports, free of duty. However, Wingfield insisted that 'the difficulties ... must be risked'. The merchants clearly saw that they would lose trade; the officials, that Tobago's declining revenue would be further diminished.¹²

VIII.4 THE CHANGING SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF TOBAGO

The collapse of sugar and the annexation to Trinidad led to a restructuring of class relations in Tobago. The major changes are now outlined.

¹¹ CO298/43: Trinidad Leg. Co. minutes, 8 Mar. 1887. Fenwick's Protest, Council Paper No. 32, 1887.

¹² CO295/318: Robinson to Knutsford, 6 July 1888, & Encs.; minutes, esp. Wingfield's, 22 Sept. & 6 Oct. 1888. The quot. is from the latter. Knutsford agreed, 30 Sept.

VIII.4.1 The Dominant Class

The composition of the planters changed considerably. The old planters, through attrition by death and bankruptcy, declined in number and importance. By 1899, they were exceeded by new planters, some coming from nearby colonies; others emerged from within Tobago, mainly from the black middle strata. Among the migrants were Capt. Mayo Short from St Vincent; Canon Turpin and his brother, coloureds from St Vincent; Dr Latour, a coloured physician from Grenada; William Date, a coloured stock farmer from Trinidad; and Esmé Howard, a British aristocrat, who was part of a syndicate investing in rubber plantations [Howard 1935]. The biggest investors were William and Trochilus Tucker, white Trinidadians, who bought Crown land as well as eight estates. Among the new black Tobago planters were the Bennetts, owning substantial tracts of land at L'Anse Fourmi; Paul Tobago and D. S. Gordon, shopkeepers and former metayers, who owned Prospect and Orange Valley, and Adventure and Roselle, respectively; Thomas Gordon, also a shopkeeper (Grafton); Luke Toby, a butcher (Hampden); heirs of Christmas Murphy, shopkeeper (Parlatuvier)¹³ and E. Edwards (Parrot Hall) [Collens 1900:303-4; Hay 1899, App. 4].

Secondly, by 1897, there were only five absentee owners of sugar estates.¹⁴ Virtually all other owners were resident in Trinidad or Tobago.

¹³ Murphy owned Parlatuvier estate by 1881, but was not mentioned in contemporary lists as an estate owner. Assessment Roll, 1881.

¹⁴ WI Royal Com. Rept., App. C, Pt. V, p. 362.

Thirdly, there was an end to the old monopoly. The McCalls in 1899 owned only 5 estates, perilously close to bankruptcy. James Hamilton owned 4, the Blakelys 3; among the new planters, the Tuckers were exceptional with 8 estates, and the Turpins with 3 (later joined into 1, Charlotteville). Most other owners had one or two estates.

Fourthly, on the advice of three visiting experts, Hart [1889], Eggers [1893] and Meaden [1898],¹⁵ emphasis was placed on alternative crops and stock rearing (Table 99).

The annexation meant that the merchants operating sailing ships with Barbados were completely bypassed.¹⁶ Free trade with Trinidad, the monthly Royal Mail packet, and the introduction in 1889 of steamers connecting the joint colony with New York, all combined to give Tobago greater access to other markets. Fifth, the merchants lost their export and import business as a result.

Sixth, the planters and merchants became distinct groups. Many of the new planters were not merchants, though some of the upwardly mobile blacks were small shopkeepers. By 1899, the only merchants who were planters were the McCalls, Thomas Blakely, Ebenezer Henderson & Co.¹⁷, and C. Plagemann.

¹⁵ Hart, Supt. of the Trinidad Botanic Station, and Baron Eggers, an eminent Dutch scientist, visited in 1889; Meaden, Supt. of the Trinidad Govt. Farm, in 1898.

¹⁶ We do not know whether they imported from Trinidad instead; Esmé Howard in 1898 stated, after investigation, that the main communication with Trinidad was by 'small sloops'. CO295/390: Howard to Selborne, Priv., 28 Nov. 1898.

¹⁷ Henderson died in 1890, but his business continued.

TABLE 99
Colour of Owners and Cultivation of Tobago Estates: 1899

<u>A: OLD PLANTERS</u>								
<u>Colour</u>	<u>No. of Planters</u>	<u>Sugar</u>	<u>Sugar & Other Crops</u>	<u>Other Crops</u>	<u>Uncult.</u>	<u>Stock</u>	<u>Fibre</u>	<u>No. of Estates</u>
Whites	9	6	5	3	3	-	-	17
Coloureds	11	5	7	4	5	2	1	24
Blacks	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
Indians	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
D. K.	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
<u>Sub-Total</u>	23	13	12	8	8	2	1	44
<u>B: NEW PLANTERS</u>								
Whites	9	4	9	4	-	2	-	19
Coloureds	6	4	3	3	1	-	-	11
Blacks	8	4	1	3	2	-	-	10
Indians	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
D. K.	10	4	2	1	4	1	-	12
<u>Sub-Total</u>	34	16	16	11	7	3	-	53
<u>C: OLD AND NEW PLANTERS (JOINT OWNERS)</u>								
Coloureds	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
<u>TOTAL</u>	57*	29	28	20	15	5	1	98

NOTES: 1. * The joint owners were both already counted. 2. DK = Don't Know.
Source: Calculated from Collens [1900:303-304].

Seventh, the senior officials, because of retrenchment, were fewer, with, in most cases, lower salaries and fewer supporting staff.

VIII.4.2 The Middle Strata

The middle strata, allied to the smaller planters and lessees, quickly advanced proposals for the support of alternative crops. A Tobago Crop Advance and Discount Co., probably the one formed by Sir John Gorrie, existed from 1892 to 1898, but no record of its accomplishments survives. Most of its officers were coloured and black, smaller planters and members of the middle strata. There was also a Tobago Co-operative Society Ltd., the creature of the same social groups. Founded in 1892 to deal in real estate, its shares were 4s each. Its committee overlapped considerably with the officers of the Crop Advance and Discount Co., which served as its banker.¹⁸

J. B. Price, the black lessee of Woodlands estate in the 1880s, initiated other enterprises. He bought the press of The News, intending to publish under the title The Tobago Indicator, but could not pay the bond of £200 required by the Trinidad Newspaper Ordinances.¹⁹ He also established The Agricultural Loan and Trading Co. Ltd., with a proposed share capital of £1000 at £2 per share. Its Board of Directors were mainly blacks from the middle strata, the Chairman being Edward Keens, who had lost his estates. The Company intended

¹⁸ The News, 26 Nov. 1892; 28 Jan. 1893; 29 Apr. 1893.

¹⁹ CO295/364: Knollys to Chamberlain, 12 July 1895, & Encs.

to do business as agriculturists, merchants, and commission agents, and to develop portions of Crown land.²⁰ Its accomplishments are unknown.

The schoolteachers, who had increased between 1881 and 1901 (Ch. 6), became more socially prominent. They signed more petitions, including those of the Defence Association. However, one incident indicates that though they were politically engaged, they did not have the power exercised by their Trinidad counterparts, who included such critics of the régime as John Jacob Thomas, the famous black schoolteacher [Brereton 1981].

J. A. P. Bowhill, a coloured merchant's clerk and land surveyor, appointed Acting Inspector of Schools, wrote in his 1884 report that most of the schools, except those of the Moravians, were very poor, due to 'very defective' teaching. He argued that in reading, writing and arithmetic, 'the children betrayed the greatest ignorance; and I can impute this only to a bad system of teaching'; he called for stricter supervision by the ministers in charge.²¹

M. J. Prince and R. Mayers, the black headteachers of Scarborough and Mt St George Wesleyan schools, respectively, responded in The News. Prince exploded: 'The lad is impertinent'. Questioning Bowhill's competence, he asked, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?' He criticized Bowhill's punctuation, and condemned the attack on the teachers.

²⁰ CO295/367: Prospectus of the Agricultural Loan and Trading Co. Ltd., 1895.

²¹ Tobago Gazette, 6 Feb. 1885.

Mayers, less vitriolic, discussed the overlooking of John B. Murray, a black schoolteacher, for the Inspectorship of Schools, preference being given to Bowhill and subsequently to John McKillop, a white engineer. He too challenged Bowhill's competence, and questioned his criteria on merit.²²

The Board of Education withdrew the Government grant payable to Prince from the date of his letter to the end of the year (1/8ths of his income from that source), and threatened him with 'instant dismissal' for any similar offence; it conveyed to Mayers its 'strong disapprobation'. It made a new rule: if a teacher wrote to the press on the school system, in what the Board considered 'intemperate or improper language', the teacher was liable to withdrawal of his salary grant, or other punishment.²³ In spite of a petition from 38 Scarborough residents on Prince's behalf and an apology from Prince, in June 1885, he was transferred to Grenada.²⁴

The incident demonstrates the fledgling power of the teachers against the officials, ministers of religion and planters who controlled the Board of Education and the schools. Such was the political climate, that in 1888, an article in 14 parts, criticizing James Anthony Froude's The English in the West Indies: The Bow of Ulysses [1888] was published under the pen name, 'Apollo Africani'. By contrast,

²² The News, 21 Feb. 1885.

²³ CO289/4: Board of Education minutes, 3 Mar. 1885, Tobago Gazette, 6 Mar. 1885; minutes of 14 Apr., *ibid.*, 17 Apr.; minutes of 12 May, *ibid.*, 5 June.

²⁴ Prince was described by Admin. Carrington as 'a black man, of considerable intelligence, and good address'. Admin.'s Despatches, 1882-85: Carrington to Robinson, 24 Aug. 1883.

J. J. Thomas published openly his Froudacity, in response to Froude [Thomas 1889/1969].²⁵

VIII.4.3 The Labouring Class

The labouring class quietly consolidated its interests. In the Windward District, some bought Crown land, but the preference was for estate land, already cleared, and nearer to means of communication. They swiftly took advantage of the Trinidad market to export produce from their freeholds and metayer grounds (Ch. 4). Temporary migration to Trinidad for waged work was also frequent. Rev Clemens, the Moravian minister in Moriah, told the 1897 Royal Commission:

There are only labourers there ... Their condition is not poor, as they can provide themselves with food and clothing, and support him and two colleagues of his denomination. They also support their schools with assistance from Government. They earn money by traffic with Trinidad in ground provisions, stock, goats, pigs and cocoa ... no labour is employed at wages in his district ... His people depend largely on wages and trade with Trinidad.²⁶

By 1900, although there was urgent need for a bi-weekly steam service around the Tobago coast, linking Tobago with Trinidad, the foundation for the flowering of a peasantry had been laid. Chapter 6 also suggests that between 1881 and 1901, many labourers achieved upward mobility by becoming shopkeepers.

²⁵ Apollo Africani. 'The Modern "Bow of Ulysses" not only "Unstrung" but broken'. The News, 11 Aug.-29 Dec. 1888. Thomas also wrote the first Trinidad Creole grammar [1869/1969].

²⁶ WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, App. C, Pt. V, pp. 357-8; cf. statements of Drs Blanc & Kenny, & David Hatt, pp. 358-9.

VIII.4.4 Summary

The period 1884-1900 was a time of transition for all the social groupings in Tobago. The reduction in state employment left the officials few in number and weakened in influence. The old monopoly was broken and small capitalists invested in estates; but in the changing situation, merchants and planters were becoming distinct groups. The entire dominant class was subordinated to that of Trinidad. Some, particularly from the black segment of the middle strata, achieved upward mobility into the ranks of the planters; but most of the enterprises conceived by the middle strata to finance their upward advance appear to have borne little fruit. For the labouring class, land was easily available, both from the Crown and indigent planters. This, with the Trinidad connection, via trade and temporary migration for wages, allowed many to become smallholders.

VIII.5 THE HAY ADMINISTRATION: 1889-1892

Since the late 1870s, the Tobago Government had pursued a policy of stringency, and little had been spent on public works. Although the London officials had refused to sanction any loans for public works before the agreement on annexation, early in 1889, on the recommendation of the Governor, Sir William Robinson, a loan of £2000 from Trinidad, at 4% interest, was approved, to repair the Tobago jetty. By October 1890, the loan having been repaid, £3000 more were

sanctioned for public works.²⁷

The first dilemma for the dominant class was the drastic decline in the already low revenue after 1885 (Table 100). They insisted that it was caused by the lower Trinidad tariff, and the abolition of shipping dues and *ad valorem* duties under the 1888 Order-in-Council²⁸ uniting the colonies. But, as investigations gradually showed, the revenue problem was more complex; also, the attribution of decline to the annexation alone was poor logic: *post hoc ergo propter hoc*.

There were several reasons for the low revenue. Its principal sources were import and other customs duties; excise duties; land and house taxes; and licenses. All four sources had been falling steadily since 1880 (Table 98). Firstly, imports and exports had been considerably reduced because of the low prices for sugar, the low profits of most estates, the metayer disputes and the severe lack of specie. In addition, some of the dues on shipping had been reduced in 1882 (Ch. 7). Secondly, all but three of the thirty-two distilleries had already been closed by 1889, so reducing the excise duty collected. After 1889, under the Trinidad excise laws, the duty per gallon of rum rose from 4s to 6s 6d, and only two stills remained working. Thirdly, the crisis left many of the larger landowners unable to pay their taxes, and there was considerable forfeiture of land to the Crown in default.

²⁷ CO295/321: Robinson to Knutsford, 19 Jan. 1889; reply, 16 Feb. 1889; CO295/330: Robinson to Knutsford, 18 Oct. 1890.

²⁸ CO289/5: Tobago Gazette, 15 Dec. 1888, & CO298/44: Trinidad Council Paper No. 94, 1888.

Finally, there was a marked export of animals by the middle strata and the labouring class after 1885, so reducing the license fees collected. The low revenue, which led to the decision to annex Tobago to Trinidad, was thus further compounded by the loss of direct imports and exports.

By 1892, there was a growing perception among the Trinidad officials that Tobago was 'bankrupt'. Its government was almost in abeyance, since the Commissioner, L. G. Hay, under the strain of office and the conflicts with Gorrie, had taken to drink, and ceased to function effectively. When the Governor, Sir Frederick Napier Broome, visited Tobago in September 1892, official salaries had not been paid for some time; and the Treasury was almost £7000 in debt:

Tobago is at the present moment bankrupt, and cannot pay its way, much less its debts. ... The Tobago Government has been partly living ... on the proceeds of postal money orders ... instead of remitting the money to meet the orders.

The London officials assumed that Tobago's condition was no worse than it had been in 1879 and 1886, and that careful administration would remove the difficulties. Hay resigned under pressure, and D. B. Horsford (Actg. Auditor-General, Trinidad) acted as Commissioner and investigated the accounts.²⁹

²⁹ CO295/340: Broome to Ripon, 11 Sept. 1892, & Encs.; minutes.

TABLE 100

Tobago: Revenue and Expenditure, 1885-1898 (Pounds Sterling)

	<u>1885</u>	<u>1886</u>	<u>1887</u>	<u>1888</u>	<u>1889</u>	<u>1890</u>	<u>1891</u>
<u>REVENUE</u>	11826	8814	9387	10489	8809	8657	8730
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	12031	9529	6995	8155	10423	9253	8783
	<u>1892</u>	<u>1893</u>	<u>1894</u>	<u>1895</u>	<u>1896</u>	<u>1897</u>	<u>1898</u>
<u>REVENUE</u>	7459	9211	8843	8591	9321	8107	8213
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	9009	8537	8135	8218	9268	8387	7479

NOTES: 1. Figures rounded to the nearest £.
2. For 1895, the Blue Bk. Rept. gives the revenue as £8803.

Sources: C0290: Tobago Blue Books, 1885-1888; C0300: Trinidad and Tobago Blue Books, 1889-1898.

The Horsford Report of September 1892 confirmed a liability of £8638 19s 4d. He ascribed the decline in revenue partially to the customs union, which allowed travellers to Trinidad to buy goods there, which were not taxed in Tobago.

The Tobago merchants are feeling the effect of this transfer of trade and are disposed to cry out for separation from Trinidad and for their right to levy taxes as in former years.³⁰

By 1892, therefore, the worsening fiscal crisis was apparent, but as yet, the Colonial Office view was that a joint colony, with separate Treasuries, was a viable option. The local view was that the decline of revenue was due to the loss of customs duties after 1889.

In December 1892, a petition was sent by the leading planters (including those recently investing), merchants and some shopkeepers, teachers and other persons from the middle strata. It argued that the annexation had resulted in 'disaster'. The Trinidad judges were blamed for sowing 'bitter dissension' between the classes, resulting in 'an almost complete stoppage of work.'

In consequence the Sugar crop of this year is only about 700 tons for the whole Island. The result being that the Public Treasury is empty, planters have no money to carry on their Estates, and labourers are leaving ... to seek work elsewhere.

Therefore, they asked for aid. Persuaded that a syndicate with capital to import Indian labourers and grow sugar would succeed, they confessed that they had 'neither means nor influence' to form it; and they asked the Secretary

³⁰ CO295/340: Fowler to Ripon, 27 Sept. 1892, Horsford's Rept.

of State to use his influence for that purpose, or to sanction a loan of £25,000 to develop Tobago's resources.

Thomas Rayner, the Acting Commissioner after Horsford's departure, reporting on the memorial, stated that, with the exception of one or two estates, cultivation was nominal. 'The remedy seems to be the abandonment of Sugar, and the taking to other products instead.' He felt that, except for the leeward plain which was suited to sugar, alternative crops should be grown; and if sugar was retained at Leeward, it would need a 'very considerable alteration' in the methods of manufacture, since common process muscovado would not pay. It would also require imported labour because 'the people prefer to be peasant proprietors'. Therefore, the syndicate should be considered only if coffee was not feasible. Rayner concluded:

In my judgement, the hope for Tobago lies not in large enterprises, but in the creation of a class of respectable and self respecting peasant proprietors, who will cultivate coffee and cocoa etc, which they will sell, and ground provisions for their own use. This must be done by allowing them to get Crown grants on easy terms and by a rigorous prevention of squatting ...

At the Colonial Office, the officials agreed with Rayner, and refused to sanction the syndicate and the loan.³¹

By the end of 1892, the positions taken by those with a voice in the debate on Tobago were emerging with clarity. The Tobago dominant class, the British and Trinidad officials were all agreed on the need to settle labourers on the Crown lands, but for differing reasons. To the officials, smallholders were

³¹ CO295/341: Broome to Ripon, 5 Dec. 1892, Encs., & minutes esp. Wingfield's, 7 Jan. 1893; reply, 17 Jan. 1893.

a source of revenue, and the main hope for future development; to the planters, *faute de mieux*, they were a source of labour, necessary to their own hopes of future accumulation.

For the dominant class, the annexation had had damaging effects. Firstly, it subordinated them to their Trinidad counterparts. Secondly, the merchants were superseded by the Trinidad merchants. Thirdly, the customs union seemed to have decimated the revenue.

The Tobago sugar planters were caught in yet another impasse. They needed both capital and labour, but no one with influence was persuaded that they should be helped, and they were unable to provide either. Therefore, for them, the last shred of hope lay in a separate administration, where the recovery of the revenue would, in principle, be possible, and where, at least, their influence over public policy would be greater. Their prospects of survival as planters therefore depended on the issue of customs/revenue and that of the development strategy, both of which were slowly tilting to the advantage of the emerging peasantry.

VIII.6 THE LOW ADMINISTRATION: 1892-1898

VIII.6.1 Economic Strategy and Revenue: 1893

Commissioner William Low, a native of Dominica, arrived in December 1892. After two months, he analysed the situation on the estates in terms close to those of Rayner: there was minimal benefit to both planter and metayer, and some of the older planters were 'fossilised'.

Agreeing with Rayner on the need to 'create' a class of

peasants, he vigorously set about to imprison squatters on Crown lands, to remake the roads and to construct traces to and through the Crown lands. He offered the lands at £1 per acre in lots of 5 to 100 acres, and blocks of 200 to 300 acres at 4s or 5s per acre to capitalists intending to cultivate the whole purchase at once. But Low hinged his recovery plan on the peasants he hoped to create.

A peasant proprietary - every man having an interest in the land, with his small house, and his cow, and, in many cases, his horse - means a well behaved body of citizens, bound to devote their whole time to the cultivation of their plots, and having no time to listen to demagogues and silly West India newspaper publishers.³²

Later he wrote:

... my best energy is bent to obtain a large number of small peasant proprietors, who would spend all their earnings within the Island, rather than a few large land owners who might possibly graze cattle or leave the land idle.³³

However, Low felt that estates were also necessary, and needed advances to pay wages. There being no local capitalist willing and able to invest, he proposed a loan to Tobago of £3000 per annum at 4% interest, to make advances at 6% interest to farmers, with a mortgage on the growing crops. (In 1895, he raised this request to £5000.)

Low's intent was, using the resources of the state, to create a peasantry and a proletariat, to restore the old planters, to increase the spending power of the residents,

³² CO295/345: Fowler to Ripon, 25 May 1893, enc. Low to Col. Sec., 27 Feb. 1893.

³³ CO295/363: Broome to Ripon, 11 May 1895, Enc. 2.

revive the merchants, and, indirectly over time, to increase the revenue, so ensuring Tobago's viability as a separate administration.

Neither the Trinidad Executive Council nor the London officials agreed to advances for planters. As usual, Wingfield went to the nub of the matter, highlighting the importance to the planters of the recovery of the revenue:

Whatever may be said in favour of Government making advances to cultivators the first condition is that Government must have the money to advance - the Govt of Tobago has no money and would not be justified in raising a loan for such a purpose even if it could do so which is doubtful.³⁴

Only a loan of £2000 for roads and public buildings, in addition to the £5000 already borrowed from Trinidad, was sanctioned.³⁵

How was Tobago to become viable as a distinct entity? If customs revenue was the source of the problem, as both Hay and Low insisted, there were three alternatives: (1) make an annual allowance from the Trinidad Treasury to cover the loss; (2) incorporate Tobago into the Government of Trinidad; (3) alter the Order-in-Council to let Tobago make its own customs arrangements. The third course was pursued by the Tobago administration, as a step towards the unstated fourth option: to return to a separate administration. But only the first was conceded. When this proved unsatisfactory by 1894, they demanded the fourth, but were obliged to accept the second.

³⁴ CO295/345: Fowler to Ripon, 25 May 1893, enc. Low to Col. Sec., 27 Feb. 1893; minutes.

³⁵ CO295/345: Fowler to Ripon, 14 June 1893, & Encs.

Low insisted on amending the Order-in-Council to enable the Tobago administration to charge duty on articles imported from Trinidad in passengers' luggage. He claimed that Tobago was losing over £1000 per annum because of the Union, and asked for a refund of £4926, the supposed loss for 1889-1893.

It was Broome, in London when Low's proposal on altering the Order-in-Council arrived, who perceived the class issues at the heart of the revenue controversy: the loss to the Government, the merchants (and implicitly to the planters) was a gain to the labouring class. He minuted:

... this is a matter in which the prosperity of the Government is one thing, and the prosperity of the people is another - to a considerable extent. The Tobago Government has no doubt lost revenue ... The Scarborough merchants have also lost; but I imagine that the Tobago agriculturist has gained a better market.

Reversion to an independent customs tariff would not benefit the small Tobago producer:

It would certainly restrict and interfere with his present way of carrying his goods to Port of Spain, having his holiday there, buying in the shops of the capital, and returning to Scarborough with his purchases.

Broome also saw that loss of customs duties was only one source of the low revenue.

Ripon asked that the papers be laid before the Legislative Council, with a proposal that a yearly allowance be granted to Tobago for loss of revenue, the amount to be considered by a Select Committee, with Low attending the

discussions.³⁶

At the same time, greater efforts were made to collect the land and house taxes. The 1885 Land and House Tax Regulation was amended by an 1893 one, empowering the Deputy Marshal to levy on all goods and chattels of defaulters, instead of only those on which the taxes were due; it also made it more difficult for planters to forfeit a small part of their estates to the Crown in lieu of taxes. (In 1892 alone 1400 acres had been so ceded to the Crown, but £30 were thereby lost to the revenue). Still, the Tobago finances did not improve.

VIII.6.2 The Petition for Closer Union: 1893

At the end of 1893, part of the middle strata and the labouring class made a significant intervention with a historic petition, which was decisive in shaping the views of the British officials on the future of Tobago. The petition had an exceptionally large number (1016) of signatures. Labourers, artisans, tailors, seamstresses, peasants, teachers, fishermen, mariners, cartermen, and even one schoolboy, George N. Paul of Mt St George, signed it. Only two planters, both from Trinidad and investing after 1886 - Trochilus Tucker and William Date - supported it. Henry Hackett, Glasgow-educated engineer, son of James Hackett, the deceased ex-slave who had bought Les Coteaux and Belmont estates, also signed. In general, the signatories belonged

³⁶ CO295/346: Fowler to Ripon, 23 July 1893, & Encs. esp. Low's minutes, 28 Dec. 1892, 23 July 1893; Broome's minute, n.d.; Ripon to Broome, 6 Oct. 1893.

firmly to the ranks of the black segment of the middle strata and the labouring class.

The petition, expressing dissatisfaction with the limited Union, asked 'that Tobago be incorporated more closely with Trinidad by a complete change from our present form of Government to the status of a Ward in the Colony of Trinidad.' It also proposed a steam service going around Tobago, calling at Scarborough and sixteen bays, and going to Barbados, to connect with the Royal Mail steamers, and thence to Trinidad. In other words, the signatories saw the need to integrate Tobago village producers with international traffic and with the major nearby markets.

Both Broome and Low disagreed, the former without comment. Low wrote:

... it is certainly supported by few names of any weight or importance; and I am satisfied that it is in no sense representative of public feeling. On the contrary it may be summed up as the work of an interested few - principally school teachers.

But at the Colonial Office, the memorial marked the turning point in their thinking. Whereas they had allowed Tobago an independent Treasury on the premise that only this was feasible, they swiftly adopted this proposal as the desired objective. Wingfield, after reviewing the relevant papers, wrote a long minute, recalling that this had been the original intention.³⁷ He agreed with the petitioners, while recognizing that the dominant classes in both Trinidad and Tobago would oppose the change; the petition was simply taking

³⁷ It was never clearly formulated in writing.

the annexation to its logical conclusion.

Ripon's reply signalled the Colonial Office intent:

I am inclined to agree with the view taken by Her Majesty's Government in 1886, that the complete incorporation of Tobago with Trinidad, by abolishing the separate Treasuries and establishments [,] would be desirable, but I am not prepared to advise Her Majesty to adopt that measure, unless it is acceptable to the Legislative Council of the Colony, and to the Financial Board of Tobago; and as I gather ... that this is not the case, no action in the direction desired by the Petitioners can be taken at present.³⁸

By early 1894, the Colonial Office supported a development strategy based on the creation of a peasantry, whose potential was enhanced by the customs union and free trade with Trinidad. Closer union with Trinidad would strengthen the interests of the middle strata and the labouring class. However, it was a direct threat to the interests of the old sugar planters and the merchants. The crystallization at the Colonial Office of the view that Tobago should be a Ward of the united colony gave the political initiative to the labouring class and those from the middle strata who promoted the petition.

VIII.6.3 The Select Committee on Tobago Customs Revenue

The Tobago dominant class was not helped by the Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on compensation to Tobago for loss of customs duties. The

³⁸ CO295/348: Broome to Ripon, 11 Dec. 1893, enc. Memorial of Certain Tobago Inhabitants, & Low to Col. Sec., 20 Nov. 1893; minutes by Harris & Wingfield; Ripon to Broome, 30 Jan. 1894.

Committee found, after examining passengers' luggage from Trinidad from 15 December 1893 to 14 January 1894, normally the busiest time of year, that the duty leviable was £3 12s 3d, based on local prices, which were at least 30% higher than the invoice value on which duty had been collected in Trinidad.

The Committee therefore estimated that the loss to Tobago in round figures would be, say, £45 per annum, and that the sum of £3928 11s 8½d, which had been paid to the Tobago Treasury as compensation for customs and excise duties foregone from January 1889 to September 1893, was adequate.

They saw the falling value of Tobago exports as partly accounting for the reduced purchasing power of its people, as shown in the reduced imports. They recommended that 'the free interchange of goods between the two Islands [be] terminated and each permitted to collect and retain its own duties and to fix its own Customs Tariff.'

A minority report by William Gordon Gordon, a leading merchant, added:

That if Tobago could be converted into a Ward of Trinidad and its affairs managed economically its position and prospects would be materially altered in a few years and it would become a valuable adjunct to Trinidad.³⁹

Accompanying the Select Committee Report, Broome sent a Memorial from all the members of the Tobago Financial Board. They showed that, while Section 29 of the Order-in-Council allowed for the laws of Trinidad relating to customs and

³⁹ CO295/351: Broome to Ripon, 3 Mar. 1894, enc. Council Paper No. 21, 1894.

excise duties to apply to Tobago, Section 30 ordered that the revenue of Tobago be kept distinct from that of Trinidad. They argued that the aim of Section 30 was defeated by the customs union, which caused 'a considerable diversion of Revenue from the Treasury of Tobago to that of Trinidad, it being impossible as has been demonstrated [by the Select Committee], to arrive at any system by which the said loss can be checked.' They therefore asked the Secretary of State to ensure to Tobago control of her customs and other duties.

Broome had no objection to these requests to end the customs union. But the London officials considered it 'retrograde'; and the view already formed was reinforced. The Select Committee Report had demolished the claim of both Commissioners Hay and Low that the loss of revenue was principally due to the Union. Instead, the officials argued that there were alternative explanations:

- (1) the lower consumption of spirits and tobacco because of the higher Trinidad excise duty;
- (2) the sugar crisis and the disputes between planters and metayers which dislocated production and trade;
- (3) lower tariffs, both because of the Union and the 1892 McKinley tariff agreement which lowered duties on United States goods.

Ripon's reply made this clear to the Legislative Council and the Financial Board, and he added:

I should be disposed, if local feeling did not stand in the way, to favour the policy advocated by Mr. Gordon in his post-script ..., namely to complete the union between the two islands by converting Tobago into a Ward of the Colony of Trinidad.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ CO295/351: Broome to Ripon, 3 Mar. 1894, Enc. 2, Memorial of Financial Board; minutes; Ripon to Broome, 19 June 1894.

VIII.6.4 The Tobago Dominant Class Fights Back

Ripon's despatch was laid before the Financial Board, which replied that

the results to the best interests of Tobago since its annexation to Trinidad ... have been so disastrous that no practical benefit whatever would accrue by Tobago becoming a Ward of Trinidad.⁴¹

The dominant class mobilized their forces to the fullest. A public meeting in Scarborough on 14 August 1894, attended by over 200 taxpayers, unanimously resolved:

That this meeting protests against Tobago being made a Ward of Trinidad or being more closely connected with the Island of Trinidad.⁴²

Broome did not wish to lay Ripon's despatch before the Trinidad Legislative Council, which was unlikely to favour closer union with a 'bankrupt' Tobago. Replying to Ripon, he drew attention to Tobago's debt (£6622 on 30 June 1894), for which there was no prospect of repayment. Tobago was again using the proceeds of money orders and its Savings Bank funds to pay salaries and current expenses, while its public services 'are and will be in a sadly starved and crippled condition.' Further drastic economies would realize only a small sum. Therefore, Broome passed the buck to the Colonial Office:

For assistance from within, there is but little scope. For assistance from without, what source is there? ... Tobago is an Imperial possession, and, if it is worth

⁴¹ CO295/356: Broome to Ripon, 25 Aug. 1894, Sub-Enc. 1, Extract from Minutes of Tobago Financial Board meeting, 15 Aug. 1894.

⁴² CO295/356: Broome to Ripon, 25 Aug. 1894, Sub-Enc. 2.

keeping, is it not worth helping?

Broome called for a £20,000 loan, with imperial guarantee, for road making and for 'small secured loans to *bona fide* and specially selected cultivators'; the debt to the Crown Agents and to Trinidad to be also paid from the loan.⁴³

At the Colonial Office, there was no acceptance of the diagnosis of bankruptcy, and no willingness to consider a £20,000 loan, since the interest would be impossible for Tobago to bear without additional taxation. Passing the buck back to Broome, they argued that a smaller loan could be raised in Trinidad, without any guarantee. The consensus was not to approve of state advances to cultivators. Wingfield perceptively observed:

Small proprietors appear to be multiplying in a fairly satisfactory manner without such inducements and it would be more prudent to wait and see what effect the improvement of the roads may have on the demand for land.⁴⁴

In December 1894, the Tobago dominant class made its final thrust to dissolve the Union. The unofficials on the Financial Board, all planters, forwarded a petition of 'Her Majesty's Loyal Inhabitants'. Their covering letter stated:

We occupy the anomalous position of being members of a Financial Body deprived, practically, of its principal source of Revenue. Trinidad is absorbing most of the money which ought to come into our Treasury

⁴³ CO295/356: Broome to Ripon, 25 Aug. 1894.

⁴⁴ CO295/356: Broome to Ripon, 25 Aug. 1894; minutes by Olivier, 15 Oct., Wingfield, 16 Oct.; Ripon to Broome, 25 Oct. 1894.

on dutiable goods consumed in this island.⁴⁵

The memorial recalled the Tobago Legislative Council resolution of 19 January 1887, which wanted a return to the *status quo ante*, should the Union prove disadvantageous. They averred that the Union was 'disastrous' to Tobago, as evidenced by the loss of revenue, the unwillingness of the majority of the Trinidad Legislative Council to assist in remedying the customs duty issue, 'the introduction of class prejudice, previously non-existent' in the metayer disputes, and the 'want of sympathy' between the inhabitants of both islands, because of 'difference in religion and practically in nationality.' They mentioned also that the Governor did not visit Tobago.

They argued against Ripon's proposal for a closer Union with Trinidad on several grounds. It would mean increased land taxes, and the application of expensive, inappropriate Trinidad laws; the diversion of trade to Trinidad would be 'ruinously increased'; it would retard the development of Tobago's Crown lands, would expose Tobago to corrupt administration, and would cause a loss of 'identity and prestige'. Instead, they asked for Tobago to be replaced under the Government of the Windward Islands.

The memorial was signed by 200 persons - the leading planters, merchants, officials and ministers of religion,⁴⁶

⁴⁵ CO295/358: Broome to Ripon, 17 Dec. 1894, Enc. 1, Tobago unofficials to Low, 10 Dec. 1894.

⁴⁶ The Moravian ministers saw the Roman Catholic influence from Trinidad as a threat to evangelical faith. Periodical Accts. (2nd Series) 2 (1893):81-2; 3 (1898):556; 4 (1900):385, (1901):529.

some of the coloured segment of the middle strata, a few school teachers, labourers and artisans. Low deemed the petitioners 'fairly representative of the property and intelligence of the community.'⁴⁷

Ripon, in reply, refused, on the grounds of the memorial, to consider any change in the Order-in-Council. He was persuaded that the actual loss of customs duties was insignificant; that the loss to the storekeepers was no loss to the community, and did not warrant interference. Broome was rebuked for 'neglect and apparent indifference', and told to visit Tobago, taking competent officials; and Ripon ordered that the laws be adjusted to suit Tobago's needs.⁴⁸

The situation was more dire than the dominant class cared to admit. A separate administration, on which the planters, the merchants, and those officials who could not easily be transferred elsewhere, all depended for their survival and influence, had to be able to pay its way. The customs revenue hoped for was uncertain. And Low's policy of investing in roads to attract investors and smallholders to the Crown lands, while seeking a loan to make small advances to the planters, was unable to bring quick, direct revenue to the Exchequer. Since all such loans had failed to get approval, advances to planters were contingent on increased revenue which, in turn, depended on the success of the Crown lands

⁴⁷ CO295/358: Broome to Ripon, 17 Dec. 1894, Enc. 2, Memorial, 25 July 1894, & Enc. 3, Low to Col. Sec., 10 Dec. 1894.

⁴⁸ CO295/358: Broome to Ripon, 17 Dec. 1894; Ripon to Broome, 2 May 1895.

policy, which could only be long-term. Thus, it was a long-term strategy, needing to produce short-term results.

The labouring class was in a far stronger position than the planters. Without state aid, they benefited from cheaper goods and access to the Trinidad market; and were rapidly becoming independent smallholders. Without state aid, most of the old planters could not survive, whether as growers of sugar cane or of other crops. If the Tobago administration was unviable, their prospects were even dimmer. For the merchants, closer union with Trinidad would be ruinous.

VIII.6.5 The Gathering Gloom: 1895-1896

Before Ripon's despatch rebuking him arrived in Trinidad, Broome visited Tobago. He reported considerable improvement since his last visit in September 1892, for which Low deserved 'much credit'. Tobago had paid its debts and revenue was covering expenditure. Exports were increasing. However, the loss of customs duties was 'still a burning question', and Broome instituted a check on passengers' luggage from Port of Spain to Tobago, for the twelve months commencing 1 June 1895.⁴⁹

Yet, Ripon agreed only to a £10,000 loan for public works, to be spent over 2 years, again considering it inadvisable to lend to planters.⁵⁰

Broome's reopening of the issue of passengers' luggage did not help the Tobago dominant class. Baggage was examined

⁴⁹ CO295/363: Broome to Ripon, 11 May 1895.

⁵⁰ CO295/363: Ripon to Broome, 17 June 1895.

from June to December 1895, and the duty leviable was £25 1s 3½d, suggesting a trifling loss to Tobago.⁵¹

By 1896, small capitalists had invested in Tobago estates and Broome, after visiting Tobago for three weeks (26 March to 15 April 1896), reported admiringly on Low's careful husbanding of the finances and his 'excellent work'. The financial situation appeared more stable, but the Tobago officials were at vicious loggerheads.⁵²

In August 1896, Broome forwarded petitions for and against the removal of Low. Broome and the Colonial Office supported Low because, in spite of his brusque manner, he deserved promotion. Six hundred and thirteen signatures, headed by those of the leading planters and merchants, were gathered against Low. They claimed that the apparent prosperity of Tobago was a mirage, since the ability to balance its books depended on the sale of Crown lands, on arrears of taxes and on speculation in postage stamps.⁵³ Although Low dismissed the petition as the work of an obstructionist 'clique', his recovery plan was falling apart, and he had, indeed, speculated in postage stamps to raise revenue.

To crown it all, Low's report on the Crown lands showed little success. Between December 1894 and December 1896, only 155 acres had been sold, with 77 persons in arrears on 31

⁵¹ CO295/369: Broome to Chamberlain, 29 Jan. 1896, & Encs.

⁵² CO295/371: Broome to Chamberlain, 9 May 1896.

⁵³ CO295/373: Broome to Chamberlain, 9 Aug. 1896; Enc. 1, Sub-Enc. 2.

December 1896. Sixteen persons had been dispossessed for non-compliance with the Rules. Low stated:

I am forced to confess ... disappointment with the people who are willing enough to obtain possession of the Lots on the Government terms, but not to plant economic plants.

Despite efforts by Mr Caines, the Cocoa Instructor, the majority of buyers had made 'little progress' with cocoa, 'preferring to plant a few potatoes, peas etc.'.

Low attributed these poor results to metayage, which gave labourers access to estate land for provisions, and also to the fact that planters sold land at 8s, while Crown land was £1, per acre.⁵⁴ Soon after, exhausted, Low applied for six months leave.

VIII.6.6 The Turning Tide of Official Opinion in Trinidad and Tobago

In March 1897, the West India Royal Commission sat in Trinidad and Tobago. Sydney Olivier from the Colonial Office was its secretary. Testifying before the Commission, Low repeated his arguments that the annexation had been to Tobago's disadvantage because of the customs union. The minutes stated:

The labouring class in Tobago are, he believes, in favour of the union with Trinidad, but most persons capable of forming an opinion are against it.

However, Low conceded the difficulty of maintaining a separate administration:

⁵⁴ CO295/377: Knollys to Chamberlain, 25 Feb. 1897, enc.
Low's Rept., 18 Jan. 1897.

Thinks a complete union might be of advantage to Tobago; their roads and their medical service would be better provided for if the island were treated fairly as compared with the rest of Trinidad; thinks the present system almost impossible to maintain.⁵⁵

The apparently satisfactory Tobago revenue was, as Low's enemies had stated, illusory. In May 1897, the Trinidad executive wrote to S. W. Knaggs, Acting Commissioner (Low being on leave), asking whether the public works provided for by the loan of £10,000 should be further proceeded with, given the falling off in the revenue. Knaggs gave a thoughtful report, and concluded:

As regards the ability of Tobago to repay this loan I am forced to entertain grave doubts. None of the expenditure, save perhaps that on Crown Lands traces, is of a reproductive character; on the contrary the upkeep of the roads and works will entail still further calls upon an already strained exchequer, and it will be certainly necessary, but for some happy contingency, shortly to decide whether Tobago shall be allowed to make her own fiscal arrangements or be entirely absorbed by Trinidad. The latter course I would strongly deprecate as being in the interests of neither Island.⁵⁶

When asked for the reasons for his concluding sentence, Knaggs submitted another careful report showing, first, the differences in taxation, especially the land tax (5d per acre in Tobago, 1s per acre in Trinidad), which would 'complete the ruin' of the planters. Secondly, he adverted to the higher costs which Union would involve, since Tobago's affairs were

⁵⁵ WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, App. C, Pt. V, pp. 364-5.

⁵⁶ CO295/384: Jerningham to Chamberlain, 10 Jan. 1898, enc. Knaggs to Col. Sec., 6 July 1897.

conducted with 'an economy that sometimes ... verges on parsimony.' Thirdly, he argued that the two flaws in the existing arrangement were the loss of customs revenue and the forcing on Tobago of laws unsuited to local conditions. Thus, he preferred an independent customs within a united colony.⁵⁷

By then, Knaggs was the only leading local official who thought likewise. The new Governor, Sir Hubert Jerningham, visited Tobago in August 1897 and reported:

Capital and labour are the two needs of the Colony. There is soil rich enough to attract the former, the people are too lazy to constitute the latter, and the unfortunate Metayer System has helped to create very small holdings sufficient to give the owners their strict nourishment and not enough to stimulate their giving attention to the soil.

Stated otherwise, the labouring class, having refused to become proletarians, maximized their advantage by paying minimal attention to metayage (Ch. 5). Jerningham was persuaded that only in complete Union with Trinidad could Tobago's prosperity be restored.⁵⁸

Late in 1897, the Royal Commission reported. They firmly recommended complete amalgamation and the abolition of separate Treasuries, since the existing arrangement was 'unnecessary and may be mischievous'. Dismissing the merchants' complaints, they stated:

The traders seem to fear that amalgamation with Trinidad would reduce their business

⁵⁷ C0295/384: Jerningham to Chamberlain, 10 Jan. 1898, enc. Knaggs to Col. Sec., 26 July 1897.

⁵⁸ C0295/380: Jerningham to Chamberlain, 19 Aug. 1897. Sir Courtenay Knollys, the Col. Sec., felt likewise. C0295/365: Knollys to Chamberlain, Conf., 26 Aug. 1895.

in connexion with the import trade, and possibly with the export trade. This result might follow, but from the point of view of the general interest, no sound argument against the amalgamation can be based on it.⁵⁹

Low, when asked, on his return from leave, to comment, wrote an extraordinary report, advising that a separate administration was unviable, and supporting a closer Union. His views bear quoting at length:

By changes and reductions in establishments and by a daily and hourly economy "verging on parsimony"[,] ... I have endeavoured to keep the Island solvent, but for some time it has been painfully apparent that collapse is within measurable distance unless external assistance is rendered ... The very limited revenue is decreasing, while essential expenditure becomes more and more urgent. ... I must candidly confess that for the first 2 or 3 years of my residence here I was not an advocate for closer union with Trinidad; ... But a very anxious and careful consideration of the impossible continuance of the existing state of things has induced a change of opinion ... Candour compels me to admit that if Tobago will be treated as fairly as other districts of the larger island opposition can no longer be honestly justified ... Among the considerations which have induced my change of opinion I place the fact - an important one - that a very large majority of the 20,000 inhabitants at present look to Trinidad as the market for their products and, consequently, would not object to the closer union ... I do not lose sight of the fact that this very advantage to one section of the community seriously affects another - the mercantile section - and tends to the destruction of their trade

But Low agreed that no sound argument against the Union could be based on the merchants' problems. Indeed, he admitted the class character of his previous views:

⁵⁹ WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, p. 41.

Mr. Knaggs' report ... embodies most of the views which I previously held in common with the merchants and planters, and are many of them cogent if Tobago is to be completely separated from Trinidad. But I do not think it will be difficult to show that, as a separate Government, the present revenue would be quite inadequate for the efficient administration of affairs even on the most careful and economical lines.

The greatest obstacle to the Union he saw in the Trinidad land tax, which would affect the Tobago planters:

Impecunious, without capital or credit, sugar moribund, they exist purely on the sufferance [sic] of their mortgagees and they annually experience increasing difficulties in paying the present tax of 5d. ... The taxes on the estates of John McCall & Co. - the largest land owners here - have just been paid by the judgment creditors because the firm could not do so, and these estates will be up for sale in a short time. ... The peasant proprietors (who number 3,988 on Mr. Knaggs' list) on the contrary would be but little affected by the increase of the Land Tax to one shilling per acre; it would only be necessary for any of them to plant 2 or 3 extra plantain trees, to rear 3 or 4 chickens, or to sell a small pig and their troubles cease.

Low then outlined the priorities - steam and telegraph communication, more peasants, and a reduction of the price of Crown lands to 10s per acre. Having indicated other needs, particularly education, he concluded that after 'five years experience of the hopelessness of the struggle against bankruptcy', 'no other possible alternative presents itself but ... complete amalgamation with Trinidad'.⁶⁰

Low's 1897 Crown lands report was his final admission of

⁶⁰ CO295/384: Jerningham to Chamberlain, 10 Jan. 1898, enc.
Low to Jerningham, 10 Dec. 1897.

failure. One hundred acres had been alienated in 17 grants, bringing to a total 1148 acres sold in 172 grants.

I greatly regret again to record my disappointment at the indifference of the peasants to their own and their Island's future welfare.⁶¹

The London officials were exuberant. They agreed to Jerningham's proposal of a Commission, chaired by Low, comprising residents of both islands, to advise on the best way to effect the complete Union. Chamberlain's reply asked that, on the Trinidad side, there should be 'a disposition to make the terms of union as favourable to Tobago as the representatives of that island could reasonably expect'.⁶²

VIII.7 COMPLETE UNION BETWEEN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Although the Low Commission apparently made generous suggestions for Tobago's immediate development, the British officials decided that such substantial expenditure should be spread over time.⁶³ Steam and telegraph communication, the most urgent needs, were allowed to wait because of the high cost to Trinidad. Knollys, the Acting Governor, suggested that the Colony be called '"Trinidad", Tobago being a district

⁶¹ CO295/385: Jerningham to Chamberlain, 14 Apr. 1898, enc. Low to Col. Sec., 5 Apr. 1898.

⁶² CO295/384: Chamberlain to Jerningham, 22 Mar. 1898. The Commission's Rept., dated 14 Apr. 1898, was received in the Col. Office, but no copy has been found after a diligent search in the libraries and archives of the UK and Trinidad and Tobago.

⁶³ CO295/385: Chamberlain to Jerningham, 28 June 1898.

only', but Wingfield insisted that it be Trinidad and Tobago.⁶⁴ The Tobago land tax was raised from 5d to 6d per acre, and the Colonial Office satisfied all classes by abolishing licenses for animals.

The assumption of the Low Commission was that Tobago's debt of £9203 (on 31 December 1897) would be borne by Britain. An imperial grant of £5000 was made to Trinidad to cover its loan to Tobago, but Chamberlain deemed any further imperial payments 'inadmissible'. He refused to sanction the loan of £10,000 for roads, and argued that the liability for the advance of £4500, which was made in anticipation of it, should be accepted by the Trinidad and Tobago Treasury.⁶⁵

The new Order-in-Council⁶⁶ establishing the Union with effect from 1 January 1899, was read, on 22 November 1898, from the Scarborough Court House steps, to a favourable crowd, by Sir Hubert Jerningham.

By 1897, in both private and official circles, it was envisaged that Tobago would supply the Port of Spain market with vegetables and meat, which were then imported from Venezuela.⁶⁷ In 1900, the only steamer plying to Tobago was the Royal Mail packet, but a regular coastal steam service was

⁶⁴ CO295/386: Knollys to Chamberlain, 19 July 1898, & minutes.

⁶⁵ CO295/385: Chamberlain to Jerningham, 28 June 1898; Jerningham to Chamberlain, 3 Mar. 1898; reply, 12 Apr. 1898.

⁶⁶ CO299/157: Council Paper No. 177, Trinidad Royal Gazette, 8 Dec. 1898.

⁶⁷ CO295/385: Jerningham to Chamberlain, 25 Apr. 1898. CO295/388: Jerningham to Chamberlain, 24 Nov. 1898; Meaden [1898]; Howard to Selborne, 28 Nov. 1898.

started in 1901 and the telegraph was installed in 1906. Land was purchased in 1899 for a Government Stock Farm and a Botanic Station, to promote stock rearing and agriculture.

A few months after the commencement of the Union, the Tobago dominant class, with a few persons from the middle strata, petitioned for improved roads, a coastal steam service linking Tobago and Trinidad, the telegraph, secondary schools etc. Ironically, the plantocrats, with power in their hands before 1876, had squandered their political and fiscal capital, and had effected none of these necessary services. Olivier minuted on the dangers of 'petting[,] coddling and spoiling the lesser Island out of the pocket of the larger'.⁶⁸

Complaints against excessive centralization of administration in Trinidad, and of 'Cinderella' status for Tobago, began soon after. In 1901, the Tobago Warden, J. J. Rousseau, asked for higher status and greater independence of action than other Wardens. The senior Trinidad officials and those in London all disagreed. The Warden of Tobago was to have the same status as all other Wardens. Rousseau was moved from Government House, which was repaired and reserved for the Governor, the Chief Justice and Heads of Departments on official visits.⁶⁹ However, under changed circumstances, this

⁶⁸ CO295/392: Jerningham to Chamberlain, 5 May 1899, enc. petition from 'the undersigned landowners, professional men, and merchants resident in ... Tobago'; CO295/395: Howard (WI Rubber Plantation Syndicate) to Chamberlain, 12 July 1899; Olivier's minute, 17 July. All their requests, except the steam service, had been discussed in Tobago long before 1884.

⁶⁹ CO295/404: Moloney to Chamberlain, 26 Sept. 1901, & Encs.; Chamberlain to Moloney, 23 Oct. 1901.

interpretation of the terms of the Union was challenged and overthrown in the latter half of the twentieth century.

VIII.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the changing class configuration of Tobago, resulting from the joint effects of the collapse of sugar and the annexation to Trinidad. It shows that, between 1884 and 1900, two major public issues - the Union with Trinidad, and the development strategy for Tobago - were integrally connected to the interests of the classes and strata constituting Tobago society.

The crash of sugar, the bankrupt Exchequer and the annexation posed several dilemmas for the dominant class. Decreases in all sources of revenue were disastrous for the viability of a separate Tobago Government, which in turn was critical to the survival, power and class strategy of the old planters and merchants, who needed to influence state policy in their favour. The majority of the planters, old and new, and the merchants, recognizing that they would be stronger under a separate Government, rejected the Union. The senior officials, whose careers and influence were threatened by the more numerous Trinidad bureaucracy, also preferred a separate administration. (New officials were appointed to head all the Tobago sub-departments after 1899.) The dominant class tried to increase production, extricate Tobago from debt and dissolve the Union.

If anyone was capable of doing so, it was Commissioner Low, whose diligence was admirable. However, even he admitted

that the system was unviable in the short term, and he retreated from opinions which, with the planters and merchants, he had firmly held until 1897. Low's abandonment of his former views cannot be seen as arising out of his conflicts with some of the dominant class. His appears to have been an honest appraisal of the situation, and the Low Commission, appointed to advise on complete union (1898), seems to have negotiated terms so favourable for Tobago that the Colonial Office opposed such high initial expenditure.

The expanding middle strata were divided on the Union. Some of the coloureds sided with the planters and merchants; but several, along with the black segment of the middle strata, supported it. As Low remarked in December 1893, the teachers were among the main supporters of the Union. Hemmed in by low salaries, limited resources, and little room for political manoeuvre, as the Bowhill affair demonstrated, the teachers stood to benefit from better salaries and opportunities for training.⁷⁰ In December 1897, Low acknowledged that education had been grossly neglected.

It was the labouring class that emerged most successfully from the demise of sugar and the annexation, both of which were to their advantage. The collapse of sugar enhanced their power as metayers; by 1897, since 95% of the canes were ratoons, they had succeeded in occupying estate lands, while not planting new canes. They also gained increased ownership

⁷⁰ The Moravian missionaries reported for 1901 that the schools were better staffed, inspection was regular, there was more supervision and 'the teachers have benefited considerably by the incorporation with Trinidad'. Periodical Accts. (2nd series) 5 (1902-4):114-5.

of cheap cleared land, as the planters were obliged to sell in order to survive; and they gained access to abandoned lands forfeited to the Crown. Moreover, annexation allowed them cheaper imports via Trinidad and a large export market, of which they took advantage, despite the need for more frequent steam communication. The loss to the merchants, the planters and the Government was a boon to the Tobago populace.

The second major issue, the development strategy, also registered a gain to the labouring class, who were clearly bent on becoming primarily smallholders independent of the estates. Hay, Rayner and Low all agreed on the need to 'create' a peasantry, as the basis of economic recovery. On this, even the planters concurred, though their desire was for a smallholding proletariat, a contradiction in terms. The planters saw the creation of such a class as essential in arresting migration, so making more labour available. The officials saw it as the means whereby the abandoned lands could be used, to produce 'economic' export crops for the foreign market. To the planters, this was acceptable, once steady labour was available to them; to the officials, it was the way to raise the purchasing power of the residents, increase trade, restore the merchants, and boost the revenue.

Thus, the Crown lands programme was pivotal to the survival of the dominant class. If it succeeded and revenue increased, the administration would survive, the merchants prosper, and there would have been less objection to state-supported loans for planters. Ironically, all sections of the dominant class were committed to the creation of a class,

whose ownership of land ensured that it would not be a proletariat, giving steady labour to the estates. However, the plan could only succeed in the long term, while the short-term viability of the dominant class was at stake.

Between 1847 and 1897, there was a marked change in the attitude of Colonial Office officials towards the peasantry. Having initially considered plantation agriculture as equivalent to 'civilization' and prosperity for the BWI, by the 1890s they favoured the strengthening of the peasantry, while not abandoning the planters [Lobdell 1988; Holt 1992]. They were firmly supported by the 1897 Royal Commission:

[N]o reform affords so good a prospect for the permanent welfare in the future of the West Indies as the settlement of the labouring population on the land as small peasant proprietors⁷¹

Therefore, production by the labouring class for the Trinidad market, begun with clandestine trade since the 1870s (Ch. 4), received the powerful endorsement of the British officials, and this weighed heavily in the local balance of forces.

However, to Low's chagrin, the labouring class desired to be peasants on its own terms, preferring cheaper, more accessible land to the remote Crown lands, and short-term crops for the Trinidad market to long-term crops for the metropole. The salutary lessons of development planning without popular consent are clear! Precisely because the peasants were expanding on their own initiative, depending on family and community labour, and not on the state, they were in a stronger position than the planters. Several requests for

⁷¹ WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, pp. 16-17.

loans to planters were ignored, as was the central factory, so essential to profitable sugar cultivation. Thus, the demise of the old planters was rapid. By 1905, of 101 estates, only 33 were owned by old planter families; the McCalls owned only one [Collens 1906:205-6].

The early decades of the 20th century saw the flowering of a peasantry, alongside estates, most of which were owned by recent small investors. By 1935, 95% of the labouring population owned or rented land, and virtually all had sources of income apart from wage labour on roads or on estates.⁷² By 1936, the number of properties under 10 acres had almost doubled from 3988 in 1897, to 7714.⁷³ The expansion of the smallholders meant that far more land was cultivated than had been under crops in the 19th century - in 1928, 41,640 acres, as opposed to 10,000 acres or less.⁷⁴ Cocoa replaced sugar as the principal export crop; but of the 12,000 acres under cocoa in 1939, 8000 were in holdings less than 50 acres in size [Orde-Browne 1939, App. III]. In 1939, Orde-Browne reported that the main wage earners were employees in the Public Works Department, nearly all of whom were also agricultural producers, while 'a large proportion' of estate properties were held by 'peasant cultivators', who were 'well established' and 'mainly self-supporting'. Tobago presented

⁷² Rept. of the Wages Advisory Board, Council Paper No. 88, 1936.

⁷³ District Administration Repts. for 1936, App. 1, Council Paper No. 78, 1937.

⁷⁴ District Administration Repts. for 1928, Council Paper No. 74, 1929.

'a spectacle of former great plantation activity which has dwindled since the decline of sugar' [ibid.:124-5]. Thus, throughout the century after 1838, the majority of the labouring class avoided becoming proletarians depending exclusively on wages [Craig 1988:8-11].

Low revenue, an unviable administration and a disappointing Crown lands programme allowed the Colonial Office to have its way in unifying Trinidad and Tobago. This time, the main, but unwitting, ally of the Colonial Office was the labouring class, rapidly becoming an independent peasantry.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

IX.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the findings of the study in the light of our two objectives, as stated in Chapter 1. It revisits the 'flight from the estates' debate briefly. It outlines a possible line of comparison between Tobago and Grenada, that is suggested by the hypothesis tested, and indicates other directions for further research. It assesses the limitations and accomplishments of this work.

IX.2 THE CHANGING SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF TOBAGO

As a case study in macro-sociological history, this work analysed the major social groupings in Tobago over time. Starting with the slavery period and the 1830s in particular, we described the changing social configuration as it was structured in the conditions following firstly, the Emancipation of 1838, and secondly, the collapse of the sugar economy in the 1880s and the annexation to Trinidad.

There was a dominant class of planters, lessees, merchants, and officials which, by 1862, included both coloureds and blacks. The rise of a monopolizing tendency (the McCall/Gillespie combine) within it after 1863, and the intra-class conflicts which this engendered, were discussed.

The collapse of the combine and the subordination of the dominant class to the Colonial Office officials and to the Trinidad dominant class were analysed in Chapters 7 and 8.

There was clearly a central conflict between the two major classes - the dominant class and the labouring class. The former were largely capitalists without capital. The latter, labourers who were not proletarians, for whom the wage was not a wage (sole means of subsistence), were engaged in a multiplicity of occupations, among which metayage predominated after 1855.

Chapter 5 eloquently showed that metayage was a metaphor for the reciprocal compromises in the struggles between the dominant and labouring classes. The planters introduced metayage to lower costs and as an incentive to production. It was also a means of narrowing the options of the labourers, who had defected to a greater extent than previously from regular estate labour, in the late 1840s. However, in spite of (and perhaps because of) the heavy burdens borne by the metayers in the production of sugar, the metayers used their position on the terrain of the estates to maximize the benefits to themselves from access to land for provisions, to minimize the benefits to the planters, and to secure a near complete autonomy over the labour process.

As a result, partly because of the metayers' strategies, partly because of the structural impediments to efficiency in a situation of backward technology and small-scale cultivation (the cost of labour for harvesting was prohibitive to most metayers who may have wished to increase their holdings above

4 acres), metayage did not allow the planters to accumulate sufficient surplus to detach themselves from either the stranglehold of the Gillespies, or from metayage itself.

However, metayage was one of the mechanisms which permitted differentiation within the labouring class; a small minority of 'large' metayers emerged, some of whom became planters by the 1880s.

In the 1880s, the metayage system reached a profound crisis, made more pronounced by the intervention of Sir John Gorrie, Chief Justice from 1889. The crisis of metayage reflected conflicts central to the social system - over class, colour, commerce, justice, state policy and production.

Neither the dominant nor the labouring class succeeded in realizing their aims by 1884. The planters, as elsewhere in the region, desired to create a proletariat, dependent on wages from the estates, on whose services they could rely. The labourers desired to increase their autonomy, although most of them were locked in a symbiotic relationship with the planters. This was shown, first, in their struggle to control their living arrangements, which is why there was an exodus from estate residence by 1855, and why the ownership of houses featured so prominently in the patterns of property ownership by 1882 (Chs. 3 and 4). Secondly, it was shown in the desire for land, either as owners or as occupiers, which runs like a red thread through this story. They also pursued skilled trades, huckstering and shopkeeping as avenues of social mobility.

The metayers succeeded in creating several degrees of

freedom for themselves. They eroded the profitability of the estates by poor husbandry, while gaining access to land and to petty landowning. Though, as Chapters 3, 4 and 8 indicate, an independent peasantry was still rudimentary by the 1880s, the labouring class was poised to gain from the annexation to Trinidad, and succeeded in enhancing their position as independent producers by 1900, with minimal assistance from the state. The dominant class, particularly the planters within it, having controlled the state from 1764 (barring the French conquests of 1783-1791 and 1802-3), squandering its resources and promoting their class interests, found themselves after 1884 hamstrung by lack of revenue and consequent loss of power. The more they needed the resources of the state, the less could they avail themselves of them.

The dominant class was riven by a conflict between the larger and smaller planters. All were allies of the British merchants, but the smaller planters and merchants struggled unsuccessfully to free themselves from the galling yoke of metropolitan dominance. As producers, they remained, except for a small minority, tied to sugar, unable to finance a more efficient method of its production, unable to diversify, and dependent for their survival as planters on relationships which were destroying them as planters. In the political sphere, the larger planters were overwhelmingly prone, faced with the challenge from the black labourers who rebelled in 1876, to surrender state power to the Crown; the smaller planters and the middle strata disagreed.

A noteworthy aspect of the dynamics of power was the role

of the Colonial Office. Formal power did not coincide either with the capacity or the will to exercise it. The Colonial Office officials seldom used their veto power over unjust legislation and policies after the 1840s. As had occurred particularly from the 1820s, there was a recurrent, acrimonious conflict between the majority of the dominant class and the executive. The acquiescence of the Colonial Office, and the refusal or inability of most Lt.-Governors to oppose unjust laws and policies, converted the metropolitan rulers into the allies of the dominant class. But the London officials played a waiting game, opting for peace with the planters unless 'imperial interests' were threatened. They sought, by pressure on bankrupt Assemblies, and by playing on the fears of the whites and coloureds about the black labouring class, prone to revolt, to exact a change of constitution to Crown rule. The planters fell into this trap, which offered neither aid nor loans. Under Crown rule, the planters, merchants and the administration were allowed to wither away.

The irony is that after the annexation to Trinidad (1889), the thrust of the Hay and Low administrations was to place the burden of restoring the administration and the dominant class on the labourers' shoulders. The intention was to settle on the Crown lands people who would grow export crops, which would increase the revenue, improve local purchasing power and restore the merchants, whose business had been eroded by the customs union with Trinidad. Increased revenue would make the administration viable and allow it to

arrange advances for the impoverished planters, who could not afford the costs of upgrading the sugar estates or of diversifying. It was a long-term strategy needing to produce results in the short term.

Once again, the labouring class did not conform to what was intended. Preferring cheap estate lands to remote Crown lands, short-term crops for the Trinidad market rather than long-term crops for export to Britain, and preferring the expected benefits of the Union to the known evils of a separate administration, the labourers frustrated the reform plan. Many remained metayers, planting no new canes, while advancing their own interests through access to estate land and increased ownership of smallholdings.

Thus, the interests of the dominant and labouring classes, concerning the recovery plan and the Union with Trinidad, conflicted. The impotence of the dominant class, the unviability of the Tobago administration (partly because of the degrees of freedom exercised by the labouring class), and the strong hand of the Colonial Office,¹ were the chief factors that led to the incorporation of Tobago into a formal Union with Trinidad in 1899.

Wage labour is the dominant form of labour control and appropriation of surplus in the capitalist world economy. Throughout, we argued that Tobago was capitalist, although

¹ Tightened control by the Colonial Office continued in Joseph Chamberlain's tenure as Secretary of State (1895-1903). He used the need for economic relief in the Sugar Depression to extend Crown rule in the BWI; many hybrid constitutions (with elected elements in the legislature) were replaced by direct rule [Amery 1951, 4:247-9].

non-wage forms predominated over wage labour after 1838, the metayers themselves being temporary employers of wage labour, usually at wages twice that paid by the planters (Ch. 5). One of the victories of the labourers who remained in Tobago, in the context of their widespread access to land, their autonomy over production, and capital shortage for the planters, was to prevent their own conversion into a proletariat. This was the general trend for the century after 1838 (Ch. 8). Thus, the labourers' strategies conditioned the ways in which capitalism was locally instituted, both before and after 1838.

We delineated the coloured and black blocs of the middle strata, some of whom succeeded, over time, in becoming lessees and planters, both before and after 1884. They were often the allies of the smaller planters before 1884. Their desire for greater access to state power, which was removed from their grasp by the constitutional changes of 1874 and 1876, was thwarted. After 1884, they promoted investment projects; but seemingly, without success. The teachers, many of them black, were more vocal from the 1880s; they used the power of the petition to record the support of the labourers for the Union with Trinidad, and benefited from it.

We have broken away from the view of Caribbean societies as typified by white, brown and black strata until after World War II.² There were contradictory tendencies towards exclusion of non-whites, and intermarriage with them, among

² But see the typology of stratification systems in Lowenthal [1972, Ch. 3]; also Braithwaite [1975] who shows the changing class/colour patterns of Trinidad in the 1950s.

the leading whites in the 1830s. Because of the attrition of whites, an uneasy alliance between whites and coloureds was formed by the 1850s and consolidated in later decades. Blacks penetrated the upper echelons of the society, as well as the middle strata, and there was differentiation within the largely black labouring class. Closer study of other moribund plantation colonies may reveal the sociological importance of coloureds and blacks in the dominant classes.³

The central dynamics in the changing society was the struggle for the control over labour. It was so on the eve of Emancipation and it continued to be so until 1900. As the metayage crisis revealed, it suffused the fabric of social life. The class conflicts and alliances were mediated by colour, such that one cannot separate class and colour as joint factors. In the final analysis, the labouring class was overwhelmingly black, and expressed its grievances in terms of this fact. The dominant class was white and coloured, with a sprinkling of blacks; they saw their class interests as needing preservation from the blacks, which is why the leading planters resorted to Crown rule and keeping the blacks disenfranchised, after the 1876 rebellion. Henry Taylor at the Colonial Office correctly perceived the psychology of class and colour in the BWI, in devising a strategy for seizing state control from the planters.

The role of gender in the social process was examined. Gender was important to the division of labour and skill, both before and after 1838; it was also important in the mobility

³ Cf. Casimir on the 'mulatto oligarchy' in Dominica [1981].

patterns of the coloureds. It was a powerful factor discriminating within the occupational groups we designated as Class III (corresponding roughly to the labouring class), between the upwardly mobile and the lowest paid; the latter were usually females. It is remarkable that, although married women were prominent among those completely withdrawing from estate labour after 1838, women bore the brunt of agrarian production in Tobago, comprising 60% of such labourers at the end of the century. However, by 1901, in Class II, roughly corresponding to the middle strata, women had made significant inroads, even taking into consideration the inconsistencies in the data (Ch. 6). Gender was also important in differentiating the landowners (Ch. 4). Although there were marked differences between the pattern of land ownership in the Windward District, on the one hand, and the Middle and Leeward Districts, on the other, within each district, male ownership predominated; and as the size, number of plots and value of holdings increased, female ownership sharply decreased. Female property owning was recognized in 1879 by legislation to protect the rights of married women who had acquired property in their husbands' absence. Gender was therefore constitutive of the way classes were structured, since it was highly correlated with the possession of (and separation from) the most important means and conditions of production and distribution.

IX.3 THE WORKING HYPOTHESIS RE-EXAMINED

Tobago's history after 1763 was constituted and shaped by its insertion into the changing capitalist world economy. Its period of profitability in the 1790s coincided with the decline of Haiti as the foremost Caribbean sugar producer. Its decline after 1800 and its marginality after 1848 were similarly affected and shaped by the conditions of the world economy of which the BWI were a part.

Our hypothesis took dependence in a global capitalist economy, which is generated by the literature on development, as the matrix and point of departure for understanding the trajectory of Tobago. However, we argued that dependence and capitalism, singly or together, could not explain why, although all the BWI colonies experienced the Sugar Depression of the late 19th century, Tobago underwent a marked crisis in the 1880s, unlike certain neighbouring colonies.

To explain why and how the crisis occurred, we argued that it was not British capital *per se*, but the source and deployment of the capital invested, that distinguished Tobago, a moribund sugar producer, from a more efficient producer such as Trinidad. Secondly, we posited that the social structure was also important, since there had to be a class or classes able, either to upgrade and restructure the sugar economy, or to diversify the economy, or both. We spelled out two major options available in the 19th century, if Tobago was to avoid succumbing to the crisis. Either a class of estate owners, resident or foreign, with the capital to upgrade estate technology and to pay wages, had to emerge (Option 1); or a

class of planters or larger landowners, or of smallholders, or both, able and efficacious in diversifying, would have made the crucial difference (Options 2A, 2B). These options are not mutually exclusive.

Chapters 4 and 7 relate Option 1 to the first factor, the source and deployment of capital. By 1882, the estates were heavily concentrated in the hands of a combine between the Gillespies, a small London merchant house, and the McCalls, resident planters, merchants, estate attorneys and insurance agents. These firms exercised a near monopoly over credit, advances, production and the transatlantic trade. Only a few estates, usually those owned by residents, succeeded in diversifying from sugar by the 1880s. The McCall/Gillespie combine gained the ascendancy after 1862, following the general abandonment of Tobago estates by the larger British merchants, such as James Ewing and Co. The McCall/Gillespie combine was facilitated by the establishment of the Encumbered Estates Court; and according to Beachey [1957:37-8], the new estate owners reduced expenditure and refused to invest in major improvements. Because Tobago was marginalized in the world sugar economy, Gillespie, Reid and Dunn, its main investors, were smaller merchants, financing muscovado estates; because they were smaller, they all succumbed to the Sugar Depression, and the planters lost their source of credit. Since the near monopoly of Gillespie inhibited both diversification and technological advance, and since these were precisely the factors which determined the extent to which the colonies suffered a crisis in the 1880s [ibid.:60],

our study demonstrates that the source and deployment of capital were crucial in determining the crisis Tobago underwent.

However, this must be amplified in two ways. Firstly, Chapter 5 links the planters' inability to extricate themselves from Gillespie to the metayage system, which produced insufficient surplus on most planters' account. The planters' loss of control over the labour process, and the low level of production were themselves related both to the want of capital and to the power which the metayers wielded on the estates.

Secondly, the ability to attract capital to modernize the estates was related to the size of the colony and to the time of its insertion into the sugar economy. Investors preferred places with large tracts of fertile land, whose soils were not exhausted. Tobago's small size and the fact that its leeward plain, the area most suited to sugar, was already cleared and planted, militated against it. These resource endowments need to be integrated into the explanatory framework, since they are major factors differentiating the colonies.

Since a class of foreign or local investors able and effective in modernizing the sugar industry never emerged (Option 1), we turn to Option 2, that of diversifying the economy.

By the 1880s, there was no class, fraction or stratum effective in diversifying the economy. Though some of the resident planters diversified, the value of alternative

products⁴ was less than 5% of the exports until 1875, after which it rose to 8% in 1880, and 22% in 1885 (Table 46). Before 1884, therefore, the planters were unable to break the stranglehold of monopoly, although they tried to 'cut out' Gillespie as a creditor, and to strengthen their hold over the inter-colonial shipping trade. Although a stratum of landowning shopkeepers, some of them renters of coconut walks, emerged by 1882, they were too small, too insignificant, to effect the necessary diversification. So too was the stratum of homesteaders with plots valued between £5 and £10, and the owners of more than one plot among the smallholders. Although they were socially visible, and probably producing crops other than sugar, they were unable, from their size, their production, and their political incapacity, to effect diversification.

The processes by which Options 2A and 2B were not feasible are thus outlined in the study. Similarly, how and why the dominant class remained tied to the McCall/Gillespie combine, and to an inability to diversify, has been fully explained (Option 1).

The data amply support the hypothesis we offer. However, we recognized in Chapter 1 that these 'factors' were themselves the product of social action and processes, and we argued that, since we had not given to social classes a privileged position, our dialogue with the data would have to make clear how this social configuration was structured.

⁴ We considered that the export data may have under-enumerated the exports, particularly of smallholders.

Chapter 7 shows the economic, political and organizational weaknesses of the smaller coloured and black planters, merchants and lessees, and of the petty shopkeepers, landowners etc. of the middle strata. These would have been the diversifying groups posited for Option 2A. Chapters 3, 5 and 7 discuss the influence of the dominant class over state policy, particularly concerning taxation, land, metayage and immigration. Metayage kept the population near the estates, while abandoned lands nearby were successfully 'annexed' by the planters by the 1850s. The power of the dominant class over the state, on the punitive taxation that pressed heavily on the labouring class, on the availability of land for purchase by labourers, and on the 'truck' system, helps to explain why smallholders effective in accomplishing Option 2B did not emerge.

Thus, the thesis shows the predominant influence of the relative power of classes and fractions of classes, both metropolitan and local, in determining the nature and capacities of all the major classes and strata. The social structure which inhibited the emergence of the classes required for transformation was itself affected by the actions of classes, fractions or class alliances.

This analysis is consistent with the reforms which were needed after 1884. For over four decades, the planters had refused to sell Crown lands to labourers, on the grounds that it would diminish their command over labour. However, in 1884, they urged the sale of Crown lands as the fastest way of 'creating' a peasantry and retaining labour on the island. The

reforms of Commissioner Low were premised on the need both to upgrade the sugar industry technologically, and to diversify agriculture. Thus, Chapter 8 is consistent with the preceding interpretation.

IX.4 'THE FLIGHT FROM THE ESTATES'

We considered the debate among Caribbean historians on the supposed 'flight from the estates' after 1838 (Ch. 3). We argued that the reconstruction of the post-Emancipation experience required a multi-faceted approach which would lift our vision beyond the confines of the debate, to analyse several distinct, parallel, but sometimes interrelated processes. We distinguished *inter alia* between the ownership of independent homes, the movement into villages, access to land, acquisition of freeholds and withdrawal from regular estate labour. We delineated the multiplicity of relations of production and land tenures that obtained before 1855, and the regional variations in these processes. Although the man/land ratio was a fundamental conditioning factor, it did not determine the extent of withdrawal from either estate residence or estate labour.

We suggest a return to the fundamental distinctions between motive, cause, and outcome, since this is a source of confusion in the debate.

IX.5 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Three lines of analysis follow from this study.

IX.5.1 Typology of Paths of Development

First, is the need to delineate a typology of trajectories of development in the Caribbean after Emancipation, starting with the BWI. Best [1968] outlined a typology of 'mature', 'new' and 'mixed' plantation economies (PEs). His schema takes into account all the factors we found significant: (1) the degree of technological upgrading and efficiency in sugar, (2) the extent of diversification from sugar, and (3) the degree to which a peasantry flourished. Tobago does not easily fit Best's schema, since it shared monocultural characteristics with the mature PEs, though most of its land was uncultivated. Because of the late emergence of its peasantry, it became a 'mixed' PE in the early 20th century.

We suggest that Best's schema be amplified to consider the colonies, grouped according to the phases at which they became sugar colonies [cf. Higman 1984a:43]. The 'mixed' PEs also need to be better understood, since by the 1890s there was considerable variation within this category. Account should be taken of the differing strategies of the British merchants investing, and of the many components in what Best terms the 'residential sector'.

IX.5.2 Comparison with Grenada

Secondly, the comparison with Grenada needs to be fully made. Grenada (133 sq. mls) and Tobago (116 sq. mls) are alike in size and topography. Grenada was annexed to France in 1674, and in 1763, like Tobago, it was ceded to Britain by the

Treaty of Paris. In 1779, it reverted to French rule but, by the Treaty of Versailles (1783), Grenada and the Grenadines became British colonies. In 1795, a rebellion of coloured planters and of slaves took place under Julien Fédon, a coloured coffee and cocoa planter. Thousands of slaves joined the rebellion, which was helped by the French, and British rule was restored, only after 16 months, by Sir Ralph Abercrombie in 1796.

In 1763, there were 81 sugar plantations, 208 in coffee, and 21 fallow, but they were relatively small. Cocoa, cotton, tobacco, indigo and other crops were grown, and Grenada was the leading exporter of tropical commodities in the Windward Islands by 1775. By then, there were 125 sugar estates; its sugar exports had also trebled. But the pattern of diverse cultivation continued and in 1824, there were 123 sugar estates, 22 cocoa and coffee, 19 coffee, 4 sugar and cotton and 11 cotton estates [Brizan 1984:27, 93]. Cocoa production doubled in the 1820s, while coffee and cotton became insignificant by 1834 [Higman 1984a:56].

According to Higman [ibid.], the area allocated to slave provision grounds equalled the area under cane. This may indicate a relatively strong 'proto-peasant' base, which may have influenced peasant growth after 1838.

Sugar production and exports plummeted, especially after 1850. By 1856, 47 estates were abandoned and a further 21 by 1866. 'Some abandoned estates were either divided into peasant lots or converted into cocoa production' [Brizan 1984:140]. In 1876, although there were 79 sugar estates, the

technology was more backward than that of Tobago; only 6 ploughs and 7 steam engines were employed. By 1887, the value of sugar exports was £2; they ceased after 1891.⁵ After 1858, cocoa became the principal estate and peasant crop, followed by spices, cotton, ground provisions and fruit.

Significantly, Momsen states that after 1855, there was an earlier transition to tree crops in Grenada than elsewhere in the Windward Islands [cf. Marshall 1963:328].

This came about because the peasant farmers ... were not only allowed but were positively encouraged by the planters to occupy former plantation land and grow tree crops, often on a share-cropping basis. The speedy development of this successful relationship between the plantocracy and the new peasantry ensured Grenada greater prosperity during this period than was possible in the other Windward Islands

[Momsen 1970:348-9]

The growth of the smallholders was striking. By 1881, out of 9000 adult males, 3000 owned lots of 1 to 50 acres [Knight 1946:45]. D. Morris, author of the subsidiary report on agriculture for the West India Royal Commission, stated:

The substitution of cacao for cane in Grenada has rendered the island entirely independent of sugar. This is the only West Indian colony of importance where this is actually the case. While there are several large cacao properties ..., it is a special feature of Grenada that the labouring classes own a considerable number of small holdings. There are 5,600 holdings under 5 acres, covering a total area of 8,338 acres; 843 holdings from 5 to 20 acres, covering a total area of 7,231 acres; and 205 holdings from 20 to 100 acres, covering a total area of 8,830 acres.

⁵ WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, App. A, p. 110.

Quoting a Mr Gurney, an authority, Morris showed that the extension of cacao had been '"mainly through the labouring classes obtaining by purchase small holdings of land and planting up the same in cacao"'. By 1893, cocoa accounted for £281,004 or 89.8% of the value of Grenada's exports.⁶

Grenada appears to have had after 1858 no consignee merchant house which could tie its sugar planters to moribund production, as occurred in Tobago. Nor was there a class of modernizing planters for the sugar estates. Thus, Option 1 was not fulfilled, and investment was deployed in the direction of diversification.

Brizan mentions a 'rising class of merchants', estate attorneys, officials and professionals, who 'invariably bought up estates of absentee planters as well as other bankrupt estates, and ... could most appropriately be called the new planting interest'. He noted too that after 1850, 'The vacuum created by the exodus of White planters and attorneys was now being filled by the rich Coloureds, the merchants and the professional men' [1984:201-2].

Sketchy though this is, it suggests that Option 2A was fulfilled in Grenada through a local class of planters, who diversified abandoned estates. There was also a rising peasantry who, by 1897, had become the foremost cocoa producers, as well as growers of other crops. Thus, Option 2B was also fulfilled.

The marked difference in outcome between Tobago and Grenada during the Sugar Depression is accounted for by this

⁶ WI Royal Com. Rept., 1897, App. A, pp. 110-112.

outline, which gives remarkable corroboration to our hypothesis, in keeping with the logic of our research design. However, further research is needed to show precisely how these processes occurred. Was the greater initial diversity of production in Grenada in the early 19th century a critical factor? Did the smaller British merchants invest in Tobago and not in Grenada? If so, why? The Grenada coloureds were more numerous than those in Tobago in the late 18th century. They were politically stronger, as their rebellion under Fédon shows. As a group, they were also wealthier. A few became sugar planters in the early 19th century, but many acquired cotton, coffee and cocoa estates, usually smaller in size than sugar plantations, and less dependent on overseas credit. Some established themselves as merchants, hucksters and shopkeepers [Cox 1984:62-75]. Were these the groups that produced the new merchant/planter class of whom Brizan writes; or did some emerge from among the ex-slaves? What were the mechanisms which allowed an earlier and stronger peasantry to emerge in Grenada⁷ than in Tobago in the 19th century? Were the large acreages devoted to slave provision grounds a factor in this process? Did the free coloured peasantry which existed during slavery contribute to this? [ibid.:66] What were the sources of credit for the Grenada planters and peasants? What were the class/colour groupings over time? A return to the primary sources is needed for answers to these questions.

⁷ The 1883 Royal Commission singled out Jamaica and Grenada as the places in which 'prosperous peasant proprietors ... appreciably increasing the exports' were most advanced. Rept. of the Royal Com. ..., 1884, Pt. IV.

IX.5.3 Further Research on Tobago

The third need is for a careful study of Tobago in the early twentieth century, delineating the class/colour structure, the relations of production, including their regional variations, and considering the character, and the trajectory, of the class of smallholders who became major producers of cocoa and food crops after 1900. More work on its cultural anthropology is also needed.

IX.6 LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY

Throughout, we indicated the limitations of the sources, the shortcomings of our procedures, and the questions that are unanswered. The major other limitation of this work is the lack of a clear historical anthropology. More details on culture building, on family life, and agrarian practices, particularly the institution of 'family land', would have made the study more complete.

The divergent interests of the dominant and labouring classes, and the fact that ultimately the labourers benefited from the crisis, while the dominant class was crippled by it, remind us that discussions on 'development' and 'underdevelopment' should take account of class differentials.

The strength of this work lies in its understanding of the class/colour configuration through time, in its description of the processes which produced these structures, and in its attempt to explain a major crisis. It shows how the labouring class consistently maximized its freedom and refused to conform to expectations from above; and how the choices

faced by all the actors were often, regardless of their desires or motives, between evils of one kind or another. It is gratifying to have helped to integrate Tobago more fully into the family of Caribbean studies, and into the field of historical sociology.

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II.2 Trinidad and Tobago

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III. ARCHIVAL RECORDS

III.1 UNITED KINGDOM

1. Archives of the Library, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Surrey

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2. Council for World Missions Archives, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Library, London University

London Missionary Society (LMS), Tobago, 1807-1813.

3. Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library, London

Tobago Population Censuses, 1851, 1881, 1891; Censuses of the Colony of Trinidad and Tobago, 1901-1931. (The censuses for 1844 & 1861 are in the CO285 files for those years; the 1871 census is in the House of Assembly Minutes, CO286/26, 1871.)

4. Methodist Missionary Society Archives, SOAS Library, London University

Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS), Tobago Letters, 1817-1890.

5. Moravian Missionary Society (MMS) Archives, Muswell Hill, London

- a. Papers and Correspondence, Tobago, 1784-1803.
- b. Diary of the Negro Congregation at Tobago, July 1800-April 1802.
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- d. Sundry other newspapers and documents related to the West India missions.

6. The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

- a. The Ellice Papers (MS. 15137, 15138, 15181-2).
- b. The Rennie Papers (MS. 19818).
- c. The Charles Steuart Papers (MS. 5027-5039).

7. Public Record Office, Kew, Surrey

Several files in the series CO285, CO286, CO287, CO288, CO289, CO290 (Tobago), CO321 (Windward Islands), CO295, CO298, CO299, CO300 (Trinidad and Tobago), CO318 (West Indies), CO441 (Encumbered Estates Court), cited in the footnotes.

8. Rhodes House Library, Oxford University

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9. Somerset House, London

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III.2 ARCHIVAL RECORDS, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

1. National Archives, Port of Spain, Trinidad

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- b. The News (Scarborough), 1892-1893.

2. The Red House, Port of Spain, Trinidad

Tobago Protocol of Deeds, 1889-1890.

3. Tobago Archives, Scarborough, Tobago

- a. Lt.-Governor's Memoranda, 1832-1835.
- b. Lt.-Governor's Letter Book, 1833-1835.
- c. Governor's Letter Book, 1836-1838.
- d. Lt.-Governor's Letters, Tobago, 1836-1838.
- e. Fair Minutes of House of Assembly, Tobago, 1849-1851.
- f. Tobago Vote Book, 1862-1870.
- g. Return of Immigrants to the Windward District, 31 December 1877.
- h. File entitled 'Prison Rules and Regulations', including Rules of the Tobago Mutual Benefit Society and documents (misfiled) on the sales of land in the Encumbered Estates Court, 1885.

4. University of the West Indies Library, St Augustine, Trinidad

- a. M. J. Herskovits Collection of Folk Songs.
- b. The Young Manuscripts (listed at I. above).

III.3 ARCHIVAL RECORDS, BARBADOS

- a. Colonial Secretary's Office (CSO). Letters in Home, Foreign and Colonial. Miscellaneous bundles, 1854-66, 1863-64, 1870-71, 1874-75, 1854-69, 1876-78.
- b. Barbados Newspapers (see below).

III.4 ARCHIVAL RECORDS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
The Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Two manuscripts by Dr J. McTear (listed at I. above).

IV. NEWSPAPERS

IV.1 The British Newspaper Library, Colindale

Daylight (Scarborough), Nov. 1884-June 1885.
The News (Scarborough), Aug. 1876, 1881-1888.
The Tobago Chronicle and Royal Gazette, Vol. VI, 1839.
The Tobago Gazette and West Indian News, 1839-1840.

IV.2 University of the West Indies Library, St Augustine, Trinidad

Port of Spain Gazette, 1889-92 (microfilm).

IV.3 Barbados Archives

Barbados Agricultural Reporter, 1876-79.
Barbados Globe, 1876-1897.
Barbados People and West Indian Gazette, March-August 1876.
The Official Gazette, 6 March 1876.
The Times, 1876-1885, 1887-1894.
The West Indian, 1876-77.

V. PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

The Turpin Family Papers on Charlotteville estate, Tobago (selected documents which the author was allowed to see in 1983).

VI. INTERVIEWS

Crosby, Mrs. I. Retired store clerk and bookkeeper.
Interview with author. Rockly Vale, Tobago, 20 July
1993.

Dalrymple, Miss I. and Mrs A. Cameron. Retired seamstress
and housewife. Interview with author. Scarborough,
Tobago, 15 July 1992.

Elder, Dr. J. D. Ethnomusicologist/anthropologist.
Interview with author. Scarborough, Tobago, 24 May 1983.

Guillaume, Mrs. E. Retired Community Development Officer.
Unrecorded conversation with author. Scarborough, Tobago,
22 April 1983.

Henry, Mrs. D. Retired District Nurse. Interview with
author. Diego Martin, Trinidad, 9 July 1992.

Leacock, Mr. G. Amateur archivist and folklorist.
Unrecorded conversation with author. Scarborough, Tobago,
3 February 1994.

Thompson, Mrs. D. Researcher. Unrecorded conversations
with author. St Augustine and Arima, Trinidad, 1, 9
April 1993.