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THE BITTER OF THE SWEET:
SUGAR PRODUCTION AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT ON ST. KITTS

by

Phyllis H. Fleming, M.A.

A thesis submitted to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

October 1987

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation addresses the question of underdevelopment on St. Kitts, one of the few remaining Caribbean islands where the production of sugar still dominates the economy. It is argued that underdevelopment on this ex-British colony emerged from the relations involved in the historic allocation of local resources to the production of sugar for export. Using a historical materialist framework, it is demonstrated how post-Columbian St. Kitts, the creation of metropolitan mercantile enterprise, became integrated into the emerging capitalist system during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It also depicts the forces which relegated the island to peripheral capitalist development, while transforming the modes of production.

The study serves to demonstrate the process by which British capitalists expropriated the surpluses derived from the production of sugar while ignoring the needs of the local working classes. In this focus on the internal as well as external factors which contributed to underdevelopment on St. Kitts, the role played by the state and racial discrimination in facilitating the process is emphasized. The analysis also focuses on working class resistance and the ensuing class struggles which culminated in the nationalization of the industry. The conclusions of this analysis are used to criticize the implementation of the dependent capitalist development strategy (industrialization by invitation), in the wake of persistent underdevelopment on St. Kitts. It is argued this ahistorical approach which promotes foreign capitalist domination, only serves to reinforce and increase the legacy of plantation sugar production - underdevelopment.

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"The story of sugar is not sweet at all."
(Dunn 1973).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In "A Dozen Reasons Why To Invest in St. Kitts and Nevis"[1], Government incentives for foreign investors include: a healthy investment climate and the opportunity to make unusual profits; a stable political environment, with a Government committed to democratic parliamentary rule with a free enterprise system; guaranteed investment protection; a workforce of friendly, easily-trained people possessing a high degree of manual dexterity; low wage rates tied to productivity, averaging US\$0.67 per hour; quick, low-cost set-up - readily available factory shells or land; quick official action to cut through red tape and guarantee industry's smooth flow of operation; and 100 percent exemption on corporate income tax for up to fifteen years, with follow-on tax exemptions up to 75 percent based on the proportion of earnings generated by exports.

These incentives are part of a strategy aimed at generating a basis for national development. They are included in the Government's plans to diversify the agricultural-based economy and make the sugar industry (the historical 'backbone' of the economy) more efficient. This aggressive promotion of St. Kitts and Nevis as a haven for foreign capital's establishment of light industries and even tourism is sanctioned by international development agencies as 'sound' development strategy (See for example, World Bank Report on St. Kitts 1983 and USAID in Caribbean Business, September and October 1983).

Such a blue-print for development which emphasizes a key role

for foreign capitalists in the shift from mono-agricultural production is not new. In fact, the Caribbean's newest nation is merely adopting Arthur Lewis' dependent capitalist development strategy (industrialization by invitation), which has been part of conventional development 'wisdom' for nearly forty years.

St. Kitts, by the mid-1970's, was seen as one of the few Caribbean territories which was seriously out of step with the tourist/light-manufacturing-industry oriented development that dominates the region. Its traditional, domineering sugar industry was being threatened by labour conflicts, increasing costs of production and low and fluctuating prices on the international markets for sugar. Under these circumstances, the Labour Government which had just assumed control of the troubled industry was also being pressured to open up the island's long closed doors to modern capitalist development (Bai, 1981). Pressure came from foreign capitalists and their governments, from the rising petty bourgeois opposition and from the working class (the younger sector in particular), which has a general aversion to labour in the sugar industry. This aversion stems not only from the fact that much of the manual labour in this industry is back-breaking and low paid, but also because it is tainted with the degrading history of slavery.

The foreign investors were seeking special concessions for the establishment and operation of assembly-for-export type industries. St. Kitts' size, proximity to North America and its large supply of labour were considered attractive by foreign investors. Not only was there clamour for more 'palatable' jobs,

3

a search for which drew many Kittitians away to the United States Virgin Islands and North America, but there was also the middle class desire for the metropolitan consumer goods which came with this type of development. A rising petite bourgeoisie in its quest for power emphasized the necessity of opening up the island to foreign capital.

Under these pressures, the island which had remained closed to industrial capitalist development under the regime of the plantocrats, was opened up to 'modernization'. Bai (1981:58) termed this strategy "defensive modernization", an attempt by the Labour Government to stay in power in the face of local and foreign pressure.

The 'opening-up' under the Labour Government was rather limited, however: an electronics assembly company, one footwear and two brasierre factories were established (Manifesto of the St. Kitts-Nevis Labour Party 1975). A more aggressive strategy for dependent capitalist production came after the petty bourgeois based party, The People's Action Movement (PAM), gained control of the state in 1980.

While manufacturing and tourism ventures are increasing, sugar, now as then, still 'has the economy by the throat' (an expression aptly coined by C.L.R. James). Sugar cane is still grown on some 90 per cent of the arable land and employs over one-third of the labour force (Economic Report 1985). In fact, it has been the main economic activity since the middle of the seventeenth century.

This study argues that it is the relations involved in the historic production of sugar which have given rise to the

impoverishment of the working classes and the general underdeveloped nature of the island as a whole.

St. Kitts' bid for the more 'modern' dependent capitalist development stems from the increasing concern about the precarious nature of the sugar industry which has dominated the island for so long. In 1982 Chief Minister Simmonds lamented:

Our near total dependence upon the fluctuating fortunes of sugar is a stranglehold upon the reasonable expectations of our people in this decade (Address to the Nation, 28, Feb. 1982).

In 1987, in his annual New Year's message, the Prime Minister, as in previous years, once again lamented the bleak future of the sugar industry and outlined his party's plans for diversification (The Chronicle, 5, January 1987).

The historical legacy of sugar and the social relations involved in its production have made it socially and politically, a highly sensitive commodity. Diversification out of this industry has been an intermittent subject for nearly a century now. The powerful plantocracy made sure, however, that no such ideas materialized to threaten their profitable industry. In fact, as we shall see, sporadically throughout the years even marginal food provision grounds were reclaimed by the planters when the sugar market in Europe expanded. The planters could do this because they owned virtually all the land on the island right up to the time of nationalization. Today, with an over-saturated world market, sugar in St. Kitts is no longer a viable industry. British capitalists and their local counterparts have lost interest, and the insolvent industry is now operated by the state.

Sugar cane lands encompass about 16,000 acres and sugar cane is grown on some 12,000 acres (See Figure 1). This, according to Government estimates, is required to support the export and local quotas which average about 35,000 tons per annum (Agricultural Report 1985). The largely seasonal industry has been the island's main employer of labour since its establishment. By the late 1700's the entire work force, some 16,000 slaves were used to cultivate 11,000 acres (Goveia 1965:121). In 1937, 7,400 persons out of a population of 18,000, or about 44 per cent of the total population, were employed in the industry. In 1985 employment accounted for about one-third of the working population (Department of Agriculture Statistics 1983; Economic Memorandum 1985). The average age of this work force has been increasing steadily. In 1985 more than 50 per cent of the workers in this industry were in the 50 or over age group. Low wages, hard labour and the association with slavery account for labour shortages in the industry. Wages in this industry are still some 30 per cent lower than the national average in spite of 328.6 index increase between 1971 and 1981 (National Agricultural Corporation Statistics 1985; Economic Memorandum 1985).

Sugar accounted for more than 90 per cent of the dollar value of domestic exports between 1930 and 1950, and still accounts for over 60 per cent of all exports (Economic Memorandum 1983; 1985). Fluctuations in the growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), are attributed to the performance of sugar on the world market. The present fiscal problems: a negative account deficit (5 per cent in 1984), growing foreign debts (US\$15.8 million, 21

Figure 1
Land Use on St. Kitts

Source: Bourne, (1980).

per cent of the GDP in 1984), in support of increasingly high levels of consumption, are ~~am~~ seen as related to the deteriorating performance of the sugar industry (Economic Report 1985).

The economic hazards of producing sugar for export have been echoed for decades. At the fortieth conference of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP) in May 1986, delegates, once again noting a "bleak future" for the industry, called for alternative uses of sugar cane. Mr. Edwin Carrington, General Secretary of the ACP Secretariat, declared that, "the sugar industry must be diversified, or ultimately, it goes". (Caribbean Contact May, 1986). This warning comes in light of the tremendous competition from other sweeteners in the post World War Two era and since the 1970's in particular.

At a rate of six cents (United States currency) per pound in 1986, world prices for sugar were at their lowest in real terms since 1930 (ACP Conference 1986; Caribbean Contact May, 1986). A dramatic increase in beet sugar production since World War Two has made Europe and North America, the traditional markets for cane sugar, virtually self-sufficient. In addition, the escalation in the use of high fructose corn syrup and other sugar substitutes since the 1970's has absorbed much of the market for cane sugar. Further saturation of the market has also been brought about by the development of large scale production in new areas in Africa, South America and Asia.

It is estimated that some forty per cent of the market for sugar in the United States, will have been lost during this decade alone. In fact, in January of 1987, the Secretary for Agriculture

in the United States announced that imports of foreign raw sugar would be cut by more than 40 per cent of the 1986 quota. In Europe, sugar production has been increased from eight million to thirteen million tons since 1975 (FAO Agricultural Commodity Reports 1984; Caribbean Contact February 1987). With the accumulation of huge surpluses, Europe has been re-exporting the sugar imported under the Lome Convention Agreement. The Lome Convention Protocol No. 3 replaced the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement (CSA) in 1974 when Britain joined the European Economic Community (EEC). Under these agreements fixed quotas of sugar were and are purchased from ACP states at prices which usually exceed that available on the world market [2]. CSA prices were fixed in relation to the cost of production. Under the Lome Agreement, the EEC sustains ACP sugar at an annually negotiated price, which takes into account "all the relevant economic factors". In 1986 the negotiated price was 16 cents (U.S) per pound, more than two and a half times the London free market price (Caribbean Contact 13, 12). St. Kitts has a sales quota of about 15,000 tons under this agreement. It also has a 12,500 ton quota on the United States market (Economic Report 1985).

The instability of these markets, given the huge world glut threatens the future of sugar in most developing countries. In his 1987 New Year Address, Prime Minister Simmonds of St. Kitts expressed his doubts about the viability of the industry. He claimed that he saw no point in continuing the production of a commodity which obtained six cents (U.S) on the world market, but cost twenty-five cents (U.S) per pound to produce. Market quotas

and prices have been declining; and unlike the CSA, the EEC agreement does not take the cost of production into account.

Under the CSA, St. Kitts had a quota averaging about 33,800 tons per annum from 1947 to 1974. There was no preferential market in the United States, and the export quota averaged about 1,500 tons. The United Kingdom (CSA) quota was reduced by more than half under the EEC agreement in 1974. In 1982 a 15,000 ton quota was obtained on the United States market. This was reduced to 12,500 in 1984, and is expected to continue declining. The domestic quota averages about 2,000 tons and another 2,000 tons or more are sold on Caricom and non-Caricom markets (Economic Report 1984, 1985; Peat et al 1972).

Until 1971 the basic CSA price was 43.50 pounds sterling per ton, with an effective price of 46.50 to 47.50 pounds per ton for St. Kitts. From 1972 to 1974 the negotiated price was 50 pounds per ton with additions of up to 11 pounds per ton for "underdeveloped countries with low total production". The effective price for St. Kitts was consequently, about 61 pounds per ton. Between 1968 and 1972 the world free market price fluctuated between 22 and 70 pounds per ton (Peat et al 1972).

Sales, prices and quotas fluctuate. The markets for Kittitian and other Caribbean sugar remain largely because of deliberate protection, subsidization and stabilization. These are secured through close association between various governments in the ACP states and related multi-national corporations, as well as intensive lobbying.

Perhaps more than any other Caribbean nation, the Kittitian economy is dependent on the fluctuating prices and markets for

sugar. St. Kitts is virtually the only Caribbean island where sugar still maintains its historic stronghold. Other territories have either abandoned the industry (like Antigua), or diversified with tourism or light manufacturing (like Barbados and Jamaica).

Sugar dominance still contributes to continued high levels of external dependence in St. Kitts. Until 1976 the industry was controlled by the Henckell, Du Buisson & Company Limited of London, a subsidiary of C. Czarnikow Limited. In addition to shares, Henckell Du Buisson received 25,000 pounds per year for management services. The company's top executives at the factory in St. Kitts (the General Manager, the Chief Engineer, the Chief Accountant and Chief Chemist), as well as some thirty-two other top employees, were all white expatriates. In addition, the foreign dominated company owned a social centre hall, private tennis courts [3], a golf course, 36 houses for its white expatriate employees, a beach hut and 13 acres of land adjoining the pier (St. Kitts Sugar Commission Report 1967; Peat et al 1972; White Paper 1976). About 90 per cent of the cane lands were controlled by two companies, Thurston and Horsfords of St. Kitts.

The continued integration of the industry in the capitalist world market since nationalization in 1975/76, is apparent in the marketing of the product. Like most primary tropical export commodities, the level of sugar processing and the degree of internal linkages is quite low. The extraction of sucrose from canes has been almost exclusively, the singular focus (See Appendix A for a description of the manufacturing process). Molasses production is really only incidental to sugar production,

although bagasse is sometimes used for fuel. The low level of internal linkages is in sharp contrast with the extent of the integration of the industry into foreign economies and multinational corporations (Thomas 1984).

Sugar cane cultivation and the production of sugar are historically heavily dependent on imports from the centre countries. Fuel, machinery, agricultural equipment (loaders, cranes, tractors and so on), chemicals, herbicides, fertilizers and expertise are all imported. In this small island most of the arable land is devoted to sugar cane. Small farmers have access only to marginal hillside plots which are not suitable for sugar cane cultivation (Merrill 1958; Peat et al 1972; CARDI 1984). [4]. This almost moribund condition in agriculture has seen expanding levels of basic and non-basic food imports over the years. Food imports top the list. With high imports for the sugar and light manufacturing industries, imports exceeded exports by US\$13.7 million in 1984 and \$25 million in 1983 (Economic Report 1984; 1985).

Sugar production is intricately interwoven with the fabric of St. Kitts' history, and that of the Caribbean as a whole. For over three centuries sugar has been the main commodity behind colonial exploitation, capitalist consolidation and subsequent underdevelopment in the region (Thomas 1984a; Williams 1970; Rodney 1981). It has therefore come to be almost synonymous with such concepts as slavery, indenture and the plantation institutions whose marks are still visible, even in those islands where sugar production has ceased to be the principal means of livelihood.

Geographical Setting

In a visit to St. Kitts, one is immediately confronted with the legacy of this history. Acres of green canes dominate the landscape, punctuated by ruins of old wind and steam mills, as well as the modern sugar factory just outside the capital.

St. Kitts is about 68 square miles (176 square kilometres) in size. It is located (Figure 2) in the Leeward Islands of the Eastern Caribbean (17° 20' N., 62° 48' W.) and hosts a population of about 35,104 (1980 census). Colloquially known throughout the leewards as "Sugar City", the island, once noted as the "Mother Colony" of the British colonies, has one of the oldest and until recently, one of the most profitable sugar industries in the area (Edwards 1890; Union Messenger 1930; Goveia 1965; Auty 1975).

The club-shaped island of volcanic origins, is about 23 miles in length with a narrow peninsula extending to the southeast (Figure 3). A mountain range skirted with gentle slopes, which extend to the sea, occupies the centre of the island. The highest peak, Mount Misery, rises to about 3,972 feet and is flanked by Brimstone Hill (779 feet), an eighteenth century fortress also known as the Gibraltar of the West Indies. Ravines or ghauts which serrate the mountains run through settlement areas and into the sea. The hills in the narrow peninsula enclose a large salt pond. The Basseterre Valley and the circle of land forming the slopes of the mountain range encompass most of the arable land on the island. At the summits of the range stands what remains of a lush tropical forest. The beaches, except those at Frigate Bay in the peninsula, are all black volcanic sands. (The Frigate Bay area

Figure 3

Source: World Bank Economic Memorandum, 1983. 9

is consequently slated for extensive tourist development). On the seaboard of the Basseterre Valley lies the capital, Basseterre, with a population of about 15,000 (Government Statistics 1983).

A narrow railway encircles the island. This coordinates the harvesting of the canes which dominate the arable landscape. Sugar cane has been planted continually on what has been termed throughout the centuries as "magnificently rich fertile soils". The island's volcanic soils are light, deep and loamy with free drainage that makes them tillable even shortly after heavy rains (National Agricultural Corporation 1983; Merrill 1958). Today, though the cultivation process includes tons of imported fertilizers, the soils are considered to be of good quality (Bourne 1980).

St. Kitts is divided into nine parishes: St. Peter Basseterre, St. George Basseterre, Trinity Palmetto Point, St. Thomas Middle Island, St. Anne Sandy Point, St. Paul Capesterre, St. John Capesterre, Christ Church Nichola Town, and St. Mary Cayon. The sugar cane mould into which the landscape has been set, also determined the location of the village settlements. Through the historic allocation of virtually all the cultivable lands to sugar, villages have been squeezed into the drainage ghauts which dissect the cane lands, or cramped along roadsides. Today heavy rains still flood these ghaut settlements (Merrill 1958; Richardson 1983).

The overwhelming majority of the population on St. Kitts is black, of African descent. Vestiges of the once powerful planter class, businessmen and expatriate advisors make up the small white population. These reside mainly in the capital district or

secluded country Houses. The majority of the population lives in rural settlements close to sugar estates, historically to provide estate labour, or in low income housing in the capital. The more 'well-to-do' live in and around Basseterre, the site of government offices and the main businesses.

Most rural dwellings are small, built with imported wood, with out-door cooking set-ups. They are situated on estate lands and tenants pay a nominal rent. Electricity has recently been extended into all the villages but few rural households have running water. Most, however, have some articles associated with prosperity, televisions for example, indicating a source of income through remittances from relatives abroad (Richardson 1983). Contemporary rural housing is a great improvement on the thatch or wooden huts in which the rural population was forced to live up to a few decades ago (Merrill 1958; Crist 1949).

The Kittitian people depend heavily on a largely imported diet. Food imports top the list in a high import-oriented society, flour, rice, milk, poultry and fish being the most common (Government Digest of Statistics #9; Richardson 1983). Some rural dwellers supplement their diet by farming rented marginal mountain lands, defying the odds of soil erosion, and raids from monkeys as well as humans. A few farmers are able to produce enough to sell through the Central Marketing Agency (CEMACO) (National Agricultural Corporation 1984). Very few engage in fishing due to the lack of funds to invest in motor boats. A few keep chickens or a pig, but for the most part they rely on money earned or remitted from abroad (Richardson 1983).

Emigration has historically been one of the ways by which Kittitians have dealt with exploitation and poverty at home. A United Nations report indicated that the migration rate from St. Kitts and Nevis between 1960 and 1970 (17,572) was almost twice as high as the rate of the Commonwealth Caribbean in general (quoted in Richardson 1983). Historically, the tendency has been for younger men to emigrate. The study showed however, that the emigration rate for young women almost equalled that of the men. Many emigrants leave behind young children who are looked after by grandparents or other relatives. Most of these children later emigrate to join their parents. In 1975 postal remittances from such emigrants totalled more than EC\$1,000,000. This excluded checks and cash sent through the mail or via friends (Richardson 1983:48).

St. Kitts' population has been declining over the years because of such heavy emigration. Popular destinations include the United States Virgin Islands, the United States, Canada, and until recently, the United Kingdom. Between 1970 and 1980 the population declined by about 0.4 per cent per year. No significant population growth is expected during this decade because of this persistent trend of emigration (World Bank Economic Report 1983).

Ill health is not as evident in St. Kitts as it was in the early part of the century, but some of the very old and the very young still suffer from malnutrition. Infant mortality was about 46 per 1,000 live births in 1978, down from 86 in 1972 and the alarming 309 per 1,000 live births in the 1930's (West India Royal Commission 1937; Economic Report 1985).

Pre-Columbian St. Kitts was Liamuga, The Fertile One, aptly named by its aboriginal inhabitants who no doubt recognized its exceptional fertile soils. Columbus spotted the island on his second voyage in 1493 and gave it the name St. Christopher, from which St. Kitts is derived. The entry of Europeans in the early seventeenth century resulted in the destruction of the indigenous population and forests, as well as the exploitation of its soils. St. Kitts quickly became a 'silvermine' producing sugar for export. Young Africans were dragged across the Atlantic to make the fortunes of Englishmen.

Production and settlements all quickly became centred around sugar. The land and slaves which made up the forces of production, were controlled by a small white planter class. The extremely concentrated ownership of land and the high level of labour exploitation gained St. Kitts the notoriety of being one of the most prosperous sugar producing islands. Today high productivity still exists. Averaging ten tons of cane per ton of sugar, labour productivity in the industry more than doubled between 1975 and 1982. Land productivity exceeds that of most other Caribbean sugar producing countries. Average yields since 1976 have been about 85 tons per hectare, compared with 66 tons per hectare in Barbados, 44 in Belize, 59 in Cuba, 71 in Jamaica and 72 in Guyana (World Bank Economic Report 1985). The high productivity ratio does not seem to be able to compensate for production costs which are higher than those in countries like Belize or the Phillipines, however.

With the social, political and economic power of the

planters, sugar came to be associated with the well-being of the country. The social and political system became geared towards the support and continuation of sugar production, first under slavery and later in the post emancipation era. So close was this association, that even after local political power passed from the hands of the planter class, the labour based government continued to view the industry in this light.

With the nationalization of the industry, the Government which had its roots in the labour movement, assumed the position formerly held by the white plantocracy, the traditional enemies of the working class. Nationalization, as some speculated, was not an attempt by the Government to "abolish the wage system and create a new society based on collective ownership of the means of production" (Bai 1972). Nationalization, as we shall see, ushered in state capitalism instead.

Nationalization was brought about without any fundamental changes in the organization of production. The Government's aim was to keep the industry alive when planters became disillusioned. Increasing pressure from the Trades and Labour Union and frequent state intervention to resolve management/labour disputes, usually in favour of labour, along with declining markets for sugar, and the uncertainty which came with Britain's decision to join the EEC in particular, dampened the interest of British and local capitalists in the industry. Profits were declining. This, along with the inter-conflict between British owners of the factory and the estate owners, accounted for the relative ease with which the Government acquired the industry (Peat et al 1972; Booker Report 1968; White Paper on

the Acquisition of the Sugar Industry 1976).

Historically, the profitability of sugar production on St. Kitts, has depended on a large supply of cheap labour. This was initially provided by the slave trade. The planter masters were owners of the slaves' labour power. Through regimentation, overworking and underproviding, the full physical capacity of the slave was exploited. The phenomenal profits extracted under this system were used to reinforce positions and aid the development of capitalism back in Britain.

By the time slavery was abolished there were no lands left for the ex-slaves to settle. Bound by the lack of the means to make a living for themselves, and strict laws governing mobility and emigration, they were forced to sell their labour to their ex-masters or face eviction from the slave huts. Through the tenantry system and stringent laws, workers were tied to the estates, working for paltry wages which were insufficient for their basic subsistence.

Extreme worker oppression, as we shall see, invariably led to worker rebellion. It was behind the 1935 revolt, and the petty-bourgeois/working class alliance which would threaten and eventually unseat the plantocracy's hold over the state. Worker resistance in the post World War Two era would also contribute to state acquisition of the industry.

Sugar production under colonialism integrated St. Kitts into the emerging world capitalist system in the mid-seventeenth century. In 1868 John Stuart Mill claimed that West Indian colonies like St. Kitts, could not be regarded as countries with

productive capital of their own. He saw them as:

the place where England finds it convenient to carry on the production of sugar, coffee and a few tropical commodities (Mill 1868: Bk.3, Chap.5).

In the nineteenth century "backward" colonies like St. Kitts in the Caribbean entered the "Third World", while those like Australia and Canada graduated to what was presumably the "First World".

Sugar continued to be produced in St. Kitts long after it lost its importance in the capitalist system. Nearly all the forces of production remained geared towards this end. The persistent concentration of the forces of production in the production of sugar for export meant that they were not employed in meeting the basic needs of the local working population. It also meant that they were not geared towards internal development, capitalist or otherwise. This resulted in internal underdevelopment - a peripheral social formation dependent on the metropole, a mould out of which St. Kitts has not been broken.

The ties that bind the individual peripheries in the Caribbean to the metropolises during and after the colonial era, are today being subjected to more rigorous analyses. Theoretical generalizations are no longer considered adequate. The empirical experiences of each territory are seen as important to the comprehensive understanding of the region. This is especially important in this era which has signs of increasing dependent integration into the capitalist system, in spite of independence.

A historical materialist approach is employed in this examination of St. Kitts' integration into the world capitalist

system and the consequent underdevelopment for its people. The study is historical because it looks for an explanation of the present condition in the development of the island's history. It is materialist, in that an explanation of manifest social phenomena is sought in the underlying material base. The approach is also dialectical because it sees changes emerging from the clash of contradictory forces in the social formation.

Class, or the relationship to the means of production, is consequently important to this study. A particular relationship determines what is produced, how it is produced and distributed, as well as who benefits. Race, the social categorization of groups by virtue of real or supposed physical differences, is also important. So is the role of the colonial or peripheral state. Sugar was produced first by the labour of African slaves, and later by their descendants who were constrained by law and state power. All these phenomena are important for the understanding of how sugar production resulted in underdevelopment for St. Kitts. They are also important for understanding the recent adoption of a strategy for development, which emphasizes attracting foreign capital to play the key role in the proposed shift from a sugar dominated economy.

The importance of including internal class relations in addition to the external factors in the study of dependency and underdevelopment is stressed in the proposed theoretical framework developed in Chapter Two. The chapter will examine some of the major strategies and theories which have influenced Caribbean and Kittitian development policies.

Interest in the Kittitian case grew out an initiating visit to the island of my birth, in 1970. It was then that the appropriateness of its nickname, "Sugar City", struck home. Sugar cane seemed to overwhelm the island. Poverty pockets were also obvious.

The concepts of underdevelopment and exploitation were not familiar to me then, but poverty and wealth were. Academic studies eventually contributed to the conceptualization of the situation in the context of class, race, underdevelopment and exploitation. Preliminary readings on Caribbean history, social and economic studies displayed an emphasis on larger territories. There was an obvious need for historical materialist work on St. Kitts. Subsequent visits to the island reinforced this conviction.

This study draws heavily on historical material. Historical materialist studies are important in the examination of development/underdevelopment because historical patterns shape contemporary societies. Consequently, such studies provide pertinent bases for development models and strategies. As St. Kitts embarks on the well-worn dependent capitalist development path, this examination of its history of underdevelopment is particularly relevant.

A major problem with undertaking a project such as this, however, is finding sources -- and particularly those sources which reflect the perspectives of the disadvantaged or subordinate classes. While "all history may be the history of the class struggle", the nature of our historical records is such that is difficult to hear the workers or the peasants speaking for themselves (Post 1978). It is this realization which has seen the

quest for the emergence of "intellectual decolonization" with the development of scholarship aimed at unearthing the real history of Caribbean peoples (Rodney 1981; 1969; Williams 1964). Such a scholarship, Dr. Eric Williams notes in the forward to his book, British Historians and the West Indies, seeks

principally to emancipate (those) compatriots whom the historical writings ... sought to depreciate and imprison for all times in the inferior status to which these writings sought to condemn them (1964:iv).

Social and labour historians now stress the importance of unearthing the perspectives of the subordinate classes in order to unveil a comprehensive picture.

As a contribution, this exercise is a response to the call for the type of analysis which "searches for the face within the archives" and incorporates the experiences of the working people. This, Gordon Lewis points out, is in contrast to the type of scholarship which "sees slavery but not the slave, imperialism but not the imperialist, emancipation but not the emancipated, emigration but not the immigrant or emigrant" (1981:48). As Lewis concludes, we need to hear more of the reports of those who are the victims in the system.

While we have to rely largely on colonial records for information on the slave and early post-emancipation periods, it is possible to draw a representative picture from what is recorded as well as from what is left unsaid - that is by "reading the silences". [5]. In addition to these records, an important source for the latter part of the study is that provided by working class members and sympathizers. I refer here to the newspaper and the

documents of the working class organizations. These, I feel are invaluable to historical materialist studies because they provide perspectives on Kittitian history previously unrecorded. This does not mean that these sources are not assessed for representativeness. The data used in this study are crossed checked by comparing them with "official" and other accounts. Like all archival data, assessment includes ideological orientation - who recorded it and why. Contemporary data was obtained from the Department of Agriculture in St. Kitts, and the National Agricultural Corporation (NACO) in particular, and included government sponsored studies and policy statements, as well as newspapers.

In 1985, during the time spent on the island collecting data for this study, a fuller understanding of the problem emerged. The archival material, though limited, provided a wealth of information, but even richer was the interaction - the interviews and discussions with sugar workers, past and present, labour leaders, government officials and others. This stay coincided with the start of the harvest season. This is a time when emotions run high on all sides and the class conflict is most intensely felt, when negotiations between Union and Management (government officials) for the start of the season, take place.

The meetings with past and present sugar workers in villages like St. Paul's, Newton Ground, Old Road and Sandy Point, were particularly enlightening. Women in the industry depicted their double dilemma: unequal wages for work of equal value, in an industry which, historically, depends on low wages. The

frustrations of younger workers, unwilling to admit that they even worked in the industry, and when they did, pointing out that it was just something to pass the time until they could emigrate; or until something better came along. The older men and women talked about "the way it was", the hard and bitter struggles.

It was impossible not to come away from the whole experience humbled by their strength and stamina. These men and women, like their ancestors, endure what can never be adequately depicted in historical documents or analytical studies. Such an experience drives home the fact that the story, the history of sugar in St. Kitts is not sweet at all. It has been the basis of the bitter experiences of poverty and exploitation for the workers, who have been alienated from the land and the means of production.

The time frame for the study extends from the middle of the sixteenth century to 1975. Chapter Three examines the factors which shaped the development of the sugar industry under slavery. This includes the establishment of the plantation and the planter class, the exploitation of enslaved Africans, as well as the internal and external factors which forced the transition to the system of free labour.

The struggle surrounding the attempt (from 1838 to the early 1900's) to keep labour enslaved and the resistance of the working class is examined in Chapter Four. Chapter Five examines the plantation under monopoly capitalism (early 1900's to 1970's). It traces the working class struggle, the alliance with the petite bourgeoisie, the eventual right to establish a trades and labour union and the struggle for decolonization.

In Chapter Six, the factors, including the class conflicts

leading to nationalization of the industry in 1975/76 are analysed. Although the time frame extends to 1975, in the seventh and concluding chapter, reference is made to the post-Nationalization period, to the quest for development and the role which the plantation and foreign capital continues to play in St. Kitts' underdevelopment.

Notes

1. St. Kitts, formerly known as St. Christopher, became the main part of the two-island state of St. Kitts-Nevis, with the acquisition of political independence in September, 1983. Anguilla, which was also historically attached to St. Kitts rebelled against associated statehood in 1967. The combined population is about 43,300 (1980 census). Some 37,000 live on St. Kitts. Since sugar has been of relatively less importance in Nevis, this study is concentrated on St. Kitts.
2. Protected market prices usually exceed those on the world market. Only on rare occasions is the situation reversed, like 1974 when world market prices skyrocketed along with oil prices. On this occasion the world market price, at 80 pounds sterling, was almost double that of the protected market. St. Kitts reduced its export quota to the United Kingdom in order to profit from a sale of some 3,050 tons to Venezuela at the exorbitant price of 300 pounds per ton.
3. These traditional exclusive reserves of the whites, which persist today, are known locally as "Little South Africa."
4. In recent years there has been an effort to allocate more lands to experimental food crop production.
5. See Appendix B for further information on the sources used in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL ISSUES

The process by which the Caribbean region has been deprived of its wealth through production for export, has been examined and documented by a wide range of scholars, from Arthur Lewis and Eric Williams to Walter Rodney and Lloyd Best. Until the late 1970's, however, it was the almost cliched lament of those who addressed the social and economic problems of the region and the Third World in general that analysis was in a state of theoretical impasse. Amidst the ever increasing large number of studies on development, there was a call for theoretical analyses which would transcend the modernization orientation of conventional economists, as well as the economic determinism of dependency and orthodox Marxist theorists.

Traditionally, development theory and the corresponding strategies for development have centred around the maximization of Gross National Product, resulting in the confusion of economic growth with human development. That this has been too narrow an aim has been acknowledged by both critics and supporters of Third World development strategies. Almost everyone agrees that the ever-increasing disarray and calamitous conditions in poor countries warranted a fresh look and re-examination of, traditional assumptions, methodologies, theories and policies (Kramrony and Elliott 1978; World Bank Report 1977). [1].

This study is based on such an approach to the question of underdevelopment. It is neo-marxist in orientation. It seeks to explain underdevelopment in St. Kitts as part of its incorporation

into peripheral capitalism. This incorporation has been based on sugar production, which until about a decade ago completely dominated the economy. It is argued here that a neo-marxist perspective provides not only an understanding of the historical nature of capitalist expropriation of surpluses produced on St. Kitts, but the internal nature of the processes involved as well. This allows for the inclusion of internal class cleavages, racial discrimination and the role of the state.

— Such an approach provides not only a more comprehensive understanding of underdevelopment, but also promotes a more realistic basis for change. This is based on the belief that any model or policy for development which does not take into account the historic processes, which includes factors like class and race, is more likely to be inadequate, because any attempt to reverse the historical relations of dependency and exploitation requires total transformation of the social relations which have formed and accompany existing conditions. Consequently, it is argued that it is the ahistoric approach, which is responsible for some of the fundamental shortcomings of a number of theories and models for development which have been urged upon the Caribbean.

5 The appropriation of the surpluses by the people - the direct producers, is the basis for the conceptualization of what constitutes development in this study. This clashes with its conceptualization by modernization theorists and many governments who see development as the maximizing of the Gross National Product, or generating foreign exchange and employment. It is this

persistent conceptualization of development which is partly responsible for the Kittitian state's recent decision to embark on yet another development strategy which concedes even further control of the accumulation process over to foreign capitalists. Because development is now seen in relation to the amount of foreign capital that the country is able to attract, the state is unable to challenge foreign control and distribution of profits. It becomes, rather, the ally of foreign capital in the expropriation of surpluses.

All this is indicative of what Marx himself tried to point out more than a century ago: that the advance in the forces of production - the process of economic development - does not necessarily result in the creation of a just or equitable society. The creation of such a society relies on the use to which society's wealth is put, which is determined by the social relations of production, the class structure (Mandle 1982:29). I am in total agreement with Marx's argument that development under capitalism "will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social condition of the mass of the people", though it may lay down the material premises for both. True social advance (development), depends not only on the development of the productive power, but on their appropriation by the people (Marx 1968:129). It is with these considerations in mind that we proceed with the theoretical critique.

Modernization and Dependent Capitalist Development

The more radical theories of dependency/underdevelopment which emerged during the militant sixties were direct responses

to, and critiques of the dominant bourgeois thesis. As such, they were instrumental in rescuing us from some of what Colin Leys refers to as the intellectual deserts of the developmentalist perspective, substituting the international economy for the old focus on traditional and modern society, stages of growth, achievement motivation and integration, as well as nation-building and political development, (Leys 1977:93; O'Brien 1975:25).

The basic inadequacies of the formulations of the modernization theory are well documented by its critics. [2]. The theory is constructed on the premise that underdevelopment is a "primal" or "original" condition. On this basis it is argued that capitalist penetration of Third World economies is a prerequisite for modernization, seeing that their development must necessarily follow a path analogous to pre-existing forms of capitalist industrialization in the "First World". Such an argument is influenced by the Parsonian view of harmony, balance and integration which presumes the functioning of an equilibrium-generating social mechanism, (Taylor 1979; Mandle 1979).

The modernization or developmental approach, critics point out, is restricted in the very areas - of causation, comparison and prediction - which are crucial for analysing Third World societies. "No matter what textual form its concepts assume," Taylor argues, "these restrictions render the theory inadequate for analysing its object" (1979:40). It is because of these underlying concepts that the theory concentrates on such aspects as "levels of growth", "levels of capital intensity", and "output of manufacturing industry", and equates them with

development. Alternatively, it ignores the problems of domination and subordination, and consequently, has been criticized for its ahistorical nature, which makes it impossible for the theory to deal with phenomena like colonialism and imperialism. In addition, the framework ignores the question of class struggle and conflict, while it portrays the state as an instrument of popular will (Leys 1977; Taylor 1979; Mouzelis 1980).

In the context of this study, however, far more serious is the problem which extends beyond the academic level - that of the policy recommendations based on the theoretical conclusions of the thesis. Such recommendations, Taylor argues, "further ensure the structuring of Third World economy to the reproductive requirements of the external capitalist mode of production, to the detriment of the domestic economy and economic needs of the indigenous populations, whose overall dependence on the industrialized capitalist states is thereby further reinforced" (1979:70). This observation is especially applicable to the development strategy which came to dominate the Caribbean after the Second World War - the dependent capitalist industrialization model.

Arthur Lewis' dependent capitalist development model (noted in the introduction), emerged in the post World War Two period, an era which saw the continuation of the general stagnation, poverty and unemployment for the masses of the Caribbean, in economies controlled by foreign capital and heavily dependent on export crops. The dominant belief as reflected in Lewis' answer for the dilemma, industrialization by invitation, was that development would come with modernization. This,

according to the dominant ideology, was only possible via capitalist penetration of the "backward" regions, seeing that they lacked any internal dynamic for development. The model stresses the impossibility of self-reliance, the need to concentrate on industrialization and the virtue of inequality (Rothstein 1976).

Arthur Lewis, considered the first of the modern "development economists", was a member of the Fabian Society, an influential group of reformist intellectuals, and worked closely with the Society's Colonial Bureau (Craig 1977). He was also one of the academics who heralded the birth of organized labour in the 1930's. Lewis' strategy for Caribbean development is outlined in "An Economic Plan for Jamaica" (1945), an analysis of "Industrial Development in Puerto Rico" (1949) and prescriptions for "The Industrialization of the British West Indies", (1950). He recommended Puerto Rico as an "easily studied example" of the route that the English-speaking Caribbean should take for development. According to Lewis, the success of the Puerto Rican attempt to create employment by inviting United States capital to establish export industries, lay in the "productivity-wage-ratio" - wages kept so much lower than North American wages that capitalists could maximize profits (Lewis 1949; cf. Craig 1977).

In the case of the British West Indies, Lewis argued that continued agricultural specialization which dominated the region would only serve to increase already high levels of poverty and unemployment. In islands which were quickly becoming overpopulated, agriculture, he claimed, was unable to support but a minority at a reasonable standard of living. The solution, he

maintained, lay in the development of labour intensive manufacturing industries, along with the simultaneous development of highly productive agriculture.

Industrialization was a necessity. Since the region could not generate the investment for the industrialization process, Lewis concluded, it had to come from expatriate sources. What was needed, according to Lewis, was an infusion of foreign capital and capitalists. Hence, there was a need for a "period of wooing and fawning upon such people" (Lewis 1950).

Lewis was mainly concerned with generating employment and he emphasized prevailing low wage levels and the anticipation of greater returns for capital. That, however, he pointed out, was not enough. Governments must be ready to offer temporary monopolies, tax holidays, tariffs protection, subsidies and other incentives to encourage the pioneer industrialists. Lewis argued that although the policy may seem distasteful, the use of cheap labour by foreign capital would increase national income, and local entrepreneurs would learn the "tricks of the trade". In this way, he added, control over local resources would not be alienated. Refusal of nationalist leaders to allow foreign capital to take advantage of the "unlimited supplies of labour", would only do "a great disservice" to the people of the region, he maintained.

The basic premise of Lewis' model is that if unlimited labour is available at a constant wage, capital accumulation must increase employment: because as profits increase, profits will be ploughed back into the local economy to create more profits, and therefore create more jobs in the capitalist sector. This process

continues until there is no more surplus labour, signalling the stage of development reached by North Atlantic economies - a transition via the "dynamic force of capitalist accumulation, resulting in the expansion of capitalist employment" (Lewis 1958:9). As Pierce (1984) observes, on such a basis, the magic of the free market is trusted to beneficially guide the development process for the general welfare of society.

It was not, and still is not difficult to persuade Caribbean governments to accept the theory. The model was welcomed by the petty bourgeois leadership who were seeking independence and aspiring to become a national bourgeoisie. These aspirations and strategies were also welcomed by the colonial governments who were threatened by increasing labour militancy. The strikes and uprisings of the 1930's and the ever-increasing pressure from the workers had forced constitutional reforms in the post World War Two era. The transfer of power was inevitable - the colonial office felt it would be better to transfer it to the aspiring bourgeoisie than to the proletariat and the peasants (Thomas 1982).

As colonial political chains fell, individual territories embarked on the competitive task of "wooing and fawning" upon investors. Over a quarter of a century later, the race is as heated as ever, in spite of various examples which indicate that the dependent capitalist strategy does not absorb labour, much less provide real development. (Unemployment in the region still averages about 25 to 30 per cent). With rising frustrations in the sugar industry, the Kittitian state is convinced that its

attraction of foreign capital will bring development (The Chronicle, 5/1/1987).

The weaknesses and failure of Lewis' model have been pointed out by many analysts. Much of the criticism, however, has centred, as Craig (1977) points out, not on the philosophical assumptions of his policies, but on their political limitations (Best and Levitt 1968). Other critics like Clive Thomas point out that the main problem with dependent capitalist development is that it serves to entrench foreign control over the economies, increasing economic and technological dependence (Thomas 1982:9).

During its infiltration, foreign capital maintains its monopoly over scientific advance and technological innovation. The subservience of the peripheral economy to international capital means that there is no scope for creative innovations (Thomas 1974). There is no avenue for the accumulation of capital to develop local technological and productive forces. Underdevelopment is reinforced, because

... dependency reproduces itself through the systematic generation of a certain type of manpower: people capable of assembling consumer goods, but not of designing them; people who sell, but do not design their own marketing strategy; people who produce, but lack any creative relationship to technology. Meanwhile, the petty traders, the landlords, and the indigenous businessmen cannot accumulate capital in sufficiently large amounts to develop local technological and productive forces even if they were inclined to do so (Thomas 1974:116).

In contrast to Lewis' expectation, intensive technology in the capitalist sector has led to increasing unemployment. "Screw-driver" technology industries based on the assembly of imported parts, create few inter-sectoral linkages which could support

autonomous, self-reinforcing growth (Thomas 1979:290). In addition, the downgrading of agriculture with the emphasis on subsidization of foreign capital has led to an increase in the urban labour force in most territories. In St. Kitts, for example, unemployment averages about 22 per cent, yet the sugar industry suffers from an annual shortage of labour. Neither the manufacturing "screw-driver" industries, nor tourism has absorbed the mass of unemployed labour in the Caribbean (Thomas 1979; Craig 1977).

Not only do corporations repatriate their profits, but local capital is lost to the centre through other mechanisms: through overpricing, over-invoicing, underpayment of property taxes, excessive fiscal concessions and so on (Thomas 1974). Even local savings, Thomas points out, are drained abroad, because of domination by multinational financial institutions over the savings investment process (1974:116).

Dependent capitalist development was posed as an advance over previous British colonial policy which confined the region to the plantation production of agricultural exports (Mandle 1981:17). This dependence on externally generated demand in turn created an exaggerated dependence on imports to meet local demands. Local demand, in turn, was heavily influenced by external factors such as cost to the planter, not by nutritional requirements of the population (cf. Williams 1970). The new dependency under new monopoly or division of labour brought about by dependent capitalism, is even more concentrated. Now only certain industrial goods are relegated for production in the periphery,

while the more dynamic areas of production are confined to the centre.

Not only has there been an increase in economic and technological domination but in cultural domination as well. Various forms of mass media, now a major instrument of transnational capital, propagate consumption patterns and attitudes which prove to be inimical to self-emancipation and self-reliance. Through these avenues, and "tourist-catering", the appetite for metropolitan goods is created. This in turn reinforces overall dependence with the ever-increasing reliance on imports. The overall impact, Gomes writes:

is the creation of behaviour patterns that are wasteful, helping to reinforce tastes and lifestyles characterizing progress whose price is little less than social and psychological decay - (1985:xx).

Confronted with the failure of his development model, evident in the persistence of poverty and unemployment, Lewis' solution in 1964 was: more of the same policies along with protection for manufacturers, incomes control and "crash programmes in public works to placate the unemployed" (Craig 1977:72). In 1972, as President of the Caribbean Development Bank, he placed the blame on the Caribbean people. Wages and consequently costs of production were too high, he argued. Lewis went on to recommend restraint on wages, more incentives to foreign capital, more productivity and currency devaluation.

For Lewis and his development policies, international capital is fundamental to the structuring of the major social and political formations in the Caribbean. The irony, Craig (1977)

points out, is that this Nobel prize winning economist who heralded the birth of organized labour in the 1930's, has insisted on a strategy based on low wages that continues to impoverish large sections of the working class in the "ultimate interest of increased private profits" (1977:73). While emphasis is always placed on controlling labour to ensure low wages and maximize profits for capital, there is never a hint in the plan of a way to control investors to benefit the working class (Craig 1977:70). In fact, governments in smaller territories which have no major natural resources, large markets or even beautiful beaches, as is the case in St. Kitts, are forced to surrender almost absolute control over the accumulation process to foreign capital, due to the limited nature of their attractions (which are mainly guaranteed cheap labour and competitive incentives).

A closer look at the ideology operating behind Lewis' theory may account for his unwavering faith in his model. Labelled "the economist with his gaze fixed on Europe" (Craig 1977), Lewis has delighted in being called an Afro-Saxon. His perspective is internationalist. He has no faith in the viability of small West Indian nations. - West Indians, whose nations are small and poor, are in need of foreign money and goodwill. They should therefore make themselves more acceptable to the outside world.

We need to create this image of ourselves because we need to have the rest of the world want West Indians (Matriculation Address, UCWI, 1960; quoted in Craig 1977).

Lewis saw the struggle for a Caribbean identity as misguided at times (Lewis 1973). In the case of music he claimed:

... a false nationalism has persuaded us that the steelband is a significant contribution to the world's heritage of music (Lewis 1960).

The destiny of Caribbean masses, according to the Lewis model, Craig aptly points out, seems to be a subordinate position in the international or (perhaps better stated), 'multinational social order' (Craig 1977:75).

While analysts continue to point out the many weaknesses and failures of the Lewis capitalist development model - some claim it is nothing more than grand illusions (Best 1975) - the model continues to ignite hopes and influence policies for development. As the end of this decade approaches, St. Kitts, which is still gripped by sugar, is throwing itself wide open to the increased dependency and underdevelopment which comes from embracing this strategy.

Regional Integration

The failure of the Lewis strategy, William Demas (former Secretary General of the Commonwealth Caribbean Regional Secretariat and current President of the Caribbean Development Bank) has argued, has been due to the fact that regional governments have concentrated on his policies for industrialization, while ignoring his proposals for agricultural transformation and regional, not just national industrialization. Lewis, himself, Demas adds, also underestimated the cumulative and self-reinforcing pattern of dependence which uninhibited entry of the international corporation into the countries of the region brought about (Demas 1971). The neglect of the agricultural

aspects of Lewis' model can be attributed to the fact that Lewis himself ignored them in his emphasis on industrialization.

In the attempt to overcome the weaknesses inherent in the Lewis model, regional integrationists like Demas advocated a policy of regional self-sufficiency based on economic integration, agrarian reform and regional coordination. The resulting Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has been the subject of much criticism and tension.

This post-independence regional attempt at integration has proven, like its colonial forerunner, the West Indies Federation, that integration cannot be imposed from above. The capacity for a progressive cohesion of the region depends on the extent to which the basic class interests of the workers and the peasants dominate the social process (Thomas 1979). CARICOM regional integration reinforces the interest of the ruling classes of individual territories. One cannot, Thomas (1979) points out, separate the acts of integration from the purposes and class interests which they seek to advance. While the West Indies Federation sought to advance the class interests of the colonial order, the present CARICOM seeks to advance those of the emerging national bourgeoisies and the dominant economic base of the present states - that is, the multinational corporations (Thomas 1979).

The basic aim of CARICOM, like its predecessor the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA), has been to liberalize free trade in the area by widening the market to improve the scope for the development of regional capitalism; stimulating both foreign and local investment in the process. What has emerged is another

framework for the development of capitalism in the area. This development, like capitalist development in general, has taken place unevenly. Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, and to a lesser extent, Barbados and Guyana, have dominated the trading gains. While the 'big four' have accounted for over 95 per cent of the exports, the Leeward and Windward islands account for less than 5 per cent. These 'small islands', however, are responsible for about 25 per cent of the region's imports (CARICOM: Statistical Appendix; Thomas 1979).

Rather than the fostering of inter-regional development CARICOM has been responsible for the entrenchment of the region's peripheral integration into the centres of capitalist expansion. Included in this process has been the development of protectionist policies for international capital and the playing off of sectional and national interests of the capitalist classes in the region. Thomas (1979) points out how CARICOM has sought to protect and advance the MNC's of the region through measures which treat certain materials as "wholly originating within the Common Market when used in ... a process of production within the Common Market" (Schedule II, Appendix of Chaguaramas Treaty). This means that certain types of industries are protected and a product like apple juice for example, can be classed as a regional product although the fruit is not even grown in the region.

Regional integration as promoted through the present Caricom structure cannot, therefore promote regional development for the masses. CARICOM policies have served to regionalize the development of capitalist markets, resulting in corporate rather

than Caribbean integration (cf. Brewster and Thomas 1967). Today Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative serves to further reinforce this dependence.

The Dependency Perspective

The dependency theory was a direct response to the general failure of neo-classical development models. It sought to expose the bourgeois orientation of these models as well as to stress the mistake made by the Marx of the Manifesto in predicting that capitalist expansion through trade and investment would be accompanied by capitalist economic development (Brenner 1977).[3].

The main tenets of the dependency theory are outlined in the work of Gunder Frank and his co-thinkers, as well as their critics. They are probably best summarized in Colin Leys' "Critical Notes". They include:

1. The social, economic and political conditions (underdevelopment) in the Third World today, are the result of the same world-historical process by which the advanced capitalist nations of the First World became developed.
2. This process which involved capitalist extraction of surplus from these parts of the world (the peripheries) to the metropole, also systematically transformed and subordinated the economies of the peripheries to the structures of the economies where capital was being accumulated. (These became capitalist as well).
3. Production in the subordinate economies took on an external orientation - that is they produced primary commodities for export and imported manufactured goods for consumption.
4. The reproduction of this process of underdevelopment via the extraction of surpluses, blocks any attempt at autonomous development in the peripheries.

The emergence of dependency/underdevelopment theory was

hailed as a progressive move towards the understanding of Third World Nations. It threw considerable light on the processes of surplus extraction. However, according to the critics, it has long reached a point of theoretical repetition and stagnation (with its focus on economic aspects), and has not advanced beyond the general level of analysis to include systematic theorization of the social, political and ideological factors of underdevelopment (Laclau 1971; O'Brien 1975; Leys 1977).

One of the major criticisms levelled at the theory, and at Gunder Frank's work in particular, has been that of conceptual imprecision. One example is Frank's well-known characterization of the whole Latin American economy as capitalist from the sixteenth century onwards. Laclau, in his equally well-known critique of Frank argues that it is Frank's loose conception of capitalism - equating it with commodity circulation - which allows him to make such a sweeping categorization, given that capitalism itself had not yet emerged in Europe during the sixteenth century. Laclau and others point out other such conceptual problems which limit units of analysis which should be central to the theory. These include social formations, modes of production and social classes (Leys 1977; Brenner 1977).

The theory is especially criticized for its neglect of social classes. For Frank, the place of social classes is taken by regions and nations in his analysis of the process of capital accumulation:

The contradictory metropolitan center-peripheral satellite relationship, like the process of surplus expropriation/appropriation, runs through the entire world capitalist system in chain-like fashion from its

uppermost, metropolitan world center through each of the various national, regional, local, and enterprise centers ... Thus the metropolis expropriates economic surplus from its satellites and appropriates it for its own economic development. The satellites remain underdeveloped for lack of access to their own surplus and as a consequence of the same polarization and exploitative contradictions which the metropolis introduces and maintains in the satellites' domestic economic structure (Frank 1969:9,10).

The internal structure "which the metropolis introduces and maintains", is ignored, however, in favour of a focus on external factors. Capitalism is, above all, a system of labour exploitation based on the expropriation of surplus value. The analysis of class is central because surpluses are produced by classes and flows of surplus occur between classes in distinct social formations, as well as between different social formations. The flow of surplus from one economic system cannot be studied without reference to the class relationship within and between each system (Mansour 1979:199). Class structure in the periphery, therefore, is not a secondary concern, as dependency theory implies. Imperialist forces operate within the class formation.

The failure to specify the particular historically developed class structure through which the processes of development and underdevelopment worked themselves out, and through which their fundamental character was actually determined, results in the failure to focus centrally on the productivity of labour as the essence and key to economic development (Brenner 1977). Hence, Brenner concludes, Frank and his co-thinkers did not see the "degree to which patterns of development or underdevelopment for an entire epoch might hinge upon the outcome of specific processes of class formation or class struggle". A focus on the world

capitalist system ignores the "real historical actors" (Petras and Trachte 1978).

The dependency theory, because of such shortcomings, has been accused of remaining within the problematic of the bourgeois development theory which it sought to criticize (Taylor 1979). The theory, then, which sprang out of the radical revisions of orthodox economic analyses by those associated with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), is seen by Marxist critics as basically an ahistorical (all history being the history of the class struggle) reformulation of bourgeois ideology which became "marxified" in the process. Geoffrey Kay puts it rather strongly:

this concept (dependence) fails to grasp the real nature of the process of underdevelopment. The immediate explanation for this is the theoretical framework employed... eclectic combination of orthodox economic theory and revolutionary phraseology (Kay 1975:103).

In spite of the weaknesses, the concentration on external factors to the exclusion of the internal, the dependency theory has been the basis for much valuable work (cf. Emmanuel 1972; Rodney 1974; Girvan 1976). In the Caribbean, the plantation economy thesis and the works of Lloyd Best and Kari Levitt (1969), George Beckford (1972) [4] and Norman Girvan (1973) have been instrumental (like the dependency thesis as a whole), in identifying and pointing out the exploitative nature of the relationship between the metropole and Caribbean "plantation economies" in the wake of emancipation and the more recent political independence.

Best and Levitt indicate how little or no economic exchange among plantations within countries or the region, resulted in externally dominated production and consumption. This created the historical intra-regional competition for the same markets and accounts for one of the reasons behind the failure of regional integration efforts. It also meant that there were virtually no internal dynamics or markets to bring about economic transformation (Best and Levitt 1968).

Girvan (1973), following on Best and Levitt's work has pointed out how the legacy of the plantation economy, together with the vertical integration of the transnational corporation prevents structural transformation.

The plantation model and its "plantation society" off-shoot (Beckford 1972), while identifying the structural links with the metropole on a pan-Caribbean basis, has some problems as does dependency theory in general. One of these problems is the fact that it ignores social forces which contribute to change in the particular territories and in the region (Craig 1982). Consequently, the impracticality of extending the plantation model to the analysis of the contemporary Caribbean, given the diversification of economies, becomes obvious. The model not only fails to deal with the changing processes of exploitation, but it ignores the internal dynamics of the class structure.

Caribbean dependency theory advocates nationalization or localization in order to prevent the persistent expropriation of surplus by the metropole. While the benefits of nationalization or localization should never be overlooked, certain factors should be taken into account. The conspicuous absence of any reference

to class divisions, in the promotion of nationalization as an answer to dependency or underdevelopment, presents the double-edged danger of providing a new opening for the national bourgeoisie on the one hand, and a false strategy for development on the other (Brenner 1977; Thomas 1974). Since the mechanisms of capital accumulation are ignored by excluding class realities, the model fails to anticipate the fact that nationalization usually becomes the means by which the state and those who dominate it acquire control over the economy without implementing any social transformation. Consequently, the model is able to discuss racial and cultural ideological factors, without including the wider aspects of class (Beckford 1972).

The wave of nationalization of key industries by Caribbean national states (including St. Kitts) in the mid-1970's, was no doubt influenced by this model, as well as the surge in the growth of nationalism which emerged in the post-war era. Nationalism had become the ideology under which the decolonization and independence battles were waged. It stressed the unity of all social groups in distinguishing "society as a whole" from the centre (Hall 1978). Nationalism not only ignores fundamental class relations, but in the absence of any comprehensive public policy for dealing with structural dependence, it increases the likelihood of strengthening capitalist relations of production through new alliances with foreign capital.

The adoption of the dependency nationalist-oriented model for development has also been accompanied by a socialist rhetoric in areas like Jamaica under Manley and Guyana, where dependent

capitalist development had failed to alleviate employment problems or provide any avenue for the national bourgeoisie to strengthen itself economically or politically (Thomas 1982). The level of resistance to nationalization by the MNC's usually depended on the type and condition of the particular industry.

With the sugar industry, as in the Kittitian case, decreasing profitability and growing class conflicts made it relatively easy. In other cases, because care was taken to qualify the accompanying "socialism" as "democratic" or "cooperative" (Guyana), transnational capital was not alarmed. Further, since the transnationals still maintained overall control via marketing, technology, credit and management, in addition to receiving adequate compensation for nationalization, the capitalist relations of production were still maintained (Thomas 1982).

Dependency theory, while providing some fundamental insights, is not equipped to handle developments like those indicated above, which do arise in the adoption of the model. The fact is, that as Frank himself admits, the model was not designed to do that. The writings

... cannot, nor are they intended to, serve as an adequate instrument to examine the class struggle as a whole and to devise the necessary popular strategy and tactics for its development, for the destruction of the capitalist system, and thereby for the development of the underdeveloped countries (Frank 1969:xv).

The Marxist Response

The enormous popularity enjoyed by the dependency theory throughout the sixties and early seventies was probably responsible for the stalemate in the development of Marxist

theories of underdevelopment. By the late seventies, however, there was a clamour for a Marxist theory which would transcend the inadequacies of the modernization thesis, as well as the dependency perspective.

The general Marxist thesis is that true development (that is, for the welfare of the masses), cannot be accomplished under capitalism, and hails a transition to socialism. Orthodox and neo-Marxists are, however, divided on the nature of this transformation.

Orthodox Marxist development theory is based on the dogmatic application of early Marxist ideas on the spread and eventual destruction of capitalism. Marx of the Manifesto had envisioned capitalism and capitalist economic development engulfing the whole world and "compelling all nations on the pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it (capitalism) compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e. to become bourgeois themselves. In a word, it creates a world after its own image." In Volume One of Capital Marx also predicted that the maturation of capital would give way to the emergence of socialism in a set of stages as the majority of the population became proletarianized. As production became centralized and labour became socialized, Marx argued, a point would be reached where:

they would become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder, the knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators become expropriated (1978:430).

Orthodox Marxist development theorists like Warren (1980),

insist that the full development of capitalism is a necessary stage in the progression to socialism. They tend to ignore the fact that, (as many writers have pointed out), historical developments have belied Marx's early optimistic progressist prognosis (Brenner 1977). Capitalist penetration of the Third World has not only failed to include capitalist economic development, but as the dependency theorists point out, it has also constructed barriers to such development. In their insistence, therefore, orthodox Marxists not only ignore the contradictions of their theory in peripheral capitalism, but also Marx's "Asiatic Mode" where he later acknowledged the possibility that capitalist expansion did not always batter down the "Chinese walls" (Marx 1968).

Failure to recognize this inability of capital to include capitalist development in the periphery, leads orthodox or paleo-Marxists as Foster-Carter (1974) calls them, to envision change in some distant future when world capitalism reaches its ultimate contradiction and destroys itself.

Neo-Marxist development theorists concentrate on Marx's later works and counter the orthodox Marxist concentration on the dogmatic application of progressive stage thesis (Kay 1975; Foster-Carter 1974; Leys 1977; Brenner 1977). They stress, as Colin Leys points out, that:

A serious and systematic application of historical materialism does not mean the application of a ready-made formula taken from the texts of Marx and Engels, or Lenin or Trotsky or Mao Tse-tung, but the application of the method and conclusions to be drawn from such texts, plus the practice out of which they emerged and by which they have since been continually revised (Leys

1977:100)..

One theory arising out of the neo-Marxist, approach has been the Non-Capitalist Path.

The theory of Non-Capitalist development has been advanced as one possible means by which Third World nations can break colonial and neo-colonial bonds in the transition to socialism. Developed by Soviet and East European theorists, a significant demonstration of its appeal as a strategy for social and political change in Latin America and the Caribbean, was the unanimous adoption of all its major propositions by the Communist and Workers Parties [5] of Latin America and the Caribbean in June 1975, at the Havana Conference in Cuba (Thomas 1978).

The idea of a non-capitalist path, first introduced by Lenin in the 1920's was only officially developed in the 1960's. The proponents argue that contrary to orthodox Marxists, full development of the capitalist forces of production is not a necessary stage in the transition to socialism. It is possible to bypass this stage. Lenin, in support of this thesis, argued that:

with the aid of the proletariat of advanced nations, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage (Lenin: 468).

The theory emphasizes the revolutionary potential of petty bourgeois leadership in alliance with other classes. According to the theory, the transition to socialism would be accomplished by the establishment of an alliance between the progressive nationalistic petite bourgeoisie, the peasantry, the proletariat

and even "progressive patriotic elements of the emerging national bourgeoisie" (Thomas 1978:11).

Proponents of the theory argue that a non-capitalist or "national democracy" phase based on anti-imperialist alliance and a national state, is necessary between the acquisition of national independence and the eventual dictatorship of the proletariat under socialism. This is necessary, they argue, because not only do Third World countries have an underdeveloped bourgeoisie, but a small underdeveloped working class as well (Thomas 1978; Gonsalves 1981). The state consequently emerges as the transitional weapon - the decisive force in development. Political or ideological leadership by the working class is not deemed necessary at this stage.

Some neo-Marxists have expressed much discomfort with the theory of non-capitalist development. First, there is the tendency for its proponents, who, while claiming that the strategy represents but one way to socialism, dogmatically discuss it as the only "realistic" path for Third World societies (Cockcroft 1979; Thomas 1979; Gonsalves 1981). The theory which has been viewed as overly optimistic (Ohiorhenuan 1980; Magdoff 1978), does recognize the weakness of the working class and the obstacles this presents for socialist advance (Thomas 1979). The danger, however, is that the non-capitalist path can degenerate into a strong conservatism, the result being not a non-capitalist road to socialism, but a new variant of capitalism, still dependent on the imperialist centres (Magdoff 1978; Thomas 1979).

Non-capitalist path theories argue that a political compromise or broad alliance is necessary during this stage

because of a numerically small working class. Marxists who see the dominant role of the proletariat in the revolution as primarily ideological and political and not numerical, argue that while small numbers may constrain, the strength of the working class does not depend entirely on numbers (Sweezy and Bettelheim; Thomas 1979). Others, like Ohiorhenuan warn that this tendency by the non-capitalist thesis to down-play the necessity for the independent development of working class movements, means that greater attention has to be paid to the type of government set up, as well as to the condition of the working class and its relative strength in the alliance (1980:408). In addition, as Bettelheim argues, a revolutionary party imposing orders on the masses eventually leads to authoritarianism, not socialism. A party cannot "act in place" of the masses (Bettelheim 1971:62).

What all this points to is the role of the state during the transition. For Marxists, the state nearly always represents the interests of the dominant class. If the state is an instrument of concentrated class rule, what is its class nature? Thomas (1979) argues that under these conditions the state is not only a tool for class domination, but it also becomes "the principal instrument of class creation itself". The non-capitalist path tends to confuse petty bourgeois nationalism with anti-imperialism. The theory consequently fails to anticipate new possible and likely alliances between international capital and the national bourgeoisie - giving way to state capitalism under the cover of non-capitalist development. The cases of Guyana, Jamaica and some African nations demonstrate how a state may carry

out radical-seeming anti-imperialist programmes like state production, land reform and so on, which are not necessarily anti-capitalist, but sometimes the only viable strategy through which national capital can expand (Thomas 1979; Dietz 1979; Cockcroft 1979; Mandle 1977; Pierce 1984).

Some critics claim that in the context of post-colonial societies, the form of state inherited must be completely abolished. The structures of this institution were designed "to maintain colonial dependency and they cannot now miraculously spearhead the movement for economic development" (Pierce 1984: 13). The petty bourgeois leadership must cease to represent their class interests and commit "~~class suicide~~". This is not easy, given the historic tendency for the petite bourgeoisie to concentrate power in its own hands under the cover of revolutionary/nationalist rhetoric at the expense of the working classes and democratic avenues of expression (Cockcroft 1979). It may require, some argue, violent struggle so that the masses can organize and "make their own decisions outside the boundaries of traditional imperial authority" (Pierce 1984:14). Violent struggle, Magdoff notes, does not guarantee the success of the transition, but "... where the colonial or neocolonial state has been smashed and ... there has truly been a transfer of power to the most oppressed, and if the masses have been mobilized to exercise this power, there is a good chance that it will" (Magdoff 1978:1).

The theory's underestimation of the level of capitalist development in the "backward" (Lentin) territories, may also be responsible for the lack of attention paid to possible sabotage by

imperialist efforts in their aim to win class allies within the society. The ability to pursue non-capitalist tasks, Thomas (1978:21) notes, is "heavily contingent on the ability to cope with economic sabotage and other dimensions of 'destabilization' as counter revolutionary activities." [6].

In addition, the aid from socialist countries mentioned by Lenin (available today mainly through the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), is hardly enough to counteract the cost. Fidel Castro, aware of the limited aid available, advised Nicaragua and Grenada to seek a working solution with their private sectors in order to avoid the confrontation and isolation experienced by Cuba (Latin American Newsletters 1981; cf. Thomson, 1983). Besides, reliance on Soviet aid again opens the way for the creation of technological and economic dependence, which, while not equivalent to that created by western MNC's, is nevertheless, problematic. For aid, whether socialist or capitalist, demands political and ideological allegiance in return.

Political and economic radicalization in underdeveloped peripheries are not necessarily precursors to the transition. Roxborough (1979) opposes the non-capitalist path thesis and argues instead, that radicalization represents a new attempt to complete the bourgeois revolution in the periphery. According to Roxborough, underdevelopment is characterized and perpetuated by the inability to accomplish this historic task. In making this point, he notes that in the West the transition to capitalism was brought about in an "abbreviated space of historical time", while

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class alliances fail to do so. This elite may adopt socialist forms, ideology, state ownership and so on, but, Petras argues, its aim is to "tie the expansion of capitalist market relations to the expansion of the state". This state capitalist development strategy is, however, incapable of developing the economy or even consolidating its own position. The playing off of the national bourgeoisie and working class against each other in an effort to consolidate its own power, eventually fails and opens the way for "reversion to a pro-imperial regime".

Petras claims that when the capacity to rule is threatened, the state bourgeoisie will often manipulate the racial/ethnic differences which transcend class boundaries, in order to maintain its position. Although he notes the powerful potential effect which manipulating racial/ethnic differences may have, Petras like the crude Marxists, dismisses these factors as epiphenomena by predicting the "imminent victory of socialist consciousness over these forms of thought" (Pierce 1984:19).

While dependency theory ignored class⁹ in its emphasis on external elements of dependency and underdevelopment, orthodox Marxists have emphasized class and crude economic determinism to the exclusion of such salient factors as race. Race was dismissed as "false consciousness", mere "divide and conquer" tactics orchestrated by the capitalists to render the working class more controllable. These divisions were expected to fade away as class consciousness and the class struggle assumed priority (Cox 1959).

This view directly contrasted with the pluralist thesis which focuses on racial/ethnic phenomena. The assumption in this case

is that these factors are primordial in nature and therefore, not likely to become subsumed or vanish. Some proponents of the theory which sprang out of Furnivall's work on Burma and Netherlands India, view the plural society as a stage in the transition to industrialization (van den Berghe 1979).

The theory became very popular in analyses of the Caribbean and Africa. M.G. Smith's influential work on the Caribbean was an attempt to account for the cultural complexity and racial/ethnic divisions in the region. His pluralist analysis was proposed to counteract the functionalist analysis of colonial and neo-colonial historians, as well as the economic reductionism of Marxists. While he indicates that his work is based on Furnivall's, he does not give the same saliency to the economic driving force of colonialism and its impact on social organization (Cox 1971:480).

The institution is the main focus of Smith's analysis. In fact, he defines pluralism as that condition in which there is a formal diversity in the basic system of compulsory institutions. These "basic" or "compulsory" institutions include the family, education, religion, property and economy, recreation and "certain sodalities" (Smith 1960:767). Each of these institutions is seen as autonomous and crucial in the understanding of a social structure. The "real plural society" exists where the basic institutions are not shared by the different cultural sections of the society. In a plural society, Smith points out in a later work, political rule or domination is by one culturally distinct section (1969). He fails to indicate, however, the process by which this political domination is achieved or legitimated.

It is probably on the question of conflict that the most criticism is directed at the theory, for the plural society thesis purports to be a theory of conflict. There is little indication, as the critics point out, of the nature or direction of conflict in these societies. On the contrary, Hall (1978) argues, the plural model represses and disguises the actual mechanisms which produce and maintain the structures of dominance and subordination in the complex social structures. He also notes the difficulty raised in interpreting sectional conflicts in the absence of widespread cultural differences. This is because the model concentrates so heavily on cultural values. The theory's ahistorical nature stems from its indefensible exclusion of the structure of material production."

The contributions of later pluralists like Despres and Kuper, while adding to the popularity of the theory, do not provide any fundamental alterations to the basic flaws (Cross 1971; Stasiulis 1980; Craig 1982). The critics are not the only ones to pinpoint major weaknesses in the model. Smith himself wonders at times whether on occasion his findings in the Caribbean are "illusionary or tautological" (1964:446; Cross 1971). Despres, in his work on Guyana admits that although pluralism exists in that country, his theory does not account for the inter-ethnic conflict in Guyanese politics (1967).

The preceding review of some of the more popular theoretical models that address various aspects of the question of under-development in the Caribbean, serves to stress the point that any framework for such analyses must be broad enough to incorporate

the empirical realities of a particular social formation. The plural framework, with its mono-emphasis on racial or cultural factors was an antithesis to crude Marxist formulations with their emphasis on class/economic factors. The impoverishment of theories which exclude certain salient factors has been noted. The orthodox Marxist approach robbed the perspective of its ability to handle intra-class divisions. It was in response to the limitations of pluralism as well as dependency and crude Marxist approaches, that neo-Marxists sought to broaden the perspective's ability to provide more comprehensive analysis. The following outline of some of the insights which guide this study draws on this body of work.

Guidelines For This Study

Marx, writing in the 19th century, noted that "all history is the history of the class struggle". In the 20th century Cardoso and Faletto expanded this by noting that, "The history of capital accumulation is the history of class struggles, of political movements, of the affirmation of ideologies and of the establishment of forms of domination and reactions against them" (Mars 1978). While these may all be part of the class struggle, the elaboration tends to avoid the pitfalls which lead to the simplistic economic reductionism of orthodox Marxists, who focus on the analysis of class (and two classes in particular), to the exclusion or subsumption of other factors which influence the shape of specific social formations. Neo-Marxists now strive to distinguish between the "superficial appearances and the reality which is often difficult to discern" (Allet 1975).

The implementation of a neo-Marxist approach to the study of underdevelopment on St. Kitts is not based on a ready-made formula. It includes, rather, the application of a method - the historical materialist conception of the process. This is necessary, because, as Marx himself noted, the specificity of a particular social formation can only be deduced from empirical and historical analyses of that social formation (Hall 1980; Stasiulis 1980). The approach operates on the premise that while material or economic relations are of central importance in the establishment of a social formation, specific forms of relations within a social formation cannot be deduced a priori from the material level (Hall 1980). In Post's words, the approach recognizes that specific social formations "are more than the simple dichotomy that lies at the basis of the economy" (1978:17). What this means is that in analysis, racial or ethnic structuring, for example, is not reduced to, or subsumed under class relations. Hence, while the economic reductionism of orthodox Marxists is rejected, it is emphasized that racial structures cannot be fully understood outside the framework of specific sets of economic relations (Hall 1980).

The inclusion of racial phenomena is important for this study because throughout its history, after the initial destruction of the indigenous population and up to nationalization, the means of production were contained almost exclusively in the hands of a small white planter class of European descent (the plantocracy), who controlled the political process. The majority of the population, those responsible for the direct producing, those

whose labour became subordinated and exploited, has been blacks of African descent. These were initially slaves. The ensuing conflicts were class as well as racially based.

Certain conceptual distinctions are appropriate here. Racial discrimination refers to the social relations involved in the subordination and exploitation of one group by another. Racism, on the other hand, is the ideology which is "the basis of invidious distinctions between groups defined as races" (Stasiulis 1980:464). Racial prejudice in turn refers to attitudes, usually hostile, which group members direct against each other. As Stasiulis points out a racist ideology will most likely be expressed through state and economic apparatuses, and members of the exploiting group will display intense prejudice in any social formation where racial discrimination is systematically reproduced (1980:464).

Kittitian colonial economy was based on the plantation. This was the structure around which classes became crystallized and polarized, economically as well as racially. The plantation became the basis for the creation of the peripheral nature of the economy. The social formation was in fact an outpost of British mercantilism. As capitalism developed, it became integrated, but still only peripherally, in the global system. The production of sugar for export and profit, dominated the entire social structure. This meant that the productive forces were not directed at satisfying the demands of the local population. These were satisfied by imports. Such a peripheral economy cannot be "autocentric" (Amin 1974:285). Dependence on external markets in this type of society becomes alarmingly precarious.

Throughout its history, the profitability of the sugar industry has depended on the coercion and exploitation of a large labour force. This was initially carried out under slavery. It was through slavery that millions of West Africans were brought to St. Kitts and the Caribbean. Slavery was not invented by the European planters. The New World version was already in place when Kittitian and other planters, in search of a large, cheap source of labour, turned to the slave trade. It was this incorporation of Africans as a subjugated, enslaved labour force which set the stage for antagonistic and unequal relations between the two groups - white planters and black slaves. Racism, racial prejudice and discrimination became part of slavery. The economic context is vital to the comprehension of this development. Black slavery was not introduced in St. Kitts because it was felt that Africans were inferior: rather, it was introduced because of an urgent need for abundant and cheap labour. White labour was not available in the quantities required and the indigenous population (which was small in number), had been wiped out.

Ancient slavery had included derogatory classifications of the enslaved (Sherlock 1973), but these had not necessarily been racial. Racism under slavery had a specific purpose - to secure the dominance of white masters over African slaves. It was material production which distributed the population into the two broad groups, however. The line separating them was dictated by law and force.

Racism and racial discrimination would become re-organized under the new relations of production after emancipation. They

would serve to control and subdue free labour. Later, emphasis on racial pride, like that inspired by the Marcus Garvey movement would fuel the class struggle in the early twentieth century. Race and racial distinction would be used to express class as well as centre-periphery conflicts.

The question of race and slavery also raises other theoretical issues which must be addressed. These include the ongoing debates of the "total institution" conceptualization of the plantation under slavery and whether or not slavery in itself was a mode of production.

The "total institution" which is behind such terms as the plantation mode of production, stems from the elaborate organizational structure of the plantation - the layout consisting of living quarters for slaves, masters and overseers surrounded by large fields and sugar processing requirements and buildings; the regimentation of labour, and the individual nature of the operation of each of the plantation structures. This organizational structure hardly qualifies it as a mode of production. Such a conceptualization leads to confusion, especially given the fact that the plantation still exists today in what is recognized as a capitalist mode of production. This accounts for the inadequacy of the "plantation economy thesis" noted above, which is applied to even those social formations whose economies have been diversified and are no longer plantation based. The plantation may be better understood as an institutional form of the basic unit of production (Thomas 1984; Post 1978). This would account for its persistence in different forms well into post-slavery and contemporary eras.

Much energy has been devoted to the debate over whether slavery was, or was not part of the capitalist mode of production (Geneovese 1971; Williams 1944; 1970; Frank 1969; Post 1978; Hindess and Hirst 1975; Thomas 1984; Bakan 1987). Some claim that slavery was a separate mode of production. Others maintain that because slavery was capital producing, it was therefore capitalist.

Slavery was indeed capital producing. It serviced Britain's period of primitive accumulation - that phase in which the producers were becoming alienated from the means of production, the "prehistoric stage of capital and the mode of production corresponding with it" (Marx 1974:668; cf. Post 1978:24). Slavery itself, however, is not seen here as capitalist, although it was part of this larger evolving process. It was pre-capitalist. True, it was based upon a particular combination of land, capital and labour power, but as Post (1978:23) points out, Marx had demonstrated that "the mere presence of capital, even in conjunction with 'free' labour, let alone chattel slaves, does not make a social formation capitalist." The accumulation of commercial capital is "perfectly compatible" with the most varied modes of production and does not by any means presuppose the existence of a capitalist mode of production (Hall 1980:319).

While the slaves were engaged in commodity production for exchange, there was no free labour market and no wages. The slaves had no purchasing power and were not subject to commodity relations. This, however, did not mean that surplus value was not produced. Labour was subordinated by capital, but this

subordination was formal and not real [7]. Marx, in his discussion of these concepts had noted that "formal subsumption can be found in the absence of a specifically capitalist mode of production" (1976:1019).

Marx saw slavery as only "formally" capitalist since it excluded free wage labour, "which is the base on which capitalist production rests" (Hall 1980). Slave owners and traders, on the other hand, were operating from an emerging capitalist base in Europe. This is the point which was clouded by Frank's sweeping categorization of the colonies, the metropolises and slavery itself as each being capitalist from the start.

The role of the state and the role of the peripheral state in particular, is also central to this study. Its importance has been indicated throughout the preceding review. Like all other aspects, the various theoretical debates about the state in the metropolises and the periphery indicate that a correct understanding of the state in the underdeveloped periphery, must be rooted in the concrete conditions of the periphery itself. This is particularly relevant when the different impacts that colonialism has had on different social formations, are taken into consideration.

Focus on the varied historical circumstances as opposed to generalizations, does not rule out the importance of theory, however. There is a growing recognition in Marxist literature, of the different forms of the state. This has led to the general acknowledgment that the dependent state is inherently different from the state in the centre, because of foreign capital's domination of the periphery's economy. In the neo-colonial period,

this often leads to the emergence of authoritarian forms of the state in the periphery because of the relatively weak nature of the local bourgeoisie (Thomas 1984b; Amin 1974; Carnoy 1984). A weak local bourgeoisie cannot guarantee foreign capital's access to the economy democratically, and is consequently pushed into establishing an authoritarian regime. This is because the dependent state's primary role is seen as an instrument of foreign capital and its need to extract peripheral surplus (Carnoy 1984:203).

Thomas emphasizes local struggles in addition to the global struggle. As he points out, authoritarian forms of the state are subject to internal contradictions like the capitalist state in the metropole (Thomas 1984b; cf. Carnoy 1984).

It has long been assumed that authoritarianism (repression, state violence and so on), was restricted to the 'coffee and banana' republics in Latin America. It has not been usually associated with the Anglicized ex-colonies (St. Kitts included), where the virtues of 'Westminster parliamentary democracy' were deeply implanted (Thomas 1984b). The repressive regimes of Gairy in Grenada and Burnham in Guyana, while exploding the myth, have been regarded as exceptions to the norm. In fact, peripheral states within the international capitalist system are basically subject to pressures forcing them to remain open to corporate imperialism and counter-revolutionary forces. These serve to keep the peripheral states within the capitalist system. As a result of the constraints and possibilities emerging from these pressures, subject states may display a wide range of responses

(Henry 1985:142).

What all this indicates is the need for more historical analyses of the forms of the state emerging in the periphery. Here, the state is seen as a specific product of the social relations in which production and reproduction takes place. Following this, the peripheral state is seen as conditioned not only by the social formation's relationship and position in the world capitalist system, but by the internal development of the class struggle as well. While it emerges as a class institution, it does not necessarily end up being a simple or automatic instrument of the ruling class (Thomas 1984b:17). The class origins of state personnel may vary. In addition, there may be differing factions of the ruling class, as this class is not always homogenous. On the other hand, those who control the state have always sought, through cultural and political intervention, to win "consent" for the maintenance of the system of domination and social reproduction (Thomas 1984b).

Generally, with the emergence of capitalist development, social regulation became less reliant on social/communal ownership of the production process and more on the material interests of the economically dominant class. Ensuring the protection of ruling class property and controlling the oppressed classes, consequently becomes one of the state's chief functions (Thomas 1984b).

The colonial state in St. Kitts, as we shall see, was an instrument free from political formations of a pre-capitalist phase, due to the violence of European settlement period which eliminated the social formation of the indigenous population. The

transformation of the island into a sugar periphery, was supported by the colonial state. The state played an active role in ensuring the subordination of Africans, which accounts for the highly militarized form which it assumed under colonialism.

To conclude this outline of the theoretical considerations which inform and guide this study, I must reiterate that the implementation of a historical materialist approach is based on the belief that historical developments and the underlying material base, as well as ensuing social relations, contain the explanations for the realities of underdevelopment. The dependent capitalist development strategy, the 'gospel' for Caribbean development, and the popular pluralist conception of Caribbean society avoid these fundamental factors. Consequently, issues such as relationships to the means of production, appropriation/expropriation of surpluses, racism and imperialism are not addressed. These factors are fundamental to this study because avoiding them is largely responsible for the persistent conceptualization of development in terms of maximizing the GNP or creating employment, instead of the means by which the productive process is geared towards meeting the basic needs of the population.

The orthodox Marxist view was also found inadequate for addressing this study because it ignored other important concepts like race, which play a large part in Caribbean and Kittitian history. The failings of these models alert us to the importance of avoiding dogmatic approaches and allowing the historical particulars to speak to us.

Notes

1. Adelman and Taft-Morris (1973) also point out that the early industrial revolution failed to improve living standards for the poor of Europe, in much the same way that Third World development in the second half of the twentieth century has also by-passed large numbers of people.
2. Taylor (1979), in From Modernization to Modes of Production provides what is probably the most rigorous critique of the fundamental categories of Parsonian functionalism and its application to the study of "modernizing societies".
3. Marx, in his later works on Capital, seems to have realized that all the old modes of production did not succumb to capitalism.
4. Beckford has since produced a historical materialist study of Jamaican society.
5. These include the Workers Party of Jamaica, Cheddi Jagan's People's Progressive Party in Guyana and the New Jewel Movement in Grenada.
6. The experiences of Grenada and Nicaragua testify to this.
7. Marx defined formal subsumption as the process by which capital subsumes the labour process of different and more 'archaic' modes of production', in which changes may or may not occur. When the scale of production is increased, this process begins to erode. Real subsumption of labour emerges when the mode of production becomes specifically capitalist.

CHAPTER THREE

PLANTATION SUGAR UNDER SLAVERY

This chapter examines the establishment of the plantation and the slave mode of production in colonial St. Kitts. The process included the elimination of the indigenous community and the creation of an immigrant-based society with slaves and masters locked in antagonism. St. Kitts became integrated into the commercial revolution and emerging capitalist system in Britain, providing surpluses which were ploughed back into the development of capital there. This orientation of production, based on externally dominated demand and financing of European capitalist expansion, meant that surpluses could not and were not used for the development of the local economy. Moreover, they were not used for the development of the direct producers.

Early Settlement

In the early seventeenth century St. Kitts became one of the many pawns in the international rivalry and struggle for supremacy which ensued from the Columbian voyages. Pre-colonial St. Kitts (Liamiuga or The Fertile Island, as it was appropriately named by its aboriginal inhabitants), was heavily forested with mountain and sloping lands described as some of the most fertile in the whole West Indies (Goveia 1965; Davy 1854). Native settlements of rectangular thatched huts were usually located near the coast. This made fishing more convenient. In addition, the cultivation of cassava, corn and even a bit of wild sugar cane made up the staples for their subsistence economy (Merrill 1958; Richardson

1983).

European colonization brought about sudden demographic and ecological changes for the island. In 1624, a few Englishmen led by Thomas Warner [1] and later that year, some Frenchmen, were allowed to settle on the island with the consent of Chief Tegreman, the leader of the small Carib population there at the time. Later, however, it was believed that the Caribs began to resent the increasing number of European settlers on the island. In 1627, fearing that the Caribs would attack their settlements, the English and French repaid Chief Tegreman by destroying the local settlement in a joint surprise attack at night. The sleeping Chief and a large number of his people were slaughtered in their hammocks. Survivors fled to neighbouring islands from which they tried to regain their land in unsuccessful sporadic attacks. [2]. With the expansion of colonial settlements, the Caribs were subsequently forced to retreat from the Leeward Islands to Dominica, Martinique and St. Vincent. Later, in a combined colonial effort, these Caribbean natives were all but wiped out from the area (Burns 1954; Pitman 1917).

St. Kitts thus became the first "successful" settlement for those English and Frenchmen who had become disillusioned with the quest for mineral wealth and began shifting their focus to agricultural exploitation instead. The French occupied both ends of the island [3], while the English established residence in the centre.

In the fifty or so years that followed, experiments with the cultivation of export crops like tobacco, cotton and indigo were hampered by a Spanish attack (1629), and seasonal hurricanes. The

greatest problems, however, were occasioned by French and English rivalry as the colonists took turns pillaging each other's settlements (Burns 1954; Pitman 1917). The rivalry finally ended around the turn of the eighteenth century, when the island became a totally English colony in accordance with the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713 (Burns 1954).

Warner, who became Governor of the English section, secured financial backing from Ralph Merrifield in England to establish a tobacco colony. In 1627 he shipped his first ten tons of tobacco back to his partner in England. The island became known as Merwâr's hope for a short while, in recognition of this partnership. In 1627, Charles I also made the Earl of Carlisle Lord Proprietor [4] of the colonies with the right to appoint Governors and collect taxes. Carlisle himself was backed by a number of rich merchants (Burns 1954; Dookhan 1971). Cardinal Richelieu established La Compagnie de St. Christophe under d'Esnambuc, and the French also set about growing tobacco. These ventures set the pattern for subsequent development on the island: an export oriented economy financed by European capital.

The colonies contained a certain attraction for disillusioned Englishmen. Seventeenth century England was battling inflation - rising prices and rising population numbers. Across the Atlantic lay land and the opportunity to "strike it rich". There was also the opportunity to escape religious intolerance, debtors' prison and harsh landlords (Sherlock 1973; Pitman 1917; Pares 1950). The indenture system not only provided a labour force, it also repopulated the colonies. Under this system, persons sold

themselves for a period of about four or five years in return for a "free ocean passage, food, clothing and shelter during [their] term of service, and certain 'freedom' dues when [their] indenture expired" (Dookhan 1973:72). Of course the system was open to abuses - masters overworking the servants, and sometimes refusing to uphold their end of the bargain at the end of the indenture period (Sherlock 1973; Burns 1954).

Yet the attraction was great, and St. Kitts was soon peopled with a large number of small white landholders. Practically all of these grew tobacco. The profits from tobacco were shortlived, however. Competition from Virginia's cheaper, higher quality tobacco, as well as from the other islands, created a huge glut on the market. So serious was the glut that in 1639, Warner, acting under orders from the Earl of Carlisle, and the French governor de Poincy ordered the destruction of all tobacco plants on the island and prohibited the cultivation of any new plants for eighteen months (Sherlock 1973; Merrill 1958).

The tobacco glut was a severe blow for the profit-seeking colonists. Experiments with indigo and cotton did not prove to be as profitable as the "stinking weed", and many of the settlers moved on to try their luck in other islands or to engage in the more lucrative privateering.

It was the Dutch who presented the French and English settlers with a profit-making alternative for tobacco - sugar. The change-over from tobacco to sugar has been termed the "sugar revolution". By the middle of the century St. Kitts was caught up in the sugar "frenzy" that was sweeping the Caribbean.

The "Sugar Revolution"

The Dutch acquired the knowledge of the techniques involved in the production of sugar from Portuguese Jews in Brazil. By 1658 the French on St. Kitts were producing it, and soon after that the English as well. By 1676 one planter in his order for coppers, ladles and skimmers for his plantation from England, claimed that "everybody that is able (is) working upon sugar, which is certain gaine" (Jeaffreson 1778, quoted in Burns 1954 and Goveia 1965).

The sugar revolution was accompanied by rapid social, political and economic changes which were dictated by those changes in the land tenure patterns. The production of sugar called for much more extensive operations than any of the crops the colonist had grown before. While the smallholder and his family could support themselves by cultivating a small patch of land without any heavy capital investments, the production of sugar required much larger areas of land.

The spread of sugar cane cultivation resulted in the swift consolidation of virtually all the arable land on the island. The small tobacco/ cotton/ indigo planters who found themselves unable to compete with the scale of production organized by the sugar investors were swallowed up in the process.[5]. Many emigrated to other islands. This gave way to the rise of a comparatively small landed class.

The production of sugar necessitated large overhead capital investments. Profitability depended on cultivation on a scale large enough to cover the overhead. The large estate or plantation seemed the only possible way to do this. The consequent thirst

for land was intense. One eighteenth century writer claimed that "they think and dream of nothing but sugar, sugar, to which every spot of land is condemned" (Ramsay 1784 in Goveia 1965). It was illustrated in the disposal of the "French" lands which became available after the French ceded the island to the English in 1713. The governor suggested limiting the sale of units of about two hundred acres to plantation owners, and offering ten-acre lots to white families who would volunteer a member for the militia. The latter part of this proposal was ignored and the land was sold to the highest bidders (Pitman 1917; Burns 1954). There was no room for the smallholder. By 1770 one hundred and twenty landholders monopolized the land on the island.

Land without labour was useless, however. Sugar production required a much larger labour force than could be found on the island. Earlier labour requirements had been obtained through indentured servanthood. The lure of land and possible wealth at the end of indentureship had brought many to the island. With the establishment of the plantation, however, land had become a scarce resource. By 1734 all the arable lands were cleared and the smallholders were choosing to emigrate, further limiting the numbers available for work.

Volunteer indentured servants had long ceased to flock to the island. The planters made repeated urgent requests to the Lords of Trade and Plantations for any kind of servant, including convicts. Even these were hard to come by, because there was a high demand for labour throughout the colonies. The numbers that came were inadequate for the labour intensive requirements of

sugar production. Land had to be cleared, fields hoed and planted; weeds had to be removed, and the cane harvested and transported to the mills. The extraction of sugar itself required the elaborate processes of milling and crushing, followed by clarification, filtering and crystallization (Pares 1928; Dookhan 1971; Goveia 1965).

It was this need for a large supply of mainly unskilled labour, that saw the planters turning to Africa and the slave trade being conducted by the Spanish and the Dutch. Until the growth of the plantation this labour source had been largely ignored by other European settlers. Now, not only did the African supply seem endless, but it was comparatively cheaper. When it was discovered that the "money that procured a white man's service for ten years, could buy a Negro for life" (Guerra y Sanchez 1964:18), thereby allowing for an extra-economic appropriation of surplus, the demand for Africans became insatiable. The Atlantic slave trade sky-rocketed. Kittitian planters clamoured as loudly as any of their contemporaries for slaves and more slaves (Sherlock 1973; Pitman 1917).

The Dutch, the established traders in the region, supplied early demands, but the British soon gained a monopoly on the trade to its colonies with the establishment of the Royal African Company in 1670. Neighbouring Nevis became the English slave market. Kittitian planters complained that this market was not satisfying their demand. In a 1680 protest to the Lords of Trade and Plantations they pointed out that:

A great hindrance to the improvement of this colony is the Royal African Company ... it is as great bondage for

us to cultivate our plantations without negro slaves as for the Egyptians to make bricks without straw. (Colonial Papers, America and The West Indies, No. 1441, 12, July 1680 quoted in Merrill 1958).

The planters admitted to having received a considerable number of slaves, but claimed that these were "refuse negroes" which were delivered at "intolerable and immoderate rates". They solved their problem by turning to the Dutch again, this time trading illegally.

Through these means, "slave" became the predominant and legal status of the bulk of the producers of sugar during this period. The "dark sweet crystal" was ground out by the sweat and blood of gangs of regimented labour, who were the "main sinews of the sugar plantations" (House of Commons Papers, quoted in Goveia 1965:121).

The trade in slaves consequently altered the population structure of St. Kitts. By the end of the seventeenth century the slave population jumped from 352 in 1672 to about 3,294. By the end of the eighteenth it had risen to about 26,000 (Table 3:1). Between 1721 and 1731 Kittitian planters imported some 10,358 slaves, but the absolute slave population only increased by about 7,000. This is probably explained by the fact that large numbers died each year.

The slave death rate was incredibly high in the late seventeenth century. At a rate of one-quarter of the population per annum, it was even higher among males (Dunn 1973). Overwork, especially the initial forest-clearing, disease, execution and even occasional suicides, account for this high mortality rate. The division of labour which assigned the more strenuous tasks like tree-felling, bush clearing and holing of the ground to men,

Table 3:1 Population of St. Kitts During Slavery

Year	White	Slave
1672	----	352
1678	1,234	1,436
1708	1,104	3,294
1720	2,800	7,321
1729	3,697	14,663
1734	3,881	17,335
1744	3,222	19,174
1755	2,713	21,891
1770	2,746	23,000
1774	1,900	23,462
1787	1,912	20,435
1807	-----	26,000
1812	1,610	19,885
1826	1,860	19,525
1831	1,600	19,084
1834	1,612	15,667

Sources: Watkins 1924; Pitman 1917; Deerr 1949;
Dunn 1973; Richardson 1983; Cox 1984.

probably accounted for the higher rate among this group. Women were generally assigned to planting, weeding and domestic work. Dunn (1973) points out that although young male slaves made up more than 60 per cent of the cargoes, the sex ratio was about 50:50 around the turn of the century. There was a general

disregard by the planters for the lives of the slaves. In addition, because it was cheaper to "buy than to breed", breeding was not encouraged (Sherlock 1973; Goveia 1965; Dunn 1973; Pares 1928).

Plantation and The Slave Mode of Production

By the mid-seventeenth century Europeans had quickly realized that the big "bonanza" which had been sought in minerals, could be found in sugar. One observer during this period noted that "there is a silvermine in St. Christophe (St. Kitts) ... such an enterprise would require great stock and an infinite number of slaves. The true silvermine on that island is sugar" (quoted in Williams 1944:11). The driving force behind the heavy investments in the sugar industry was the chance to make a "big killing" and use the profits to buy peerages or reinforce statuses back in Britain.

The considerable amount of capital required for initial investment ensured that only those with access to wealth in Britain were able to establish plantations. The major investment by far was in land and labour, but it also included work animals, mills, boiling houses and so on. The extent of the planters' capital investment may be gathered from a typical layout.

A plantation averaged about 200 to 300 hundred acres. Because of the highly perishable nature of the sucrose content of cane, the mill (initially the cattle mill, powered by mules and horses and later maybe a windmill), was located at a central, easily accessible point in the layout. Nearby stood the boiling and curing houses, a still house, the owner's and manager's

residences as well as storehouses, animal pens and the plantation hospital or "hot" house. The slave huts, "flimsy little huts ... valued at 2 pounds a piece" (Dunn 1973:139) were located some distance from this centre, usually squeezed into drainage ghaunts so the planter could make use of every inch of his arable land. Higher up the mountain, on the marginal lands in the ravines, were the slave provision grounds.

In addition to this layout, the planter provided tools and equipment for cultivation and processing. These included hoes, picks, bills, heavy rollers for the mill, cattle (mules and horses) to power them, clarifiers, boilers, fireplaces, ladles and skimmers. He was also supplied with coolers and hogsheads for curing and shipping the sugar, as well as tills, cisterns and pumps for the still house (Goveia 1965; Dookhan 1971; Pares 1950).

The capital which financed this venture came mainly from mercantile houses in Britain which charged at least 5- per cent interest (Pares 1950; Goveia 1965). All of it was centred around a regimented, quasi-military organization of labour. The planter usually divided his lands in half so that planting on one section was concluded just as the other became ready for harvesting. Each cycle lasted between twelve to fifteen months (Dookhan 1971; Goveia 1965; Pares 1950).

This routine meant that there was no slack period for the slaves, who went from planting one crop to harvesting another. The incessant hard labour was extracted under a strict system of supervision. One contemporary writer described the routine: The slaves were awakened at dawn and worked till sunset with a short

break for breakfast at nine, and a lunch break which varied from one to three hours. These breaks were hardly rest or feeding periods, Ramsay (1789) notes, because during that time they were required to gather bundles of grass to feed the animals [6]. Under this routine the slaves put in at least a ten hour day in the field, plus some three or four hours picking grass. In addition, at crop time when the grinding went on all night, they put in much longer hours (more than eighteen hours at a time), supplying canes for the mill, fuel for the boilers, [7] or extracting the sugar from the canes (Goveia 1965:130).

The slaves worked in gangs. Each gang was watched over by a driver with a whip, who was under the supervision of an overseer. The 'main' gang, composing the strongest of the field slaves prepared the land by "holing" - a time consuming, back-breaking method which involved digging up square hole in a long line. Edwards (1801) observed that for forty slaves, holing one acre of land was a hard day's work.

After the holing, the soil was manured. Slaves with baskets of dung scattered it into the holes. Cane cuttings were then planted. Later there was the weeding and moulding. These tasks were largely relegated to female slaves and children from the "hogmeat" gang - a group made up of children under twelve (Goveia 1965).

When the fields were ready for harvesting, bills or machetes were used to cut the canes which grew up to eight feet in height. The canes were stripped, tied into bundles and carried or carted to the mill. There they were crushed and processed under the watchful eyes of skilled slaves. [8]. The juice was clarified by

heating and adding just the right amount of lime. It was then boiled in coppers and allowed to condense. Finally it was cooled, cured in perforated hogsheads which allowed the molasses to drip out leaving the ~~sugar~~ crystals, and shipped (Dookhan 1971; Pares 1950; Goveia 1965; Pitman 1917).

It was under this rigid exploitation of labour, that St. Kitts, lined with waving green fields of cane was regarded as a "sugar island par excellence", "the garden of the West Indies", the "silvermine", in the eighteenth century (Pitman 1917; Williams 1944; Goveia 1965). Bryan Edwards, noting a record production of five hogsheads (eighty hundredweight) per acre for one plantation, and another's average of four hogsheads (sixty-four hundredweight) per acre, claimed that the island's average production of two hogsheads (thirty-two hundredweight) per acre was so prodigious a return (four times that of Jamaica), that it was not equalled, in his estimation, by any other sugar producing country on the globe (Edwards 1794:431). Kittitian sugar exports were in fact, comparable with islands like Antigua and Barbados which were double and almost triple its size (Tables 3.2 and 3.3).

Sugar exports to England from St. Kitts rose from an annual average of 819 tons in 1706 - 1710, to 9,143 tons in 1771 - 1775, more than an elevenfold increase (Sheridan 1970:84). In 1770 the 11,008 tons exported was valued at 338,609 pounds sterling. The total capital stock which was concentrated in the hands of less than 120 proprietors, was appraised at 4 million pounds around that same time. Of this, 1.3 million pounds was the value of slaves (Sheridan 1970:84).

We have no record of actual profits realized by planters, because they generally kept their wealth secret. Their profit margins, however, varied with the fluctuating price of sugar and the cost of slaves.

The price of muscovado sugar in the late seventeenth century when Kittitian planters became actively engaged had dropped from 4 pounds per hundredweight in the 1640's, to 16 shillings and 11 pence per hundredweight. In 1733, it was selling at 16 shillings

Table 3:2

Sugar Exports to England 1763-1774

Year	Colony	Exports (Tons)
1763	Antigua	6,398
	Barbados	8,264
	Jamaica	33,981
	St. Kitts	7,499
1768	Antigua	10,400
	Barbados	7,836
	Jamaica	34,903
	St. Kitts	9,980
1770	Antigua	11,324
	Barbados	8,635
	Jamaica	35,943
	St. Kitts	11,008
1774	Antigua	11,672
	Barbados	6,978
	Jamaica	45,487
	St. Kitts	10,237

Source: Ragatz (1928:73-172).

Note: The quantities shown are the legal exports.

Table 3:3

Sugar Production of the Ten Leading Caribbean
Islands, 1741-5 and 1766-70
 (Annual Averages in Tons)

	Area in Sq. Miles	1741-5	1766-70
St Domingue (Fr.)	10,714	42,400	61,247
Jamaica (British)	4,411	15,578	36,021
Antigua (British)	108	6,229	10,690
Cuba (Spanish)	44,164	2,000	10,000
St Kitts (British)	68	7,299	9,701
Martinique (Fr.)	425	14,163	8,778
St. Croix (Danish)	84	730	8,230
Guadeloupe (Fr.)	583	8,112	7,898
Barbados (British)	166	6,640	7,819
Grenada (British)	120		6,552
Total	60,843	103,151	166,93

Source: Sheridan (1970:23)

and 11 pence per hundredweight. By 1747 it had surged to 42 shillings 9 pence. This was largely the result of the ability of the absentee planters and investors, who made up the West India Interest in the British Parliament, to push a Bill through the House which allowed the colonies to ship sugar directly to other European ports. Merchants and sugar refiners strongly contested

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this Act but the dominant planter interest prevailed. As demand was exceeding supply up to this point, the prices increased (Dunn 1973; Pitman 1917).

By 1782 the wars had driven prices up to about 106 shillings per hundredweight. These increased prices served temporarily to offset the increasing costs of production. By 1783 prices had dropped to 80 shillings, and 69 shillings in 1796 (Pares 1928). These prices saw the refiners lobbying for the introduction of foreign and East Indian sugar at the same duty rates to challenge the West Indian monopoly (Pares 1928; Pitman 1917).

The elaborate organizational structure of the plantation: its layout, land use, labour regimentation and profitability under slavery has gained it the classification of a mode of production in itself. The plantation, however, as noted above, was never a separate and historically distinct mode of production. It was the institutionalized form of the basic unit of production which continued to exist in different forms, long after slavery (Post 1978; Thomas 1984a).

The plantation layout was impressive, but its real significance was not confined to its internal structure. The plantation, more importantly, was influenced by, integrated into and dependent upon the emerging capitalism in Britain. This is demonstrated in the dependence on the markets, technology and capital created by the development of capitalism.

In the first case, profitable production without a large market is almost impossible. The market in St. Kitts for sugar was almost non-existent. Disposal of large scale sugar produce required a mass consumption market. This was found in the growing

population of displaced peasants in Britain. The agricultural revolution and the spread of large scale technological farming coincided with a population growth that doubled in the last half of the eighteenth century. Sugar had the additional advantage of not being as truly exotic as spices, thereby appealing to a larger market as the drinking of tea and coffee became more popular.

Not only was the market for Kittitian sugar located in Britain, but the capital required for initial investment sprang from the increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few there. Mercantile capitalists used the pre-capitalist slave mode as its agent in the West Indies, drawing it into the capitalist mode of exchange. Uneven development on St. Kitts after slavery, consequently stemmed from the particular characteristics of this slave mode of production.

Colonialism was the mediating force which determined this mode of production. Slavery was not a "natural" outgrowth of the development of the indigenous society. While the plantations appeared to be "little states", St. Kitts under slavery was an instance of British mercantile capitalism. It was the creation of external forces, shaped in relation to its place in the British imperial system (Williams 1944; Post 1978). With the production of sugar under slavery, the island was part of the triangular pattern that British and European capital financed. The Royal African Company provided the young slaves from the African coast. These produced the sugar on Kittitian plantations, which was then imported into Britain as raw material for manufacture. Planters in turn imported basic supplies from Britain and North America.

Although slavery was pre-capitalist, the slaves did produce surpluses. Slave owners realized profits through the appropriation of the products of surplus labour time over and above that required for the slave's subsistence, even though the slave was regarded as property.

The surplus value produced under slave conditions was therefore absolute. Earnest Mandel points this out in his examination of ancient slavery:

The surplus value produced by a slave, leaving out of account the recovery of his purchase price, represents the difference between the value of the commodities he produces (and which his master appropriates) and the cost of production of these commodities (cost of raw material, overheads, including the depreciation of tools, and maintenance costs of the slave himself) (Mandel 1968:87).

While Mandel was dealing with ancient slavery, his argument can be extended to Caribbean slavery. The owner was responsible for the maintenance and subsistence - feeding, clothing and housing of the slave. It is reasonable to assume that the slave's working day consisted of necessary and surplus labour; and that by appropriating the products of surplus labour time, the owner realized his/her profits.

On St. Kitts, extra profits were obtained by overworking the slaves - work days in excess of twelve hours and sometimes nearly twenty-four hours. In addition, the work load was intensified - intense manuring of fields, grass picking, all under the watchful eyes of the slave driver and his whip. The limit of the slave's work day was his or her physical capacity.

Further, the planter sought to extend profits not through any

fundamental alteration in the productive process, but through increasing the number of slaves, and the size of his plantation wherever possible. While the small size of the island limited the ultimate expansion of the estate, the planter utilized virtually all the available lands. Along with this the custom was to use as many slaves as was possible. By the mid-eighteenth century there was a population density of about three hundred slaves per square mile. (Burns 1954).

On the other hand, the rate of absolute surplus value was increased by reduction in the amount relegated towards the maintenance and subsistence of the slave. In addition to production of sugar on the plantation during the early days, slaves were required to produce food crops for their subsistence on "good cane land". As the planters increased their production, however, land became too valuable to be used for anything other than cane [9]. They also found it 'wasteful' to give slaves time off for the cultivation of these provision grounds. Consequently, the slaves were allowed to cultivate only those marginal mountain lands, the ravines which were not suitable for planting cane. This they had to do on their own time. Such marginal lands could not support the slaves, and the planters' reliance on imported supplies for their subsistence as well as the slaves' increased.

Evidence suggests that the amount of supplies granted the slaves were hardly enough to sustain the heavy labour required of them (Goveia 1965; Sherlock 1973). The St. Kitts legislature reported in 1788 that masters generally provided about nine pints of flour, corn or peas, and about eight herring or other salted fish per slave per week. Skilled slaves, those involved in the

processing of sugar, received a double allowance, while children were allotted half the usual. During crop time when cane liquor was available, it was assumed that the slaves would partake of this, so the provisions were reduced by half (House of Commons Accounts and Papers 1789, quoted in Goveia 1965:138). These were the legal requirements, but as one contemporary (Ramsay 1784) pointed out, the planters could shirk these responsibilities without being penalized.

As for clothing, one suit of osnaburg, a thick, coarse linen, was the annual provision, although some slaves also received a blanket and a jacket, trousers or petticoat (Goveia 1965; Pares 1928; Sherlock 1973). The houses were "posts in the ground, thatched around the sides and upon the roof" (St. Kitts Legislature in Goveia 1968:139). In general, slaves had to supplement these inadequate provisions by cultivating the marginal lands on the hillsides.

The basic contradiction in slavery was the fact that both labour power and fixed capital were combined in the person of the slave (Post 1978:23). The slave was a commodity as well as a person. This meant that the over-exploitation of the slave's labour power destroyed the fixed capital he or she embodied as well. Crisis in the slave mode of production was therefore likely to occur when the rate of destruction of fixed capital exceeded the rate of profit from slave produce (Post 1978:23).

By the late eighteenth century the slave plantations were tottering on the brink of destruction. Slaves were becoming more expensive. The costs of production were rising and it was

becoming more difficult to maintain the by now overpopulated plantations, which the planters still felt were absolutely necessary for profitable production. Absentee remittances, commissions, freight insurance and duties were absorbing most of the plantation profits, channelling them back into Britain.

Although the mode of production on St. Kitts prior to the 1830's was shaped by emerging capitalism, and although the goal behind the plantation was production for profit, and private appropriation of that profit, the planters themselves were only speculative capitalists. Despite the huge capital outlays, they were interested only in the real subordination of labour and the abstraction of absolute surplus value at that time. This, in fact, was the general outlook of merchant capital at the time (Thomas 1984b:11). The fact that they invested in sugar, the price of which was very uncertain, demonstrates this. These planters were not interested in the returns from the small steady yields: they anticipated the big bonanza. In addition, the fact that these planters sought mainly to reinforce their statuses back in Britain, meant that the locally produced surplus was "consumed" elsewhere. This tendency was not characteristic of the driving force of self-expanding value that accompanied accumulation in the emerging capitalist societies at the centre (Thomas 1984b:12).

Planters used their profits to engage in "borough-mongering" - the purchase of seats to enhance their prestige. It also helped to create the powerful West India Interest in Parliament. They organized themselves into clubs like the Planters Clubs of London and Bristol. They joined forces with the West India merchants. In general they engaged in ostentatious living to the chagrin of

the old aristocracy, giving way to the old saying "as rich as a West India planter" (Pares 1928; Pitman 1917; Williams 1944).

On St. Kitts there were complaints about the "niggardly proprietors in England, who expend in ostentation what ought to be put to profit on their estates" (Caines 1801 in Goveia 1965:110). By 1744 the island legislature was complaining that over one half of the landowners were absentees and tried unsuccessfully to levy a tax against them (Pitman 1917:39). The absentee planters themselves complained about the inefficiency and dishonesty of the managers left in charge, but these were not reasons enough to induce them to return to the plantations. By 1849 the Governor was claiming that the number of resident planters was no more than eight (Davy 1854:459). This may have been an exaggeration, but it serves to indicate the high rate of absenteeism.

The speculative nature of the planters, producing for consumption in Britain, is also reflected in certain pre-capitalist patterns of local investment and forms of technology. As noted above, planters sought to realize more profits through the extensive rather than the intensive exploitation of labour: longer hours, more slaves and new acreage, rather than trying to raise productivity per worker per hour by improving farming methods.

The planters resisted improved technology. This was most evident in their refusal to implement the plough. Excuses ranged from the claim that the land was too steep, to the incapacity of the slaves to handle it. The real reason, however, as some admitted, was the "difficulty of keeping cattle" to pull the

plough, as this would mean turning some cane land into pasture (House of Commons Papers vol. xxvi 1789, St. Christopher, in Goveia 1965:117). This refusal to turn any cane land into pasture, it was pointed out above, meant that the slaves had to hand feed those animals used to power the mill. In addition, slaves were required to do other laborious tasks like taking manure uphill, which could have been done much easier with the use of work animals. Consequently, the slaves continued to prepare the land using the time and labour consuming method of holing with the hoe, well into the nineteenth century.

The Kittitian planters also resisted the vacuum pan, an invention which increased the processing efficiency by about 30 to 40 per cent. This was invented in 1813, but was not implemented until the early twentieth century.

Thus it was that by the turn of the nineteenth century a pattern had been established: the environment and African slaves were being exploited by British speculators with the aid of the colonial state and British finance houses. The surpluses appropriated were ploughed back into Britain for consumption there. They also served to help fuel the development of capitalism there [10]. As we shall see later, many of the growing number of absentee planters were not only part of the landed classes in Britain, but were also to become more closely linked with capitalist development there.

The slave mode of production established during this colonial period served to relocate a number of Africans to a place they were to eventually call home. Their labour power was not their own and the profits expropriated from their surplus labour were

not for their own development. The poverty suffered by the black slaves whose white masters overworked and underfed them, would follow them into the centuries to come. Later, as "free" labourers would continue to till land which they did not own. Below, we examine the ideological constructs which supported this system of production.

Slavery, Racism and the Colonial State

Racial concepts (race, racism and racial discrimination) have become almost synonymous with slavery in the Caribbean and the Americas as a whole. The task here is to examine the racial system as it evolved in St. Kitts. This can only be accomplished by examining it within its economic base. Hence, what is attempted is the depiction of the specific form of racism which arose under the slave mode of production on St. Kitts in conjunction with its incorporation into the mercantilist phase of capitalist development.

What has been gathered from the preceeding examination of St. Kitts' early colonial history is that the introduction of slavery was not instigated by ideas of racial inferiority. Nor was slavery introduced by Kittitian planters. Slavery has existed at various times throughout history. It was economics, the quest for an adequate supply of labour for the emerging plantations, which was the driving force behind the introduction of slavery on the island. Other sources of labour, indenture and even kidnapping, had been explored and found inadequate for plantation production. The desperate search saw the planters turning to the existing

slave trade.

The position of slave, therefore, was first established through the relations of production formed under the slave mode. The slave was a commodity, a chattel, part of the investment that the speculative planter made in the production of sugar.

This colonial slavery, unlike African and European systems of bondage, had no other purpose than that of profit-making. As Sherlock (1973:99) points out, there was no humane element in this slavery. These slaves were not prisoners of war whose lives were spared by the system. Neither was there any moral element involved, as in the systems that enslaved guilty criminals as penalty for breaking the law instead of putting them to death. The motive was economic through and through. Slavery provided the large supplies of labour which were required, and at a much cheaper rate than other sources too.

Slavery was economic in origin, but it was subsequently rationalized in racial terms. While ancient slaveries had included derogatory classifications distinguishing the enslaved from the enslaving peoples, it did not until now, entail the use of specific racial categories (Hall 1980). Pre-emancipation slavery was a system which involved the constant use of brute force. The chattel embodied the labour power bought by the master, but the chattel was also a person - a black African. The colour and cultural differences were used as rationalizations for the legal system which denied personal liberties to the person who was also property. The ever-present possibility of the legally bound slaves revolting and asserting themselves as free human beings,

was a constant threat to their captors.

The process of legal bondage was deemed necessary for the reproduction of the economic system. Human beings were treated as commodities. Their subjugation, dehumanization and exploitation perpetuated the system that brought wealth to their subjugators. The dominance was centred on the economic element, but as Post (1978) points out, people always try to rationalize their dominance or domination. The manipulation of ideology and the state apparatus consequently became the mechanisms for the rationalization and preservation of the system.

— This concern for the preservation of the system was the driving force behind the many policing laws which governed slave activity. The development of the plantation had led to the disappearance of the small white planter. Most of those who had been swallowed up in the sugar revolution had moved on to other islands, or had turned to buccanneering to make their fortunes. One of the contradictions which became inherent in the establishment of the slave mode on St. Kitts was that a small number of white planters ruled over ever increasing numbers of African slaves. By the end of the seventeenth century (as noted above), the slave population had outnumbered the white population by about two to one. By the mid-eighteenth century it was more than ten to one, and even twenty to one in some areas. A concerted slave revolt could bring about an end to the system in a hurry. The slave owners were well aware of this threat, and constantly used their influence over the state apparatus to enact laws to preserve the system.

Before outlining some of these laws, the nature of the state

apparatus under colonial slavery will be outlined. The destruction of the social formation which existed on St. Kitts before European settlement meant that the creation of the colonial state was unhindered by any pre-capitalist forms. There was no remnant of the indigenous political system to integrate into the new colonial system.

The colonial state became the active agency through which St. Kitts was established as an agricultural periphery - an outpost of British mercantile capital. Its role was central in the subjugation and enslavement of imported Africans, since there was no local population to incorporate into the new economic system as workers. As a result of its role, the colonial state became highly militarized. The colony had to be protected from hostile European rivals, as well as Carib attempts to regain their settlement. In addition, when slavery was introduced, force was required to keep the Africans in subjugation.

Until early 1660 the system of government in St. Kitts was proprietary. This colony, like the other British territories, had been granted to the Earl of Carlisle and his descendants. With the development of the plantation and its growing prosperity, the colonial government resumed a more direct participation in colonial affairs. The system of government which emerged resembled the metropolitan parliamentary system. It included a Governor who represented the King, an Executive Council corresponding to the House of Lords, an Assembly corresponding to the House of Commons, a judiciary, a local militia and garrisons of British troops (Dookhan 1971:111; Goveia 1965).

This form of government later became known as the Old Representative System. The Governor was empowered by the colonial centre. He was the symbol of its overarching sovereignty and was expected to protect the interests of the British Government. He had the power to recruit councillors from among the planters, or dismiss them after consulting with the central authorities. The Legislative Assembly, on the other hand, was the centre of local power. It was controlled and monopolized by the planter class.

Under the St. Kitts Act #71 of 1727, franchise was extended only to free male white Protestants, twenty-one years and over, who were natural born or naturalized British subjects and owned at least ten acres of land or a house and land to the yearly value of 10 pounds currency. The same conditions were required of candidates for the Legislative Assembly, with the exception that they had to own forty acres of land or a house and land to the value of 40 pounds per annum (Goveia 1965:90).

In effect, it was the plantation owners who dominated the political system. From 1727, there were twenty-four of them in the Legislative Assembly, and ten in the Executive Council. They controlled the institutions of government within the colony. The Assembly members laid claim to all the rights and privileges of the British House of Commons. They took control of the colony's finances. They were the judges, the Justices of the Peace, the treasurers, the Masters of the Chancery and the military officers wielding all the power available to them. Because of their small numbers and the present desire to make a profit, there was much multiple officeholding. For example, Archibald Esdaile was a member of the Council in the mid-eighteenth century. He was also

Master in Chancery and Judge Surrogate of the Court of Vice-Admiralty, as well as Assistant Justice in the Court of the King's Bench and Common Pleas. In the 1780's John Garnett, who was Speaker of the Assembly, also acquired some of the most lucrative posts on the island: Master in Chancery, Casual Receiver and Registrar of Deeds (Goveia 1965:87).

Later we shall see that as absenteeism among these landowners grew, the political ruling class was opened up to non-Protestants and the not-so-wealthy white men. The general rule, however, was control by the propertied plantation owners. These were bound together by the common interest of maintaining the slave system. Even some of the Governors were proprietors. Goveia (1965:76) indicates that in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, five of the Governors serving in the Leeward Islands were Kittitian plantation owners. The Governor, usually selected with the approval of the West India Interest in London, more often than not found himself subjected to the will of the local Legislature when the wishes of the Colonial Office conflicted with theirs. (Dookhan 1971; Goveia 1965; Burns 1954).

In spite of the power wielded by the local ruling class, they were in the last instance subject to the mother country. State power flowed from the colonial office downwards. The planters relied on Britain for their naval and military defence, and the colonial office there had the final word. The colonial office in Britain, while holding ultimate power, increasingly relied on the local state to represent its interests. This was encouraged by local and absentee planters who used the local state apparatus in

the crude pursuit of their material interests.

The slave system rested on the legal concept of property in persons, and was accepted in the statute laws of both England and the colonies (Goveia 1965:152; Dookhan 1971). It was generally assumed that the status of slave was hereditary. Children of slave women assumed the status of their mother. The slave laws on St. Kitts were largely of a policing nature. It is through these laws that we are presented with the manner in which the ideology of racism manifested itself in Kittitian slave society. These laws were contained mainly in the Slave Acts of 1711 and 1722, and can be outlined as follows:

1. Slaves were forbidden to have arms.
2. Any slave striking a white person was to be punished by whipping. Wounding a white person was punishable by dismemberment or death.
3. Slaves were forbidden to leave the plantation without a ticket authorizing them to do so.
4. Slaves were forbidden to hold "dangerous" assemblies with slaves from other plantations.
5. The beating of drums and the blowing of horns (which were considered communication between slaves) were also forbidden.
6. Slaves were not allowed to trade without their masters' permission.
7. All slaves guilty of running away or stealing, were to be punished by a slave court which consisted of two or more justices without a jury.
8. Those aiding runaway slaves were to be punished, and those

who captured or killed them were to be rewarded. Slave huts were also subject to searches for runaways.

Punishments ranged from whippings to mutilation and death. The law defined slaves as property, and treated them as such. The law also regarded the Africans as inferior beings, and also treated them accordingly.

While these laws were enacted early in establishment of the society, it was not until the late eighteenth century when slavery and its barbarities came under attack, that a law was passed on St. Kitts to prevent the mutilation of slaves (St. Kitts Act 1783, in Goveia 1965: 187). Masters were granted extensive powers over their slaves, but slaves were not protected from cruel and abusive masters who treated them as property, not persons, inflicting severe punishments for minor offences (Dookhan 1971).

It was only near the end of the slave system, that men like Jordan Burke, Wadham Strode and William Herbert could be made accountable for mutilating their slaves. Burke was fined 50 pounds for cutting off a female slave's ear, while Strode was fined 100 pounds for cutting off a male slave's ear in 1785. In 1786, Herbert was fined a mere 40 shillings for the "wanton ill-treatment" of a six-year old male slave. So serious was Herbert's abuse of the child that the Provost Marshall took the "poor unoffending boy into his custody" to protect him against further violence (Goveia 1965:186-187).

Although these cases were tried after the law preventing the mutilation of slaves had been passed, they were handed much lighter sentences than were permitted by the law. The penalty of

500 pounds and six months imprisonment was enacted by law. It was probably only the watchful eye of the abolitionists that made these cases come to trial in the first place. The law itself had been enacted under the fire of their strong criticism. Wilberforce, in his motion for the abolition of the slave trade in 1797, also criticized the small fines which these men had to pay for such gross crimes (Goveia 1965:187; Parliamentary Papers, XXXIII, 1389).

The laws enforced the status of slave as property. Masters could claim financial compensation for slaves legally put to death. They could also claim compensation if their slaves were used or abused by another white person. As personal property they could be sold in debt or bequeathed in inheritance. Slaves, on the other hand, could not fill any office, possess any property or testify against a white person. They could, on the other hand, be criminally prosecuted (Dookhan 1971; Goveia 1965). Chief Justice Ottley, commenting on the fact that slaves could not testify against whites, claimed that:

As evidence of slaves is never admitted against white men, the difficulty of legally establishing facts is so great, that white men are in a manner put beyond the law (House of Commons Accounts and Papers, vol. xxiv, 1790-91, No. 746 p. 159 in Goveia 1965:189).

In condemning the Kittitian slave laws in 1784, the Reverend James Ramsay had declared:

Our laws, indeed, as far as they respect slaves, are only licensed modes of exercising tyranny on them, for they are not parties to them though their lives and feelings be concluded by them (Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves ... 1784, in Goveia 1965:190).

In relation to the condition of the masters and the slaves, he concluded that "no law restrains the one, no election or compact secures the other". Even if the slaves could seek justice, it was highly unlikely that they would have received it in the courts, for the special criminal branch of the judiciary reserved for slaves was controlled by the planters.

The slave laws and the ideological system in general were aimed at obtaining the complete subordination of slaves to their masters. The preservation of slavery and, consequently, the profitable sugar plantations depended on this, strict subordination. On an island where the disproportionate numbers of masters and slaves threatened the system, the political and ideological apparatuses served to reinforce the economic domination. Through these mechanisms, racial and social inferiority were attributed to the enslaved.

The dominance the white planters gained from their economic position and political power, was further enhanced as the racist logic they used to legitimate the enslavement of African labour was institutionalized. The slaves were continually referred to as inferior, lazy, primitive, child-like, brutish and animal-like. This image surfaced in correspondence, reports, and the literature in general. Janet Schaw, commenting on the slave driving system on St. Kitts in the eighteenth century, noted:

When one comes to be better acquainted with the nature of Negroes, the horror of it must wear off. It is the suffering of the human mind that constitutes the greatest misery of punishment, but with them it is merely corporeal. As to the brutes, it inflicts no wounds on their minds, whose natures seem made to bear it, and whose sufferings are not attended to with shame or pain beyond the present moment (Schaw, Lady of Quality, 127, quoted in Goveia 1965:134).

One of the most persistent excuses used to support the enslavement of black Africans to work the plantations, was the claim which surfaces in twentieth century analyses that climatic conditions (the hot sun) made it impossible to employ white Europeans in the fields. Black Africans were supposedly better able to withstand the heat and the punishments as well (Pares 1928; 1950; Pitman 1917; Burns 1954). Racism became so dominant that it eclipsed the ideological position of mercantilism which legitimated the accumulation of capital in the centre (Henry 1985:30).

The manipulation of the ideological system was easier in this particular social formation because pre-existing cultural patterns, like all the other institutions, had been erased. There was one difference, however. While Africans were forcefully removed from their homelands, they could not be forced to leave their cultural traditions behind.

Europeans set out to recreate the system they had left behind, one that would support the new economic system. This in turn required the complete subjugation and, consequently, the deculturalization of the Africans. This process was facilitated by the fact that Africans were uprooted from different communities and cultures and indiscriminately lumped together.[11] At times there was a conscious attempt to separate relatives. In addition, the new hostile environment was not receptive to African traditional practices. Political traditions became impossible, although the symbolic crowning of kings of various ethnic groups was practised during the early part of the slave era (Goveia 1965;

Henry 1985 Sherlock 1973). Deculturalization was a specific function of the colonial state. Drumming, dancing, festivals and any other cultural practice which the state considered as threatening, or a possible means for resistance, were banned or controlled.

While African deculturalization meant that the social formation which emerged on St. Kitts was largely shaped and dominated by the English system, there were certain accommodations. A pidginized English, composed of English and African elements, was spoken by the slaves, but understood by all. The various belief systems of the Africans were forced to deteriorate into a general magical outlook, devoid of religious devotion, known as obeah. The practice of obeah (which still exists in St. Kitts as well as other islands today), involved rituals which centred around procuring the aid of spirits to solve day to day problems, to protect self and property, or to inflict harm on enemies. Obeah assumes the existence of 'jumbies' and other nocturnal evil spirits, which usually harm people. The early obeah practice under slavery, also included soothsayings or "foreseeing Events, and ... pointing out the Means of producing these Events".—Special herbal potions and remedies were also prominent. A colonial agent noted that on St. Kitts obeah practitioners:

from their Skill in Simples, and the Virtues of Plants, sometimes operate extraordinary Cures in Disease, which have baffled the Skill of regular Practitioners, and more especially in foul Sores and Ulcers. I have myself made use of their Skill for the last with great success (House of Commons Accounts and Papers, vol. XXVI 1789, quoted in Goveia 1965:248).

As Africans became christianized, the system became further hybridized. For example, the Bible became a tool in the divining practices. (Goveia 1965; Henry 1985; Sherlock 1973).

Deculturalization and subjugation of Africans also meant that the rich African heritage and traditions of art - sculpture, paintings and carvings, were not developed on St. Kitts, as they were in Haiti, a country which managed to throw off its colonial chains relatively early (Sherlock 1973; Henry 1985).

The manipulation of religion and education would become important instruments of domination, with the collapse of the system of slavery. This would not be until the nineteenth century, however, since no effort was made to christianize the slaves until near the end of the eighteenth century (Goveia 1965; Coke 1971; Cox 1984).

In their own eyes the planters were economically, politically and socially dominant, and this dominance, achieved through coercion, dictated an inferior position to the enslaved, creating caste-like divisions according to class and colour. While all the whites on St. Kitts did not belong to the ruling planter class, there was no permanent group of white peasants like those in Barbados.

The supervisory position of overseer was probably the lowest position in which most of the landless whites found themselves (Goveia 1965; Cox 1984). Even those who were "artisans" employed slaves to do physical work for them. By the end of the eighteenth century the landless whites remaining on St. Kitts were largely professional or managerial. Overseers and managers invested in slaves of their own and hired out these, as well as some of their

absentee masters to build their own fortunes. As Cardoso (1962:23) noted, "... freedom in slave society is defined by slavery. Therefore, everyone aspired to have slaves and having them, not to work" (in Geneovese 1969:6).

For all white males on St. Kitts there was always the hope of "making it big" and moving into the ruling propertied class. The story of John Stanley who rose from a family of poor whites in Nevis to become a member of the St. Kitts Legislature and Commander in Chief of the Leeward Islands, and then to retire to England to become Member of Parliament for Hastings, may have been a exceptional case of good fortune. The opportunity to rise to the white elite, however, became easier with the increasing growth of the absentee planters in the eighteenth century. The requirements for entry into the Legislature were gradually opened up to include any white male (Goveia 1965).

As aspiring owners or owners of slaves, whites on the island were likely to rationalize and support the system which subjugated black labour. The system extended discrimination to the free coloured on the island. Free coloured is a term used to refer to all non-white members of the population who were not enslaved. This group was overwhelmingly made up of Afro-European descendants - initially, the offspring of slave women who were raped or seduced by their white masters. Under slavery, children acquired the status of their mother, which meant that the children of master/slave liaisons would also be slaves. Most masters, however, granted these children their freedom, even when they denied paternity, which was frequent (Cox 1984; Goveia 1965).

Some of these offspring, who became the free coloured, were allowed to work as domestic or house servants, a few were educated by their fathers. Generally, it worked out that the lighter the skin, the greater the number of privileges granted to the individual. Lighter-skinned slaves (usually the master/slave offspring who were not granted freedom), were usually assigned less strenuous tasks (Goyeia 1965).

The free coloured made up a relatively insignificant proportion of the population, until about 1770, when they accounted for about 1.5 per cent of the total population. By 1826 their number had increased to a significant 10.5 per cent of the population (Table 3:4). This increase was due to increasing liaisons between slave men and free coloured women, as well as white master/black slave and white/coloured liaisons and intra-coloured procreation (Cox 1984).

Table 3:4: Population of St. Kitts, 1770-1826

Year	White	Free Coloured	Slave
1770	2,713	391	23,000
1774	1,900	417	23,462
1788	1,912	908	20,435
1805	1,800	198	26,000
1812	1,612	1,996	19,885
1826	1,860	2,500	19,525
1831	1,600	4,600	19,084

Source: Cox 1984.

The free coloureds were not enslaved, but their rights and privileges were curtailed by the slave system. Colour easily distinguished slaves from their masters. With the growth of the free coloured population there was no way of easily distinguishing

free from slave. The rights of the free nonwhite members of the population were constantly abused as a result.

The freedom of the free coloureds was threatened by laws restricting slaves. They were liable to be arrested and punished as runaway slaves. Under a 1797 law, free coloured fishermen were liable to be arrested, whipped and even sold as slaves if they were found fishing between St. Kitts and Nevis unaccompanied by a "credible white person" (Colonial Office 1797; Góveia 1965; Cox 1984). By the turn of the nineteenth century, any nonwhite entering the island was deemed a runaway slave unless he or she could produce a certificate of freedom. One Admiral pointed out the situation:

Here, as in all other Countries, where slavery is established, and where Slaves in their Complexion carry the indelible Marks of their Situation, the Plain, simple Rule universally prevails, that every Person of that Complexion is to be supposed a Slave, till authentic, legal Proofs to the Contrary are produced (Colonial Office 9/28, 1783, in Goveia 1965:221).

In the general attempt to maintain the subjugation of their slaves, the white ruling class alienated the rights of those free persons who resembled the enslaved in colour. Like the slaves, these were denied the right to elect or be elected representatives in the Legislature. This was the case in spite of the fact that, as the free coloureds complained in 1823, they were taxpayers who should, like the whites, enjoy that privilege (Cox 1984:92).

Free coloureds were debarred from public offices, from serving as jurors and managerial positions on estates. They were also prohibited from inheriting large amounts of land. Their children were denied entry into public school. In the churches

they sat in segregated pews, and in death their remains could not be buried near whites. Their economic activities were limited to retailing, fishing, carpentry and other trades. Some women worked as domestic servants or washerwomen. A few owned slaves, acquired mainly through inheritance, but also through marriage, as was the case with Cleghorn, who would later emerge as a champion of the rights of the people of colour, (see Chapter Four). Those who owned slaves usually rented them out to the plantations to do specific jobs (Cox 1984; Goveia 1965).

While whites sought to subjugate the free coloureds to the position of slave, the free coloureds fought desperately against this classification by isolating themselves from slaves. The slave mode of production was the basis of their restricted freedom, but their struggle was for recognition of their own freedom, and consequently the distinction of their position from that of the slaves. It was not until the 1830's, when the anti-slavery movement was at its strongest, that members of the free coloureds began to identify their struggle with the struggle for the freedom of all people of African descent (Cox 1984:107). Earlier in 1788, when slaves on St. Kitts planned a revolt, they had seen no potential allies in the free coloureds. "Don't they stand like Bacara already?" (Aren't they just like the whites anyway?), was the query of one conspirator (Goveia 1965:223).

With the declining population of whites and the increasing numbers of slaves and the free coloureds, there was a desperate effort to build "a strong white population" (Goveia 1965). This meant the inclusion of whites in general into positions of power.

Their inclusion was not without reservations, but the fear of slave revolt, especially when the militia which was stationed at Brimstone Hill was away, was greater. In 1798, the Chief Justice bemoaned the loss of the "respectable members of the Legislature:

This island, ... among the many distinguishing Advantages, which it possesses over her Sister Colonies, from her pre-eminent Fertility, has this singular melancholy Consequence to lament, "that all the Land-Proprietors are settled in Great Britain which has produced a substitution of the most ignorant of the English, Scotch and Irish as their Attorneys and Managers") ... Our Branches of Legislature are not composed of very respectable Members (William Payne Georges to Portland, 22 March 1798, quoted in Goveia 1965:89; cf. Cox 1984:17).

By the time of emancipation, slavery, racism, and racial discrimination were being perpetuated by law and custom. The slaves, however, were never completely subdued. In the next section the form which their resistance took is examined.

Slave Resistance

Scholars of Caribbean slavery have documented a number of resistance and protest methods employed by slaves (Williams 1944; Patterson 1967). These included both passive resistance and rebellions. The particular environment of St. Kitts limited the types of resistance. For example, desertion, which was practised more widely in larger colonies was limited on St. Kitts. There was no vast interior where runaway slaves could set up settlements as did the Jamaican Maroons. Yet, Markus "King of the Woods" headed a small mobile band of about thirty escapees in the 1830's. These roamed the forested highlands above the plantations, occasionally carrying out a raid (Richardson 1984:75). Escape from the island

was also difficult, for any black person free or not, travelling from St. Kitts to nearby Nevis by boat had to be accompanied by a "credible white man" (Goveia 1965; Cox 1984). Yet a few did manage to escape on some of the ships that called at the ports.

This was only occasional, and slaves found other means of resistance. Go-slow tactics and refusal to work were common in spite of the flogging which forced them to return to work. Destruction of plantation property and occasional burning of cane fields were also protest forms which the slaves employed from time to time. Cane leaves were sometimes burnt to facilitate cutting, and slaves on St. Kitts as elsewhere used this as opportunity to destroy the canes as well as the leaves. In the post-emancipation period, the ex-slaves would continue to burn cane fields to protest their exploitation. Slaves who were underfed tried to survive by stealing food as well as property, which they ate or sold (Dookhan 1971; Goveia 1965).

Laws which prevented slave interaction limited organized resistance. In spite of the restrictions, the slaves did attempt organized rebellions. In 1778 a planned revolt was discovered before it could be put into action. Martial law was declared, and conspirators arrested on the charge of planning to "murder the inhabitants, and deliver the island to the French, or any persons who would make them free" (Colonial Papers, 1778; Goveia 1965:95).

The slaves had alarmed their white subjugators once before in 1770, when their 'Saturday night Satire' at Palmetto Point was discovered. Apparently, a number of slaves from different estates met and held mock elections, appointing their own government

officials. The evenings usually ended with a dance (Burns 1954; Goveia 1965). While the evidence indicated that the slaves were only mocking their masters, the Governor speculated on what could have developed from the meetings had they not been discovered in time. The episode provides a good example of accommodation resistance on the part of the slaves, and we can speculate, like the Governor, that the slaves on St. Kitts may have assumed dominance, had an opportunity arisen.

St. Kitts' small size and the strict control enforced by a highly militarized state, contained much of the overt slave resistance which was manifested in territories like Haiti, Jamaica, or even Antigua (Augier et al 1960; Dunn 1973). The potential threat which they (the Kittitian slaves) like their counterparts in other territories embodied, and the open revolts which were taking place on an increasing basis in the area, would eventually contribute to the dissolution of the system. We turn now to some of the other factors which brought about the end of the system.

The Collapse of The Slave Mode

By the end of the eighteenth century the slave mode of production was already under assault. The planters were fighting desperately to perpetuate the system on which they had built their fortunes. The abolition of the system in 1834 was due to a number of social, political and economic factors. These were both internal and external, but the death blow came from economic developments, and it came from outside, from Britain.

The slave mode could not withstand the onslaught of industrial capitalism. It had served its purpose. It had fuelled the development of the capitalist mode in Britain. Its profits had been directed into other industrial, technological and scientific developments, including cheaper and better ways to produce sugar, and the West India colonies no longer played that all important role. Dr. Eric Williams aptly expressed this in his analogy: "Rip Van Winkle had gone to sleep for a hundred years on his sugar plantation" (1944:125). When he awoke, it was to find that his sugar no longer occupied that special place in the changing metropolis.

With the consolidation of industrial capitalism and the growth of free trade in Britain, St. Kitts and other West Indian colonies were anomalies. It was no longer necessary to sustain the privileged West Indian sugar interest. Slavery had exhausted itself both economically and politically in terms of international exchange (Williams 1944; Post 1978; Rodney 1981). St. Kitts, like the other colonies, was structurally dependent on Britain, and when the metropolitan country found cheaper sugar in new sources like India, Mauritius and Brazil, this sugar colony's future was in jeopardy.

Not even the once powerful West India Interest could avert this. They no longer had the strong political clout in Parliament which their weight as a vested interest had gained them during the earlier, more prosperous years.

The economic importance of St. Kitts and the other British West Indian colonies had begun to wane with the American War of Independence in the late eighteenth century, and the increasing

competition from other sugar producing areas, including European beet sugar. British North America had been the main supplier of food and other supplies to the colonies, as well as a market for their sugar and molasses. The acquisition of independence made the United States a "foreign state" with which trade was restricted.

The war had produced a severe crisis in the colonies. Three hundred slaves on St. Kitts died of starvation when food supplies were cut off. It also resulted in a more than one hundred per cent increase in the price of the North American goods after the war (see Table 3:5; Williams 1944; Sherlock 1973 and Goveia 1965). These price increases were reflected in the rise in the cost of sugar production. As the United States began to focus on their trade with the French and Spanish, the planters on St. Kitts and the other British colonies found themselves weakening and falling into greater debt. In addition, sugar duties in Britain were also increasing rapidly as the market became glutted with sugar from the newer colonies.

Table 3:5
Prices Before, During and After the American War of Independence
(in sterling currency, 1776-1783)

	Lumber per (1,000 ft)	Rice (cwt.)	Flour (barrel)	Corn (bushel)	Horses (head)	Oxen (head)
Before	7pounds	20s.	22s. 6d	5ls.	18pounds	14pounds
During	36 "	45s.	50s.	112s.	66 "	45 "
After	14 "	40s.	33s.	9ls.	30 "	34 "

Source: Inniss 1983:19.

The effects of the American Revolution depicted the precarious nature of a system which produced raw agricultural products for export, while importing all other necessities. On the other hand, the Haitian Revolution which occurred near the end of the eighteenth century, depicted the revolutionary power of the slaves and served to further illustrate the instability of the system.

On St. Kitts, where there was a density of about three hundred slaves per square mile, and about twenty slaves to one white person in some areas, there was much cause for alarm. In 1794 an Act to "prevent coloured persons and Negroes and other slaves who formerly resided in the late French islands from coming or being brought into this island" was passed. In 1795 a number of refugees and their slaves from the French colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique, were deported as a security measure. The plantocracy feared the infiltration of French revolutionary ideas, which they felt would 'contaminate' their slaves (Colonial Office, 15/75, 1794, 1795, in Goveia 1965:254).

The planters' speculative outlook on sugar production was no longer appropriate in the context of industrial capitalism. These planters had resisted innovations in the production of sugar, preferring the extensive use of slave labour and time and labour consuming methods. They could only visualize increase in profits through the increase in the absolute rate of surplus extraction. Technological developments under emerging capitalism had provided the means to increase the relative rate of surplus extraction. Ploughs, steam mills and new factory equipment like the vacuum

pan were among the labour saving technology in which the planters could invest.

This was one of the reasons for the growing conflict between the planter aristocracy and the rising industrial bourgeoisie. The planters were clinging to their investments in "human capital" and refusing to shift to the technological innovations which the industrial capitalists offered. While the planters resisted technological innovations in the colonies, industrial capitalist development was in full swing in Britain. This development was to see the industrial capitalist interest usurping the old planter class alliance in Parliament, and sounding the death knell for the slave mode in the process.

The exhaustion of the slave mode's usefulness to capitalism opened it up to attack from all sides. The humanitarian movement for the abolition of the slave trade and freedom for the slaves which had been ineffective in the late eighteenth century was now exerting more influence. The West India Interest fought the movement, but in their weakened state they could not defeat the move for the abolition of the slave mode and finally, slavery itself in 1833.

Colonial St. Kitts had been the creation of external forces. Emerging capitalism in Europe and Britain in particular, had used the pre-capitalist slave mode to integrate it into the international capitalist mode of exchange. The production of sugar for export, the repatriation of profits and the importation of nearly all other necessities, established a pattern of exploitation and underdevelopment which would continue for centuries to come.

In the end it was the pressure of economic forces, including

the declining profitability of slavery as an economic system that destroyed it and saw St. Kitts and other British colonies faced with economic reorganization after 1838. In the next chapter this reorganization will be examined.

Notes

1. There is indication that Warner in his voyages to Guyana had made frequent stops at St. Kitts and was known to the local Chief (Burns 1954; Dookhan 1971).
2. Warner's Carib mistress and his son by her, Indian Warner were among a few of the Caribs to remain on the island. Indian Warner was later recruited to help contain Carib attacks on the Leeward colonies, which were launched from Dominica in the south. Indian Warner joined forces with the Caribs. He was later murdered, allegedly by his half brother, Colonel Warner, in a brutal massacre launched by the British in their attempt to wipe out the "Carib menace" once and for all (Burns 1954; Pitman 1917; Dunn 1973).
3. Names like Basseterre, the capital of St. Kitts, and Cayon are vestiges of French settlement on the island.
4. This practice of granting a nobleman territory was derived from feudal times. This grant to Carlisle which lasted until 1664 when the islands became crown colonies, was resented and opposed by the settlers.
5. After one of the French raids in 1706, a few of the small planters chose to relocate to other islands rather than re-settle. This made it easier for the sugar investors to acquire the land.
6. Ramsay described this gathering of grass to feed the animals as one of the most burdensome of the slave's tasks, given that the planter utilized virtually all his land for cane cultivation. Finding feed, especially in drier seasons was exhausting, because punishment awaited those who returned empty-handed. Ramsay and Caines claimed that many slaves ran away because of the fear of punishment for failure to bring in the required amount of grass in the time allotted for the task (Ramsay 1784; Caines 1801 in Goveia 1965).
7. The use of windmills which became more popular in the late eighteenth century, meant even more work for the slaves, for unlike the cattle they required neither rest nor food.
8. Initially, planters hired skilled white labour to teach this art to the slaves. The planters in turn were able to hire out these skilled slaves to other planters (Pares 1928; Goveia 1965).
9. It was earlier pointed out that slave huts were squeezed into these ghauts for the same reason. These ravines were and still are susceptible to flooding during heavy rains. The better mountain lands were also planted in canes. Slaves had to build stone terraces to control erosion.

10. Abbe Raynal estimated that Europeans gained 10.9 million pounds sterling in 1775. 3.4 million of this went to England (Raynal 1788 in Sheridan 1970:106).
11. In the mid-eighteenth century, James Grainger noted the diverse origins of Kittitian slaves. They included the Mandingoes, muslim slaves from the Senegambian region and the Windward coast; the Koromantyns, from the Kingdoms of the Gold Coast and Shante region; the Pawpaws and Nagoes from the Whydah region; the Eboes and Mocoos from the Bight of Benin, and Angolans (Goveia 1965:243; Sherlock 1973).

CHAPTER FOUR

EMANCIPATION AND WORKER RESISTANCE

The termination of the slave trade and slavery itself in the British West Indies meant the loss of a captive, externally reproduced labour force on islands like St. Kitts. The period following Emancipation was to see the planter aristocracy struggling to keep the "Negroes in their place" at the bottom of the structure as subjugated labour, because the planters believed that their survival as profit-makers depended on this. The greatest problem these planters had was how to replace slavery with wage labour and maintain a constant supply of labour without increasing their costs of production. This period would also see the ex-slaves resisting exploitation by the planters in their struggle to survive.

In effect, as we shall see, the Emancipation Act (1833) was not really against the interests of the planters. They resisted it because they felt that any alteration in the organization of the system of production would be their ruin. Emancipation and the introduction of wage labour in a system where the planters continued to dominate the means of production, as well as the political process, turned out instead to be the basis for their survival as capitalism developed. The planters, Goveia (1965) points out, had been "inflexible at the very point where change was becoming necessary economically." They could not foresee that the overabundance of slaves on the plantation was contributing to their decline, and that the slaves, once free on an island with no available land for settlement, would be forced to submit their

Labour power to their ex-masters. [1].

In addition, Kittitian planters were compensated with about 329,400 pounds sterling out of the 20 million which the colonial government provided for the "loss of slaves" (Hall 1971:10). This allowed the planters to pay off debts in Britain and restore credit ratings. The ex-slaves, who were denied access to or control over the means of production, received no compensation.

It was, on the contrary the intention of the British Government that ex-slaves remain on the plantation selling their labour power to former masters. The conditions of Emancipation demonstrated this. The Emancipation Act, which was passed by the British Parliament in 1833, was to come into effect one year later on the first of August, 1834. Under this Act, all children under six years would become completely free on that date. Older slaves, however, were required to serve as apprentices for four to six years before they could realize their freedom. The apprenticeship period for praedial or field slaves was to last six years, but was four years for the others. Apprentices were bound to work for forty and one-half hours per week for their masters. They could demand wages or withdraw their labour for any work beyond this time. Apprentices could hire themselves out to other employers or work on their own, provided they completed the required time on their masters' plantation. Owners were required to supply shelter and food as under slavery. Apprentices could be sold with the estate, or buy their freedom at a price agreed to by the owner, the special magistrate which Britain would send out, and the apprentice (Burns 1954; Hall 1971). No alternative to

the apprenticeship system was allowed, but colonial legislation could shorten or dispense with the system altogether. [2].

The conditions of the Emancipation Act were opposed by both planters and slaves, but for different reasons. One of the resolutions of the planters in the St. Kitts House of Assembly stated:

That the plan proposed by His Majesty's Government seems to threaten the abrogation of every existing contract, whether of mortgage, settlement, annuity or other charge contingent upon slave labour, and that it will endanger, and, as this House fears, annihilate the complicated interests that have been created by the confidence which, till this eventful period, has obtained in the sacred character of property (Resolution of the House of Assembly, St. Christopher, October 3, 1833; Parliamentary Papers 1835 L. p.582; also in Frucht 1975:201).

While the planters were opposing any freedom for the slaves, the slaves on the other hand, were demanding complete freedom and rebelled against the apprenticeship bondage.

This resistance to the restricted freedom imposed by the system, represents the first organized display of open rebellion by Kittitian workers that is documented. It represents the first stage in the development of the "working class for itself", (Frucht 1975). Later we shall examine two more instances of open organized rebellion, at the end of the 19th century and in the 1930's. First, however, we examine the 1834 revolt.

The 1834 Revolt: "Me Free; No Bind; No Work."

The 1834 revolt was a direct reaction to the installation of modified slavery - apprenticeship, instead of full freedom. Apprenticeship meant that the slaves were actually buying their

freedom by providing the required labour, and thereby further compensating the planters, who had already been granted cash compensation. In addition, as Frucht (1975:199) points out, the laws on St. Kitts stated that a planter's interest in the services of an apprentice was in fact a chattel interest.

The Apprenticeship system was introduced without much "unrest" in the majority of the islands. The isolated revolt on St. Kitts is therefore barely mentioned in the general histories. Even modern historians provide one liners: "Martial law had to be proclaimed on St. Kitts and some ex-slaves punished before the apprentices would work" (Sherlock 1973:229). Douglas Hall, in his study which examines the history of the Leeward Islands from 1834 to 1870, notes, "In St. Kitts there were riots. Martial law was declared and a naval force sent from Antigua" (1971:24). Burns (1954) claims that the "incipient disorders were easily suppressed." William Matthieson (1837) is the only historian's work encountered which devotes more than a line or two to the uprising.

The Kittitian worker revolt in 1834 is seemingly insignificant in the general history of the Caribbean, but in the Kittitian context, in the analysis of the working class struggle against plantation domination, it is an important milestone. The revolt itself is significant, but the manner in which it was put down is also important for an understanding of the role of the state in controlling labour.

Although details of the account of the revolt are refracted through the reports of colonial civil servants and missionaries

[3], for the first time we begin to hear the voices of the workers themselves. The missionaries (Moravian and Methodist) relayed the workers' sentiments, as well as their own.

While missionaries in some islands like Jamaica were allegedly responsible for eliciting and articulating anti-slavery sentiments (Goveia 1965; Post 1978), this was not the case in St. Kitts. Missionary activity had been largely restricted in this island. The Anglican Church (a bulwark of white supremacy), had ignored and discriminated against slaves and free coloureds (Goveia 1965; Cox 1984). When the winds of change which were sweeping Britain and the colonies began gathering greater momentum, more missionary activity was encouraged. Missionaries on St. Kitts had learned early not to 'create any waves'. They sought rather, to maintain the status quo and instruct the slaves about the duty of slaves towards their masters, while looking for a better life beyond the grave. Consequently, on St. Kitts, the missionaries did not question the morality of slavery or the apprenticeship system (Goveia 1965; Cox 1984). They tried instead to pacify the ex-slaves.

From the time the slaves learned of the proclamation of the Emancipation Act in the summer of 1833, they became restless. The Lieutenant Governor, John Dixon, visited some of the estates and noted in a letter to the Governor in Chief in Antigua that there was "a disposition manifested by the gangs to decline working, by reason of their disappointment in not getting their freedom." He claimed, however, that "by good management they were brought back to their duty without coercion" (Nixon to Stanley, Aug. 2, 1833; PP 1835; Frucht 1975:200).

Later in the year Nixon wrote to Secretary of State for the Colonies about a "few instances of discontent on the part of the slaves, and of late ... several robberies ... hitherto almost unheard of" (Nixon to Stanley, Oct. 31, 1833; PP 1835; Frucht 1975:200).

The ex-slaves were opposed to the conditions of apprenticeship, which they saw as a continuation of slavery. They did not expect the planters who had shirked their obligations to provide adequate provisions under slavery, to do any better when they knew that the apprentices would soon be no longer "theirs". In addition, the ex-slaves now had to provide for their children who were under six years of age. They knew as well that the planters had been granted compensation and apprenticeship was only further compensation.

They demanded wages for their labour. David Bigler, a United Brethren missionary, writing to the Governor in Chief in Antigua, claimed that they had found to their "great grief, that prejudice against the terms 'apprenticeship' and 'bound' used in the Act, was so great, that our interference to rectify their mistaken notions was deemed uncalled for" (Bigler to MacGregor, Aug. 17, 1834, PP 1835 p.607). James Cox, Wesleyan missionary, claimed:

It was difficult to make them understand how they could be "discharged of all manner of slavery, and absolutely and forever manumitted", and yet be compelled to work the greater part of their time for the same masters without adequate wages. Freedom and compulsory labour without payment, and for no crime, appeared to them incongruous ... and all my attempts to show that the apprenticeship was a part payment for absolute unconditional freedom were in some cases unsatisfactory. I am fully persuaded, therefore, that had the term "slavery" been retained with the modification of the

present system, it would have been productive of far less confusion (Cox to MacGregor, Aug. 18, 1834; PP 1835:609; Frucht 1975:203).

The slaves, Cox went on to explain, "only wanted perfect personal liberty and wages, and preposterously hoped they may be obtained by passive disobedience and clamour" (emphasis added). The slaves, however, were set in their determination to oppose apprenticeship. Observers claimed that they were frequently heard to proclaim that "they would give their souls to hell and their bodies to the sharks rather than be bound to work as apprentices" (Schomberg to MacGregor 1834). Their watchword, Oliver notes, was "Me free; no bind; no work" (Cleghorn to McCauley, June 29, 1833, in Oliver 1919:142).

The slaves blamed their masters for the continuation of their bondage. They knew that the slaves on Antigua were to be set free in 1834. They also knew that one absentee owner of slaves on St. Kitts, Earl Romney, had made provisions for the 300 slaves on his more than 500 acre estate to be manumitted before the first of August, 1834. These would not be subject to the obligations of apprenticeship (Hall 1971; Frucht 1975).

Added to all this was the fact that the slaves on St. Kitts were convinced that one of the leaders of the free coloureds, Ralph Cleghorn, who had gone to England earlier in the year, would bring back their "free" papers. Cleghorn, a "light-skinned" shopkeeper, had been educated in England. He married a white creole woman in St. Kitts and acquired ownership of about 15 slaves. Cleghorn, who championed the rights of the free coloureds, soon became an opponent of slavery as well. He freed

his slaves in 1832. In 1833, after the Kittitian Legislature had been pressured [4] into passing an Act admitting the right of free coloureds to membership in the Assembly, Cleghorn and two others became the first coloureds to be elected to the Assembly (Assembly Minutes, Act 248, 1833; Cox 1984). [5]. Later that year the Governor-in-Chief, Evan MacGregor, appointed Cleghorn and another mulatto, Charles A. Berkley as aide-de-camp's. Their appointments were indignantly protested by the white population, and two other white appointees refused to serve with them. Cleghorn's business was boycotted by the white planters and under all the pressure, he left for England to try to use his contacts there to seek an appointment as Provost Marshall of St. Kitts instead (Cox 1984; Frucht 1975).

The Governor of St. Kitts, John Nixon, found out in a humiliating encounter with the slaves on July 5, 1834, that the slaves felt that Cleghorn had gone to England to bring back their "freedom papers":

They una voce protested against the apprenticeship system, declaring their resolution to resist it, and not to work after the 1st August without wages, saying that on that day they were to be free, as announced by the King's proclamation, and that their masters could not take their houses or provision-grounds from them, having so long occupied them; many of them observing that they had as good a right to be free as the negroes of Antigua, and that the Governor of Antigua, who was the Governor of St. Kitts also, had made them free, and that I was only Lieut. governor, and was brought by the white men to deceive them, but when Mr. Cleghorn returned from England he would bring out these free papers, for which purpose he had gone to the King, as I was brought by their owners to cheat them. They hooted, and in some instances threw banana husks at or towards me, and walked off shouting, and could not be brought back by their owners or overseers... when I was returning home, I was followed a considerable way by crowds making the most hideous noise (Nixon to MacGregor, July 19, 1834, PP

1835, pp. 591-2; Frucht 1975:204).

Nixon, whom Cleghorn had characterized in 1833 as being "unfit to govern a West Indian colony to the benefit of the slaves or the coloured people at this crisis time particularly", had warned the slaves not to strike in a July 1st proclamation: "If any master chooses to say he will not have apprentices, you must not think that will release you from labour; there are other laws that will compel you to work" (Proclamation to the Labouring Population, July 1st, 1834; PP 1835: 590; Frucht 1975:205). The slaves, on the other hand, restated their vows not to work as apprentices.

Tensions were heightening on the island as Emancipation Day approached. On July 11, Nixon sent a dispatch to MacGregor in which he stated that, "The alarm created by this open combination, and the determination of the negroes, have driven some families who resided in the country to seek refuge in Basseterre, and as far as I can learn, many more are coming in this morning" (Nixon to MacGregor 1834; PP 1835:592; Frucht 1975:206). By the 16th of July, Nixon was complaining that he had only 239 regular troops and 500 of the militia on the island. These, he claimed, were "extremely badly equipped and armed, and also in wretched state of discipline". MacGregor agreed to send arms and ammunition, as well as a regiment of soldiers from Barbados aboard the HMS Belvidera and the HMS Wasp.

On July 31st the slaves quit working, some of them taking to the hills:

In the evening and day of that day, upon 12 or 14 estates, they deposited their hoes and bills near the dwelling houses of their respective managers, thereby

expressing their determination not again to use them; and [on] a great many estates, on Saturday the 2d of August, they refused to throw meat for the cattle and other stock, and the stock-minders [refused] to attend to their duties (Nixon to MacGregor, 11 July 1834; PP 1835:592; Frucht 1975:206).

Adam Stevens, the manager of one estate, informed Nixon that the gang on his estate "had brought their hoes into the yard, threw them down, giving a loud huzza, and left them".

Friday, 1st August, 1834, Emancipation Day, was a holiday. By Monday August 4th, the Governor in Chief of the Leeward Islands was on the island and estate managers and owners began sending in reports on the strike. There were about 150 plantations ranging in size from 37 to 1200 acres. Only 42 are specifically mentioned in the dispatches to the Colonial Office, but there are indications that all the parishes, if not all the estates were involved. For example, while only eight estates were named in a report by G.W. Fahie on the parishes of St. Ann and St. Paul, he did note that "the whole district is in a state of resistance to the authority of master and managers" (Fahie to Nixon, enclosed in Nixon to MacGregor, August 4, 1834; PP 1835:634; Frucht 1975:207).

William Wilson reported that in St. Mary and Christ Church parishes, there was not a single apprentice at work on the five or six largest estates. Grange, Woodley's and Bourgeaux estates, he claimed "are very obstinate. On the estates there are nearly 800 people, and all in a riotous way." On the other side of the island it was reported that not a single person had reported for work on Conoly's estate (Wilson to MacGregor; Hazel to MacGregor Aug. 4, 1834).

Robert Claxton, Solicitor-General of St. Kitts commenting on the apparent organized nature of the resistance, claimed that:

There is little doubt that emissaries have been sent from the leading gangs to others, for the purpose of confirming them in their determination to strike work after the 1st of August. And it is to be lamented that the occasions and manner in which their missions have been conducted have hitherto remained undetected. The head people upon many estates, who have hitherto been confidential and trustworthy, have betrayed a reluctance to converse with their masters on this subject; and others have admitted the fact of the general combination to strike work (Claxton to MacGregor, August 3, 1834; PP 1835:599; Frucht 1975:207).

While the strike seems to have been well-organized and supported, not all the ex-slaves participated. Some skilled tradesmen (coopers, distillers, carpenters and other mill workers), drivers and foremen of field gangs stayed behind on Estridge's estate. One of these informed the estate manager that the strike was "universal in the neighbourhood". On Wingfield's estate, an overseer, two drivers, four stock-keepers and all the house servants showed up for work. On Hutchison's two drivers, an overseer, four stock-keepers, two distillers, a mason and all the house servants reported for duty. All the field slaves seemed to have participated, however (Davis and Williamson to Nixon, August 4, 1834; PP 1835:635). The fact that some remained on the estates did not mean that they did not support the strike. Philip, a planter, had cause to believe that "some secret understanding exists between those negroes who have entirely absented themselves and those who remain on their estates" (Philip to Nixon, August 4, 1834; PP. 1835).

On August 5th the Governor-in-Chief declared that martial law

would be in effect if the apprentices did not return to work by Wednesday, the sixth. Estate managers began seeking out presumed ring leaders among those who remained in the estate houses, punishing them in an attempt to curb the revolt. Fahie claimed that after the most "turbulent and rebellious resistance to the law", he had succeeded in securing some of the ringleaders on Sir Gillis Payne's plantation. On Blake's plantation the "ringleaders" received corporeal punishment, others were confined. Those at Hutchinson's received fifty lashes, and three women there were put into confinement. Those on Matthew's estate were handcuffed and beaten with cats-of-nine-tails. Adam Stevens, commanding a militia, tied up eight men and eight women and locked eleven men and ten women in the sick-house on the Lodge estate. He reported that those on Burragan's estate escaped to the mountains after they had been warned about the arriving militia (Williamson, Stevens, Wilson and Fahie to MacGregor, August 5, 1834).

The punishments were in vain, however, because the strikers refused to go back to work or release any information. One manager reported that after all the coercion, "they still continue refractory". By the time martial law came into effect, most of the strikers had fled to the hills.

The planters began worrying about their cattle and crops. There were no slaves to hand feed the animals or prepare the fields. The situation, they claimed, was "truly deplorable". Since all the "steps taken by the civil authority to induce or force the apprentices to work have entirely failed," they wrote

to MacGregor, "some prompt and effectual measures are [to be] resorted to, or the entire destruction of our properties must shortly ensue" (Group of Planters to MacGregor, August 6, 1834; Frucht 1975).

Almost two weeks after the start of the strike, the apprentices remained in the mountains. By this time the troops were hunting them down. On August 12th, the St. Kitts Advertiser reported:

Since Wednesday a considerable number of the rebels have been apprehended, and publicly whipped ... we regret to state that up to the present moment, thousands of the Labouring Classes remain absent from duty, having taken refuge in the mountains where, in consequence of their folly and obstinacy, they must be suffering great privation (The Advertiser, 12 August, 1834).

The workers apparently raided provision grounds by night, while hiding in the ravines of the mountain range. Every effort was made to root them out. Some planters burned the slave huts. Coordinated military advances had been launched from both sides of the island. The troops formed long skirmish lines and ascended the slopes driving the strikers from the hills and capturing some.

Some runaway workers had apparently joined Markus' band. By that time the 'King of the Woods' was classified as "a most daring and dangerous character", and was being accused of murder. His capture was considered essential to the restoration of order (Pogson to Lieut. Col. Bedingfield, August 11, 1834; PP 1835:605; Frucht 1975:211).

By August 18th, when martial law was lifted, the military burnings, huntings and beatings had proven too much for the striking workers, and they surrendered and returned to the

plantations. (There is no evidence that Markus was ever captured).

Charles Berkley, the free coloured aide-de-camp gloated:

the severe chastisement which so many have received, the destruction of their huts and little property, and the astonishing activity of the regular troops, as well as the militia, particularly in the general movement into the mountains have so terrified and amazed the apprenticed ... that I do not anticipate the slightest recurrence of their refusal to work (Berkley to MacGregor, August 19, 1834; Frucht 1975:212):

The workers' rebellion had been subdued, but their spirits were not broken. There were reports of the "workpeople behaving in a very insolent and provoking manner towards their superiors" (Nixon to Spring Rice, October 6, 1834; PP 1835:619; Frucht 1975:212).

There were no reported fatalities during the uprising. Sixteen people, including two women, were tried for sedition and mutiny and inciting others to rebel. Eleven of these were punished. Five were exiled to Bermuda; the others received 24 to 100 lashes and confined (Returns of Convictions under Courts-martial for Offences, from August 6 to 18, 1834; PP 1835: 609; Frucht. 1975:213). While, as Frucht states, the fact that the planters needed the workers to begin work on their plantations probably accounts for the fact that more people were not punished by Court Martial, all the apprentices were punished in a sense. Kittitian apprentices were required to put in forty-five hours per week instead of the mandated forty and one-half hours.

It had been agreed that the planters would allow the apprentices to complete their required hours during the five week days, so that they could work on their provision grounds or work

elsewhere for their maintenance [6] as well as their children's on Saturdays. The ex-slaves, were also expected to attend church on Sunday (a form of control considered necessary after the abolition of absolute slavery). Some planters "deprived" the apprentices of their Saturday. Governor Nixon claimed that although this system was "vexatious" and "particularly inconvenient to the apprentices", he could see:

no likelihood of inducing the Assembly, who are chiefly composed of agriculturalists, to correct this evil, as it takes from the planter or his agent the power of punishing their labourers for offences, real or imaginary, at his own discretion by depriving him of his Saturday (Nixon to Spring Rice, October 6, 1834; PP 1835:619; Frucht 1975).

It was not until 1838 that Kittitian workers achieved full and legal emancipation. The 1834 Emancipation Day, as far as they were concerned, had been a "great white lie". One man expressed his feelings, "White man all rascal, false and lie" (Schomberg to MacGregor, December 2, 1834; Frucht 1975:214). The revolt was the beginning of the struggle of Kittitian workers. It illustrated that the full force of colonial military power would be unleashed against the working class, if need be, to ensure the subordination of labour. Open revolt against exploitation would recur at the end of the century as workers were pushed to their limit. Again, colonial force would be used against them.

Plantation Development and Labour Control

Emancipation provided a new economic status for the mass of Kittitian population who had been engaged in the production of

sugar against their will. They were no longer legally at the beck and call of those who had owned them. They were "free" to sell their labour power or withhold it from the labour market.

The plantation/peasant struggle is the general characterization of the Caribbean during this period, as freed slaves fled the plantations and established villages in their effort to control their own lives. While this dichotomy has been criticized (James 1963; Frucht 1967), the classification persists. This may be related in part to the ongoing debate on what constitutes a peasantry, but more so, because of the fact that studies of Caribbean rural groups have been more or less, until recently, concentrated on the larger territories like Guyana, Trinidad and Jamaica, where this development did take place.

The generalizations and extension of these conclusions to the entire Caribbean have subsequently ignored the variations of the plantation/peasant dichotomy. St. Kitts is a particular variation. Freedom here was not accompanied by the "great flight from the plantation" or the "village movement". This was only possible in those larger territories where there were still large areas of Crown land available for squatting. In St. Kitts, where the plantations had monopolized virtually all the land, such a movement was impossible without the cooperation of the plantocracy. Even the mountains and woodland, which made up the interior of the island were included in the estates' property (Merrill 1958).

Here, the regional attempt by the colonial plantocracy to restrict the development of an independent peasantry (groups which did not have to rely on the plantation for subsistence) was much easier. The planters had calculated that an independent peasantry

would be in competition for land (thereby weakening their land monopoly), but more threatening, an independent peasantry would deplete their labour supply, which they felt was vital for the survival of their plantations (Dookhan 1975; Hall 1971; Sherlock 1973).

The 19th century and the post-Emancipation era in particular, has been regarded as the "make or break" period for the sugar industries in the West Indies. The sugar revolution had seen the introduction of sugar cane into nearly all the British colonies, with little concern about the suitability of the islands for the crop. [7]. The crises of the 19th century: the abolition of the slave trade, Emancipation, the effects of the American Revolution, the establishment of free trade, competition from foreign and other British sugars, a general glut on the world market and technical improvements in the labour process, forced many islands like Nevis, Montserrat, Dominica, Grenada and Tobago out of production. Suitable conditions, geography, soil, the ability or the inability of the ex-slaves to construct alternatives to plantation labour, as well as the scope of technological implementation and the power of the ruling planter class to obtain and subdue labour were to dictate which sugar industries survived (Williams 1944; Beachey 1957; Hall 1971; Dookhan 1975). The sugar industry on St. Kitts survived and prospered.

Kittitian planters, like their Caribbean counterparts, had opposed emancipation because they felt that slavery was the only means by which they could control the large amount of labour required to maintain production. As the apprenticeship period

came to an end, they were, therefore, filled with apprehension. Recollection of the 1834 revolt and the resulting halt in production, aroused much fear of large-scale withdrawal of labour.

Although there was virtually no land to which the ex-slaves could retreat, planter fears were compounded by the threat of emigration. The Trinidad and Guyanese Governments were paying recruiting agents up to \$14 per head for workers from islands like St. Kitts, Nevis, Antigua and Montserrat. Planters in the recruiting countries were willing to pay cash, food and rum for the labour which was required on the huge, modern plantations there. These, and the added advantage of higher wages, were fully advertised by the agents who plied the waters of the Caribbean as freedom for the apprentices approached. (Hall 1971; Richardson 1983).

By 1837, planters on Antigua (where freedom for slaves had been granted in 1834), were complaining that their workers were being enticed away by promises of higher wages in the South (Hall 1971). Kittitian planters decided to take the "necessary" precautions to ensure their supplies of labour before apprenticeship ended.

Land laws were passed preventing trespassing or encroachment, thereby making squatting illegal. Written contracts were to be drawn up between labourers and employers to specify working conditions and housing arrangements. Persons wishing to emigrate were required to give 30 days notice to their employers as well as to local magistrates. In addition, prospective emigrants would be required to prove that they had no "aged or infirm Father or Mother, Wife or Infant Child, legitimate or illegitimate ... who

may or ought to be dependent on them for support" (St. Christopher Gazette and Charibbean Courier, November 23, 1903; Richardson 1983:82).

In 1838, the St. Kitts Legislature also enacted a series of laws which served to restrict the labour recruiters from the South. Ship captains were required to post bond of 300 pounds on arrival in port. They were forbidden to leave any seamen (labour recruiters) behind. Further, ships would only be allowed to embark with those labourers who had "proper" licences from the colonial secretary, proving that they had satisfied local regulations (Richardson 1983:82).

While the restrictive elements of most of these laws were subsequently disallowed in London, their immediate enactment in the island, as well as the lengthy period of time required for correspondence between London and the colonies, prevented any massive migration at the end of the apprenticeship period. Even when the laws were vetoed, the local plantocracy continued to enforce some of these restrictive laws.

The colonial office ruled that workers should be allowed to seek the highest wages wherever they could find them, in order to support their families. The ruling also stated, however, that labourers should not use emigration as a means to avoid paying debts. Local planters took advantage of this clause to falsify debts in order to prevent labour migration. Prospective migrants were soon complaining about this hindrance (Parliamentary Papers 1902; Richardson 1983:82).

On July 2nd, 1838, approximately one month before the end of

apprenticeship, Governor Macleod addressed Kittitian plantation workers on their impending freedom. He exhorted them to be industrious and work hard, and outlined the laws and regulations which govern them under "freedom". He elaborated on the question of emigration, warning them against evil recruiting agents, and painting a sordid picture of life on the plantations in the South. Food prices were high elsewhere, he claimed, and emigrant workers, contrary to their expectations were "sold as slaves into strange countries" (Annual Report for Bermuda 1901-1904; quoted in Richardson 1983:82).

By the time Kittitian workers were finally freed on August 1st, 1838, their ex-masters had done almost everything within their power to ensure that they would continue to submit their labour to the plantations, on terms which the planters dictated. The planters firmly refused to sell idle or surrounding canelands. This enabled them to restrict the workers' movement away from the plantation. It also ensured that they would maintain their control over labour (Mathieson 1932; Hall 1971).

While theoretically, ex-slaves now had the freedom to choose when and where to labour, or not to labour, they had no means of subsistence. They could either enter the labour market - and this meant going back to the plantation, or they could rent idle plantation lands and empty slave huts and try to make a living for themselves. The choice, it turned out, was not theirs to make. The planters, seizing their opportunity to harness labour, would only agree to rent if the tenant agreed to work on their estates, and their estates alone (Matheison 1932; Hall 1971).

"Freedom" was proving to be frustrating. The security of

shelter was only obtainable through the continuous submission of labour power to the estate on which it was provided. Under written contracts, labourers were required to work on the estate from dawn till dark (an average of 12 hours), in return for a small wage, access to idle plantation and surrounding woodlands and the right to occupy old slave huts, which they had built, or new collapsable ones, which they would set up. Access to idle canelands on which they could plant provision crops was subject to the planting programme of the estate, and had to be relinquished when they were required (Hall 1971; Mathieson 1932).

Added to this coercion of labour, was the practice of withholding wages for alleged malingering. The threat of ejection from estate huts also haunted the workers. Sudden eviction was the punishment for changing jobs, working for another estate, absenteeism or even irritating employers (Parliamentary Papers 1839: xxvi; Richardson 1983; Hall 1971; Mathieson 1932). This power of eviction which had been included in the Contract Act of Antigua in 1834, was not given the royal assent in St. Kitts and other colonies in 1838. Nevertheless, planters continued to use eviction as a form of labour control throughout the 19th century and well into the twentieth (Union Messenger, 1922).

While evicted workers could probably find employment and with it shelter on other estates, the trauma of sudden eviction and the restrictions placed on their freedom to work when and where they wished, must have been frustrating, to say the least.

Life for the ex-slaves in the period immediately following emancipation must have been very reminiscent of slavery with all

the repressive laws. Not only was the security of housing conditional on the continuous submission of labour, but mobility within the island, like emigration, was restricted. Vagrancy Acts were designed to keep them tied to particular plantations. A fine of 50 pounds or six months imprisonment was the maximum penalty for those "vagrants" who were found guilty of "trespassing or encroachment on another's (planter's) property" (Assembly Minutes, January 1836 to June 1840: 737-38; Richardson 1983:83). While these sentences were rarely carried out in their entirety, they served to inhibit workers who wished to travel from one estate to another in search of better wages.

Heavy sentences were rare, but convictions and 'lighter' sentences like the following were numerous:

Penny Markham, under 2d clause of Vagrancy Act, crossing a ratoon piece on the Walk estate, having been previously warned not to do so on a former occasion, there being no public path through the same piece. Informer, the Hon. W.W. Rawlins.

Date, 29th August, 1838.

Punishment, 14 days' labour in penal gang.

(Parliamentary Papers 1839:XXXVII, 224, quoted in Richardson 1983:84).

Hundreds of similar sentences were handed down in the first few months following emancipation. Richardson notes that from August 22 to November 28, 1838, 52 labourers were convicted for trespass on the windward side of the island alone (Richardson 1983:84; PP 1839:205).

Emigration was hindered not only by laws and false debts, but by restricting "loitering" near the ports. Dock workers and porters were issued special badges, and badgeless "loiterers" were subject to fines, 30 days in prison or both. Even those workers

whose badges were "improperly" displayed, were subject to punishment (Richardson 1983):

By 1840, the more restrictive emigration laws were reduced. They had been effective, however, since only about one thousand Kittitian workers migrated to the southern plantations between 1839 and 1846, compared with the more than two thousand from Nevis or Montserrat (Table 4:1). Kittitian labourers migrated mainly to Trinidad during this period. Work on the plantations there was no easier, but the wages were twice as high (Hall 1971; Augier et al 1960), and workers could move from estate to estate in search of better conditions. Richardson (1983), who examines the migratory history of Kittitians and Nevisians, points out that while neither Trinidadian nor Kittitian records accurately depict the number of Caribbean workers recruited during this period, most of the Kittitians returned.

By 1846, emigration from this and other Caribbean islands to the southern plantations virtually came to a halt, when the bounty system ended and wages there were reduced with the mass importation of indentured Indian labourers (Hall 1971; Augier et al 1960).

Emigration in the decade after emancipation was a symbolic assertion of freedom for Kittitian workers (Richardson 1983). The act itself was courageous, since it involved, for the most part, boarding the open ships at night. Many left the island illegally when falsified debts prevented them from doing so legally, and braved the open ocean during the several days it took to sail to Trinidad.

Table 4:1
Comparative Migration to Trinidad 1839 to 1846

Year	From St. Kitts		From Nevis		From Montserrat		From All West Indies	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1839	31	1	40	9	32	12		692
1840	131	130	126	97	40	37		1,106
1841	57	56	244	261	147	157		1,719
1842	71	38	419	338	152	112		1,956
1843	150	100	226	230	279	192		2,075
1844	55	45	174	141	296	190		1,708
1845	6	5	127	9	188	139		990
1846	17	10	102	80	142	103		-*
Sub-total	518	385	1,354	1255	1,276	942		-
Total	903		2,609		2,218			10,246

Sources: Hall 1971:41, citing data from the Colonial Office; Richardson 1983:88).

* Data not available.

Emigration was more of an anticipated threat than an actual problem for the Kittitian planters. The numbers leaving were minimal, and St. Kitts also received a few hundred immigrants from neighbouring islands like Nevis, Anguilla as well as some runaway slaves from St. Martin (a French colony) where slavery was still in force (Hall 1971). The Kittitian population grew from 21,578 to 23,177 between 1838 and 1844 (Richardson 1983 citing St. Christopher Blue Book 1843 and Parliamentary Papers 1845/XXXI).

Still the planters lamented that "emigration [was] their greatest evil" (Estridge to Select Committee, 1841), and renounced the "sordid agents" who persuaded workers to sever domestic ties (Lt. Governor Cunningham, Council Minutes 1840; Hall 1971).

It was the threat of possible large scale migration of labour which eventually forced the planters into separating rent and wages. Lieutenant Governor Cunningham, in addressing the Assembly in 1840 warned the planters about this. He claimed that prospective emigrants had told him that the "reason for their leaving their homes ... was the uncertainty of the tenure by which they hold their houses and grounds" (quoted in Richardson, 1983:84).

By the 1840's, owners of the more profitable estates who needed more labour than that which was being provided by their resident workers, as well as those who were confident about their ability to attract workers with higher wages, began supporting the separation of rents and wages. The majority of the planters continued to oppose it, but owners of abandoned or of a few of the non-productive estates like Sadler's and Challenger's, felt that it was more profitable for them to rent small lots to the workers (Merrill 1958:96; Hall 1971:49). Sadler's and Challenger's became the first "free" villages to emerge on St. Kitts in the 1840's. Workers rented small plots on which they built houses from sugar cane thatch and wood. These villages were a welcome change for people who were forced to live in old slave yards under slave-like conditions. The numbers accommodated in the new villages were relatively small. While these were still forced to work on the plantations, they did "task or job work", rather than day work

[8], and their thatched houses on rented land became a symbol of freedom and independence.

By 1845, magistrates were reporting three systems of tenancy on the island. There were those labourers who were still bound by the combination of rent and wages: these received a small wage and the right to occupy estate huts and use marginal or idle land. Others paid cash rent for housing and the use of estate land, while working where they chose. A small but increasing number rented land on which they built their houses and grew food-crops while working for wages on nearby estates (Cunningham to Gladstone 1846; Hall 1971:49). [9] Planters managed to maintain their control over labour by making only small-scale, short-term rentals at high rates. Rates averaged about two dollars per acre per month; wages ranged from six to twelve cents per day (Davy 1854; Hall 1971).

Provision grounds became more important to those workers who wished to live at a standard even slightly above absolute poverty, for wages were designed to keep them dependent on the estate. Wages were to:

suffice ... actual necessities and reasonable want, without inducing any, even temporary relaxation of exertion on the part of the labourer (Governor MacGregor to Glenelg, 1835; Hall 1975).

The ideology of the day dictated that this was the standard of living with which "all the labouring classes ought to be satisfied" (Hall 1971).

At the rate of 6 pence per day for "first class" field workers, wages on St. Kitts were higher than those in Nevis or Montserrat, but lower than most of the other islands. In Barbados

the rate was 1 shilling and 3 pence. It ranged from 10 pence to 1 shilling and 10 pence in St. Lucia; 1 shilling and 6 pence in Jamaica; 2 shillings and 1 pence in Trinidad; and 1 shilling to 2 shillings in Guyana (Dookhan 1975:10; Hall 1971). The 6 pence rate on St. Kitts was established in 1839, and except for a brief three-year period between 1842 and 1845 when resistance to the plantation and the threat of emigration drove it to one shilling, the six pence rate continued well into the twentieth century. Table 4:2 compares wages in the Leeward Islands.

Table 4:2
Daily Wage Rates for First Class Field Labourers
1839-1848

Year	Antigua	Montserrat	Nevis	St. Kitts
1839	6d	5d	6d	6d
1842	1s	5 1/2d	6d	9d
1845	1s	5 1/2d	10d	1s
1848	6d	4d	5d	6d

Sources: Hall 1971: 55 citing Colonial Office Records;
Dookhan 1975:10.

While it is difficult to calculate the exact worth of wages in terms of the labourer's command over goods and services on the market, Hall (1971) has estimated that rations given to the slaves (which were usually inadequate for subsistence), would cost a wage worker about 5 to 6 pence sterling per day, or nearly 3 shillings and 6 pence per week. A first class labourer working a 6 day week at 6 pence per day, would earn 3 shillings per week. This

Table 4:3

Prices Quoted in St. Kitts or Nevis about 1850
(sterling)

HOUSEHOLD ARTICLES (each)

Knives	4 1/2d	Scissors	2d
Forks	4 1/2d	Candlesticks	2s 1d
Cups & Saucers	3d	Basins	1s 3d
Dishes	7 1/2d	Chairs	10s 6d
Saucepans	6d	Deal Tables	8s 4d
Iron Pots	6d	Brooms	1s 6d

CLOTHS&CLOTHING (per yard) (per item/pair)

Osnaburgh	2d	Caps	2s 6d
Cottons	3d-4d	Cotton Dresses	6s 3d
Coarse Linen	5d	Muslin Dresses	7s 4d
Nankéen	6d	Jackets	6s 3d
Dimity	1s 2d	Black Cloth Pants	8s 4d
Brown Drill	1s 3d	Handkerchiefs	6d
Linen	1s 4d	Stockings	1s 1d
Satin	4s 2d	Socks	11d
Crepe	4s 2d	Boots & Stout Shoes	5s 3d
		Grenella Shirts	4s 2d
		Fancy Straw Bonnets	6s 3d

FOODSTUFF (per lb.)

Tea (b)	2s 1d	Meat	9d
Coffee (c)	6d	Ham (b)	6d
Cocoa (c)	4 1/2d	Cheese (b)	8d
Sugar (a)	1 1/2-2d	Butter (b)	10d
Wheatflour (b)	4d	(per bushel)	
Cornmeal (b)	1 1/2d	Yams (a)	12s 6d
Mackerel (b)	3d	Cassava (a)	12s 6d
Mess Port (b)	6d	Potatoes (a)	3s 0d
		Tanias (a)	3s 0d

(a) = local produce (b) = imported goods.
(c) = uncertain origin

Note: All prices are approximate.

Source: Hall 1971:57, citing The Wigley Papers 1848; 1849-52; Roden/Dinzey Correspondence (January to April 1852).

was hardly enough to provide the equivalent to the rations under slavery for one person. The purchase of any of the ordinary household items listed in Table 4:3 would be impossible on a worker's wage. Providing for a family was out of the question. Labourers would consequently be heavily dependent on their provision grounds as well as wage labour.

While the basic need to survive meant that Kittitian labourers could not withdraw their labour from the estates to the extent that many of their regional counterparts did, they avoided the places that had held them in bondage, whenever they could. Irregularity was one way of coping with the fact that they were still bound to the plantation wherever emigration was not possible.

In spite of planter coercion, workers did not submit their labour in the numbers and consistency to which their old slave masters were accustomed. One estate owner summed up the labour situation from the planters' point of view, in answer to the question as to whether there were enough labourers on St. Kitts: "Yes, there are labourers, but not enough labour" (Estridge to the Select Committee 1842; Hall 1971:32).

The planters accused the labourers of being idle, but Orlando Patterson's comments on the contemporary abhorrence of plantation labour, are probably even more relevant for the newly emancipated people on St. Kitts in the 1840's. There the memories of the horror, the cruel and brutalising experiences under slavery were still very fresh.

Do we ask the Jew to live and work in the concentration camps in Germany? Do we ask a recently released

prisoner who has been unjustly imprisoned for the better part of his life to continue living in his cell? Do we expect him to like it? Is it not natural for him to loathe it and despise it? Why then, is it that when ex-slaves and their descendants express an abhorrence for the sugar estates, we do not accept the obvious explanation? ... Why do we seek to prevent a natural response by calling them lazy or by talking nonsense about hatred for manual labour? (Patterson, 1971:61, Contribution to a Symposium on Sugar and Change).

Kittitian planters did not need the large scale importation of indentured labour as their counterparts in Guyana, Trinidad and Jamaica demanded. Yet, that yearning for a body of workers over which they could have constant command, saw them introducing and passing several resolutions in the Assembly and voting money for immigrant labour in the mid-1840's (Cunningham to Gladstone 1846; Hall 1971). When a cholera epidemic wiped out nearly 4,000 Kittitians between 1853 and 1855, accounting for a significant decrease in the population (Table 4:4), the planters used the high mortality rate to help justify the importation of labourers (Richardson 1983:94).

Table 4:4
Population of St. Kitts, 1844-1891

Year	Male	Female	Total
1844	10,523	12,654	23,177
1855	9,525	11,216	20,741
1861	11,437	13,003	24,440
1871	13,259	14,910	28,169
1881	13,706	15,431	29,137
1891	14,410	16,466	30,876

Source: Richardson 1983:93, citing St. Kitts Blue Books 1844, 1854, 1864, 1871, 1881; Leeward Islands Blue Book 1893; Parliamentary Papers 1845/XXXI.

During the 1840's, about 460 of the Africans who had been resettled in West Africa after being 'freed' by the British navy from slave ships heading for Cuba and Brazil, were brought to St. Kitts as labourers (Augier et al 1960). By 1849 only 97 of these Africans were still on the island. Bound by indenture contracts, they provided "comparatively steady continuous labour" in comparison with local labour (Report on St. Kitts, 1849; Richardson 1983:95).

While Kittitian planters felt the Africans were good labourers, they preferred European immigrants in the post-emancipation period for social reasons. They hoped that the Europeans would be good "examples" for the ex-slaves, by demonstrating "great industry". More important, they would serve to increase the proportion of whites to blacks on the island (Cunningham to Gladstone 1846, quoted in Hall 1971).

In 1845, therefore, about 200 English labourers were imported with the aid of a 1,000 pound grant. These labourers were bound for three years at the rate of 10 shillings and 6 pence per week, and provided with houses, gardens and medical attention (Davy 1854:450). The planters regretted their choice almost immediately. They claimed that the labourers were "given to drink, ill-selected, ill-conducted, ignorant, infirm, totally unworthy of the name of skilled labourers" and likely to "corrupt the otherwise moral and sober character of the negroes" (Davy 1854:450). Within a few months after their arrival, most of these workers had become sick and died. The remainder wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies pleading to be returned to England [10].

About 900 indentured Portuguese labourers from Madeira were brought to St. Kitts between 1847 and 1870, through a bounty system adopted by the planters. These were considered to be "of great service, submitting to the call for regular and sustained labour, which the creole negro finds so irksome" (Davy 1854:451). Once their indenture contracts expired, however, most of the Madeirans left the island. The remainder opened small retail shops. By 1869 Governor Cairns was claiming that nine-tenths of the "respectable and well-to-do" shopkeepers were immigrants from Madeira (Hall 1971).

In 1861, the Kittitian planters imported about 300 of the 548,000 Indians brought to the Caribbean (Table 4:6). Many of these died during their indenture service and the rest emigrated to Trinidad and Guyana when their contracts expired (Augier et al 1960).

These experiments with indentured immigrant labour were insignificant in comparison to the larger islands. Overall, Kittitian planters relied on the local black masses to continue the production of sugar on their estates, but the experiments demonstrated their belief that total control over labour was necessary for profitable production.

The inability of the planters to maintain complete control over labour (which for them meant having the workers submitting their labour in a "regular and sustained fashion"), forced many of them into implementing mechanical devices. Machinery was introduced mainly on those estates which were becoming consolidated under new British capitalists.

Table 4:5
Africans Brought to the West Indies After 1838

British Guyana	13,970
Jamaica	10,000
Trinidad	8,390
Grenada	1,540
St. Vincent	1,040
St. Lucia	730
St. Kitts	460

Source: Augier et al 1960:197

Table 4:6
Indian Immigrants to the West Indies
Between 1845 and 1917

British Guyana	239,220
Trinidad	134,183
Jamaica	33,533
St. Lucia	4,427
Grenada	3,033
St. Vincent	2,746
St. Kitts	337
Guadeloupe & Martinique	78,453
French Guyana	19,290
Dutch Guyana	35,501
St. Croix	351

Source: Deerr 1949: Vol.2:398

The ascendancy of capitalism and the 19th century crises also brought changes in the structure of plantation ownership on St. Kitts. While the Lieutenant Governor claimed in 1849 that there were not more than eight resident planters (Davy 1854), other sources suggest that around 1848, 27 resident proprietors and lessees operated 59 of the 126 estates under cultivation [11], while 69 were controlled by absentees (Greene to The Select Committee 1848, in Hall 1971:106-107). Greene [12] also claimed that residents with two-fifths of the canelands produced four-fifteenths of the sugar, while absentees with three-fifths produced eleven-fifteenths.

The number of plantations owned by absentees increased significantly in the immediate post-slavery period. By 1845 a large number had come under the control of some Liverpool merchant shipowners to whom these plantations had been mortgaged. Most of the other absentee owners represented various mercantile houses in Britain (Mathieson 1932:131). [13].

While absentees had represented the larger proportion of the proprietors on St. Kitts since the mid-eighteenth century, the absentees of the mid-nineteenth century were of a different type. These were the capitalist merchants of Britain. Sugar was but one of their interests. These merchants' ships brought machinery, stores and supplies for their estates, as well as manufactured goods for local merchants from Britain. The ships returned to Britain loaded with sugar from the estates. On the arrival of these ships in St. Kitts, the merchant's canes were harvested and processed whether they were ripe or not (Mathieson 1937:131). It was under such new management that the sugar industry on St. Kitts

entered a new phase after the loss of absolute control over labour.

The industrial revolution which had benefitted from the profits of the sugar production, was revolutionizing that industry. The concern for labour cost and productivity which had been neglected under slavery, saw the planters attempting to introduce labour saving machinery on their estates. This was imperative if they were to keep pace with other sugar producers with whom they were forced to compete. For example, Kittitian and Antiguan planters claimed in 1848, that it cost about 18 to 21 shillings to produce one hundredweight of sugar, while planters in Cuba and Puerto Rico were selling their sugar for 11 to 13 shillings per hundredweight (Select Committee 1848 in Hall 1971; Parry and Sherlock 1956).

By the 1840's, numerous books and theses on the agricultural and manufacturing processes of sugar, were being published (Davy 1854; Beachey 1957; Hall 1971). Engineers were being brought out to the colonies to advise planters. The planter-dominated Legislature on St. Kitts engaged a civil engineer at a salary of 500 pounds sterling per year for three years, "... for the purpose of promoting any improvements in machinery that he might suggest" (Greene to Select Committee 1848; Hall 1971:108). In general, advisors indicated efficiency as the key issue and wastage as the main problem (Hall 1971; Thomas 1970). Planters were urged to reduce labour and production costs by implementing agricultural machinery and more powerful mills. Steam mills, they pointed out, would extract almost 40 per cent more cane juice than cattle or

wind mills, and the introduction of the vacuum pan boiler and centrifugal drier for evaporation and curing [14] were certainly more efficient than the old copper boilers (Davy 1854; Beachey 1957; Hall 1971).

By 1845 most Kittitian planters had introduced the ploughs, wheelbarrows, harrows and weeding machines that had been so stubbornly resisted under slavery. In 1854 John Davy noted that a plough drawn by two horses and operated by a man and a boy, was doing the work of eight persons with a hoe. A weeding machine with a man and a boy, had displaced sixteen persons in the weeding of the canes (Davy 1854:448). By 1860, only about one quarter of the labour employed in the cultivation of canes during slavery, was being used on the plantations (Richardson 1983:100).

By the middle of the 19th century there were 33 steam mills on the island, whereas in 1825 none could be found, unlike neighbouring Nevis which had two. By 1878 St. Kitts had 74 steam mills, compared to 35 on Antigua and 4 on Nevis. By the end of the century, 63 of the 64 sugar factories on St. Kitts were using steam mills and pouring noxious fumes into the atmosphere at crop time (Hall 1971:10; Leeward Islands Blue Book 1895; Richardson 1983:101).

This, however, was the extent of the technological improvement in the processing of the canes. The mills, while more efficient, were still small. The small estates on St. Kitts and the Leeward Islands in general, were unable to finance the modern improvements in manufacturing, which were being used to produce higher grades of sugar in Trinidad and Guyana (Beachey 1957). Many of the planters were already in debt and could not obtain

additional credit. This was further affected by the commercial crisis in Britain from 1847 to 1848, during which 18 merchant houses engaged in West Indian trade collapsed and were liquidated (Dookhan 1975). In addition, sugar prices in London were decreasing. By 1847 prices had dropped from 33 shillings and 8 pence per hundredweight, to 23 shillings and 8 pence per hundredweight. By 1851, sugar was selling for 21 shillings per hundredweight (Deerr 1949; Dookhan 1975).

Hall points out some of the difficulties involved in the early employment of foreign technology in a dependent colony: [15]

Some of it, like the centrifugal drier needed motive power which the factories could not provide unless they were equipped with powerful steam-engines; some of it, like the vacuum-pan, was so costly that it was thought uneconomic on estates making less than about 375 tons of sugar a year, and no single estate in the Leewards produced that quantity. ... Expensive mills and boiling and curing-house machinery did not match small cane-areas and scarce or irregular labour supply (1971: 110-111).

The ultimate in manufacturing renovations was the establishment of a central factory. This was suggested by the Royal Commission on Commerce in the British West Indies in 1847-1848. The Commission claimed that the sugar proprietor was incapable of acting efficiently in the many capacities of planter, merchant, manufacturer and distiller (Beachey 1957:81). [16].

The planters who had operated individually for nearly two centuries were unwilling to co-operate at that time. They claimed that the existing works and layout of the estates were not conducive to centralization. In addition, a slight boom in the industry during late 1850's made it less urgent for them to

centralize. It was not until the early twentieth century (1912), with increasing capitalist consolidation in the industry and growing competition, that a central factory was introduced.

In the meantime, sugarcane cultivation still required large numbers of workers, especially in the field. There were no substitutes for those workers like the cane cutters, and harvesting is one of the most labour intensive of the tasks. The planters were still heavily dependent on a large, steady supply of labour, especially during crop-time from January to July. The survival of the plantation would therefore depend on the ability of the planters to obtain and control this large supply of labour, and this meant cheap labour, if there were to be profits.

By the time the Emancipation Act was passed in 1833, St. Kitts and other Caribbean islands had lost their preeminence in the process of capital accumulation, but their dependent integration remained a significant feature (Rodney 1981:94). Colonial status and involvement in the early stages of capitalism meant that the lives of Kittitians and other Caribbean peoples were still affected by the various cycles of capitalism in the colonizing countries.

The "boom and burst" cycles, which Engels observed occurring about once every ten years when capitalist production was thrown "out of gear" due to market gluts, were felt sharply in the colonies through various price mechanisms (Rodney 1981:19). Because St. Kitts' integration into capitalism was based on the production and export of cane sugar, the fate of Kittitians was strongly affected by the market performance of the commodity. As

the prices of agricultural commodities, and sugar in particular, declined steadily throughout the 19th century in spite of occasional short-term fluctuations, Kittitians and Kittitian labourers in particular suffered. This happened not only because a decline in sugar prices meant a cut in their wages, but also because the fall of prices was greater for sugar than it was for the commodity imports on which they depended.

Dependent colonies had no control over market fluctuations. They were not in a position to enact legislative and fiscal measures to defend their productive forces like the capitalist centres. A good harvest no longer ensured the highest financial return as it did during the "golden years" under slavery. British capitalists were on the look-out for the cheapest raw materials they could find and ignored the cries of hard times from Kittitian and other Caribbean planters.

Kittitian planters were able to survive the 19th century and continue producing when many West Indian colonies were on the decline or out of production, because St. Kitts was, comparatively, a low cost producer. The island possessed rich soils which have held up under centuries of sugar cane cultivation, but more important, St. Kitts had an abundant supply of local labour. It was largely the planters' ability to control this labour and the wages that ensured survival and even prosperity. Kittitian planters responded to capitalist crises in the centre by decreasing wages. For example, between 1846 and 1854, the Sugar Duties Act of 1846 gradually opened up the British market to free trade, thereby ending the preferential treatment which British sugar, and West Indian sugar in particular, had received. The

market was consequently flooded with sugars from areas like Cuba where the cost of production was almost 30 per cent less than St. Kitts and other British West Indian colonies (Beachey 1957). The price of sugar dropped by almost 44 per cent with the increased worldwide competition. Planters on St. Kitts and Antigua responded by cutting the workers' wages by a full 50 per cent (Hall 1971:113). The planters tried to appease the workers by promising them that their wages would be increased proportionally, when the market prices for sugar improved. Workers on Antigua acquiesced, but on St. Kitts they responded by burning cane fields (Higgins to Gray 1848 in Hall 1971:113). This seemed to be the only means by which they could express their frustrations and outrage. All the planters had agreed to reduce wages, so changing jobs was useless. Emigration, for those who could do so, was no longer a viable option. Trinidad and Guyana had discontinued the bounty system and lowered wages with the introduction of indentured labour. The basic need for survival in the absence of enough land on which they could subsist, forced the workers to submit their labour for half as much.

Contrary to the planters' laments, the Sugar Duties and Free Trade Act did not constitute their ruin. While it meant equalization of duties, there was still a difference of about 16 shillings per hundredweight on the duties for clayed and refined sugar and those for the brown muscovado sugar until 1874. The higher duties were imposed on the partially refined and refined sugars in order to protect the British refining industry. St. Kitts exported the brown muscovado, like most of the other British

West Indian colonies. (Only Trinidad and Guyana, exported some refined and semi-refined sugar). The muscovado producing colonies were therefore able to enjoy the 16 shilling advantage until 1874 (Beachey 1957; Dookhan 1975).

The period from 1840 to 1872 saw an increase in production on St. Kitts which surpassed pre-emancipation levels. With averages of nearly 14,000 tons per annum, Mr. Berkely of Peter's Hall plantation claimed that by 1872 the plantations were at the "zenith of their prosperity and were never so successfully cultivated" (quoted in Beachey 1957:42). By 1872, the price of sugar which had dropped to an average of about 21 shillings per hundredweight in the late 1840's to early 50's, had risen to about 25 shillings and 6 pence per hundredweight. This rise was due to the effects of the Crimean War (1854-56) and the American Civil War (1861-65).

The complete removal of all sugar duties on the British market in 1874 removed the advantage of Kittitian and other muscovado producers. Britain maintained a duty free policy on all sugars until 1901, when a customs duty of 4 shillings and 2 pence per hundredweight was imposed on all sugars from all sources. In 1919 the 1846 Act was reversed when differential duties in favour of British colonial sugar were imposed (Beachey 1957; Dookhan 1957).

The drop in sugar prices (especially refined sugars which by 1875 had declined by about 3 shillings and 2 pence per hundredweight, compared with the 1 shilling and 3 pence drop for muscovado), saw a steady increase in the consumption of sugar in Britain. Sugar consumption increase from about 15 pounds per

person in 1840 to about 68 pounds per person in 1880. By the turn of the century it had risen to about 85 pounds per head. Total consumption rose from about 307,115 tons in 1848 to 650,000 tons in 1870 and 930,000 tons in 1880 (Deerr 1949:5327; Hall 1971:124; Beachey 1957).

Kittitian and other British West Indian planters, while increasing and maintaining exports (compare an average of 5,145 tons in the 1840's to 50's and 14,000 in the 1870's for St. Kitts and 145,000 and 200,000 tons for all British West Indian sugar producers respectively) complained that they did not share in the increased British consumption. When the price for muscovado was cut to about 21 shillings per hundredweight after 1874, there was even further cause for complaint.

By 1876 Kittitian and other West Indian planters had more reason for alarm. Europe was undergoing another slump with the market glut. The effect of the wars in the 1850's and 60's had offset a decline in sugar prices. The 1873-79 crisis, however, coincided with the abolition of the muscovado advantage. The effects of world-wide competition was further aggravated by the rival European beet sugar. The heavily subsidized beet sugar had been steadily increasing its share of the market. In the year after Emancipation, beet sugar had accounted for only five per cent of world sugar production. By 1850 it had increased to about 13 per cent, and by 1875 it was about 45 per cent. By the turn of the century beet sugar accounted for nearly 55 per cent of the world sugar (Deerr 1949:490-491). European beet sugar grew from two-thirds of Caribbean cane sugar in 1859/60 to three and one

quarter times Caribbean production in 1894/95 (Dookhan 1975:17).

Beet sugar not only competed with cane sugar on the British market, but it also satisfied the continental market. This meant that this market was closed to surplus West Indian cane sugar which Britain had customarily re-exported (Dookhan 1975:17). Beet root had a lower sucrose content than cane, but the application of science and technology and capital provided a higher extraction. Beet root, unlike sugar, was well adapted to small holdings, and provided large amounts of cattle feed from its residue. It could be stored for months without spoiling, again unlike sugar, and in rotation with other crops it increased cereal yields and brought more marginal lands into cultivation. Beet sugar production enjoyed the additional advantage of large bounties from European governments who hoped to reduce the population drift from the country to the town (Dookhan 1975; Beachey 1957).

The cost of producing beet sugar was about the same as cane sugar, but bounties and lower freight costs allowed beet sugar to be sold much cheaper than the cost of its production. Between 1884 and 1894 Germany provided a 1 pound sterling per ton subsidy. In France the subsidy was 5 pounds per ton.

These bounties Rodney (1981) points out, were expressions of competitive national capital in the context of the cyclical crises in the capitalist economies. The spectre of unemployment as well as ruin which loomed large for the direct and indirect producers of beet sugar, goaded European governments into providing protective measures, including export subsidies. European governments met set-backs in the industry by increasing subsidies,

thereby ensuring that beet sugar would enter foreign markets at lower than production costs even when there were poor harvests. These subsidies served to drastically reduce the price of all sugars on the market. In 1884 alone, the price of muscovado dropped from 20 shillings to 13 shillings per hundredweight, an all-time low in almost two centuries and about 59 per cent of its average price in 1867 to 1877. By the turn of the century it was selling for about 9 shillings per hundredweight (Deerr 1949:531; Beachey 1957).

Lower prices for beet sugar increased its popularity among British consumers, including sugar refiners and confectioners. Its importation into Britain increased from 80,027 tons in 1865 to 559,000 tons in 1884 and 1,362,000 tons in 1900 (Table 4:7). West Indian exports to Britain decreased correspondingly, although high levels of production were maintained. Czarnikow, London's largest sugar brokers, were scarcely handling cane sugar by the end of the 19th century. Tate's Liverpool refinery increased its percentage of beet sugar from 39 per cent in 1877 to 100 per cent in 1899 (Watson 1973, cited in Rodney 1981:22).

Clamours from West Indian planters and cane sugar brokers for British duties against French and German beet sugar were ignored. The new capitalists who had the political power in Britain were interested in the cheapest sources for raw material. Cheap sugar promoted the development of the confectionery industry. Beet sugar subsidies made sugar the cheapest item for consumers in Britain and together with the confectioners, they lobbied for a "free breakfast table" (Rodney 1981:23). Plantations on St.

Kitts managed to survive this crisis by switching exports to the United States market and reducing wages.

Table 4:7
The Sugar Trade, 1884-1900
(In Thousands of Tons)

B.W.I. Sugar Exports		Sugar Imports into Britain			
		Cane Sugar		Beet Sugar	
Year	Amount	B.W.I.	Other		Total
1884	329	168	414	559	1,141
1885	283	138	423	562	1,123
1886	256	99	367	586	1,052
1887	336	108	331	772	1,211
1888	299	106	468	661	1,235
1889	289	94	376	855	1,325
1890	298	67	216	987	1,270
1891	264	54	298	1,001	1,353
1892	279	75	311	958	1,344
1893	273	61	307	1,009	1,377
1894	260	85	239	1,087	1,411
1895	236	85	243	1,169	1,497
1896	206	72	226	1,144	1,442
1897	254	47	228	1,159	1,434
1898	289	41	235	1,117	1,393
1899	244	39	106	1,258	1,403
1900	238	37	113	1,362	1,512

Source: Dookhan 1975:18.

With increasing competition on the British market, St. Kitts, like many other Caribbean territories, found a "saviour" in the United States market. A lowering of United States' duties on muscovado unrefined sugar in 1872 benefitted the refining industry there, and opened up a market for British West Indian muscovado. Manufactured and other goods from the United States had long established markets in the West Indies. With the increase in the demand for muscovado sugar, the long-standing trade links were reinforced. By 1887, out of a total production of 336,016 tons, British West Indian colonies exported 194,920 tons to the United States. By 1900, the United States was receiving over two-thirds of British West Indian sugar exports (Beachey 1957:128; Dookhan 1975).

With the abolition of all sugar duties in Britain in 1874, increasing beet competition and a huge price drop in 1884, British West Indian sugar producers claimed they received an extra profit of 2 pounds sterling per ton in the United States, despite a 40 per cent duty there. In addition, continental beet sugar was subject to a higher duty in the United States, thus allowing for the muscovado advantage.

Export to the United States was not only nearer and cheaper, it was also easier. Caribbean territories imported large amounts of foodstuffs from the United States, and returning ships had room for cargo. St. Kitts, where an office of the West India and Panama Telegraph Company had set up an office in the 1870's, was the last stop for the steamships on their way to the United States from the South. By 1879 it was claimed that the sugar proprietors of St. Kitts and Nevis who were not tied to English merchants,

were disposing of their crops to purchasers for the United States market and realizing 2 or 3 pounds sterling more per hogshead on the price obtained in the United Kingdom (Beachey 1957:129).

The Royal Commission on Finance 1883-84 reported that American buyers were everywhere, and that the American market was a "great boon even with heavy duty" (Beachey 1957:130). By 1881-82, the bulk of Kittitian sugar was being sold to American "speculators in the local market" (Parliamentary Papers 1910, Beachey 1957:131).

The British West Indian colonies signed a trade agreement with the United States in 1891. The colonies agreed to reduce duties on imports of kerosene, timber and flour from the United States, in return for the United States' promise not to impose stiffer tariffs on their sugar. The agreement was short-lived, however, lasting only until early 1894. As the United States increased its imperialist advances its policies changed. Preferential duties on sugar were awarded to Cuba, Puerto Rico, Brazil and the Dominican Republic in 1895. These countries were granted a 5 pound sterling per ton advantage over other sugars imported into the United States. The market was virtually closed to St. Kitts and other British West Indian colonies when further preferences were awarded to Cuba and Puerto Rico at the turn of the century, although exports never really ceased (Beachey 1957; Dookhan 1975).

The never-ending complaints of Kittitian and other West Indian planters about hard times, probably rang truest in 1896. International capitalism was undergoing a deep structural crisis.

Sugar was at a record low at 10 shillings per hundredweight. The British market was flooded with cheap beet sugar. France and Germany had just doubled their subsidies, which would account for a further drop in prices (9 shillings in 1897). British West Indian sugar was being excluded from the American market. The American refiners were no longer inclined to use muscovado unless it was dried centrifugally. Kittitian and other West Indian planters who had not advanced that far in technological innovation, were in despair. [17]. Plantations were being forced out of production. Financial houses, like Swendell and Matthews on St. Kitts, which made loans to the planters, were collapsing. Some absentee owners began ordering their managers to cease production (Beachey 1957).

The depression was felt more acutely by the working people, however. Their sufferings and the increasing exploitation by the plantation owners and managers would erupt into another revolt during this decade.

Depression and Revolt, 1896

The workers' wages on St. Kitts had been reduced by half during the economic crisis of the late 1840's. The planters had not increased wages when sugar prices had risen during their periods of prosperity, as they had promised. The prices for imported necessities, in contrast, had increased significantly.

At a time when most of the treasuries in the colonies were virtually bankrupt, St. Kitts' was overflowing. This was one of the reasons for Kittitian objection to the British Federation plans in the late 19th century. St. Kitts, as part of a

Federation, would have to share its wealth with the bankrupt territories (Hall 1971).

The Kittitian treasury was overflowing at the expense of the working people. After emancipation the island's revenues were almost exclusively derived from customs and excise duties and trade licences. This meant that the businesses of local merchants and shopkeepers became more important politically. It also led to periodic conflicts between these and the planters. Planters who dominated the Assembly called for higher import duties in an attempt to ensure a good supply of labour. Their theory was that higher tariffs would inflate prices of consumer goods. The working people would need more money to buy higher priced items, therefore, they would offer more labour to the estates. While the merchants argued that lower tariffs would enable them to increase sales and profits, the more powerful planters had their way (Hall 1971). In addition, this form of revenue collection meant that direct taxation which would affect the planters, was not implemented. [18].

Another reason for the comparative wealth of the Kittitian treasury was the fact that expenditure on public welfare was significantly less than that in many of the neighbouring islands. A hospital had been built in the late 1840's when disease epidemics threatened the island and a law for poor relief, which was never effectively enforced, was passed in the 1850's. There was a marked absence of the relative generosity and volunteer arrangements of the Legislature and friendly societies in Antigua (Colonial Office Report 1866; Hall 1971). Two and one half per

cent of customs duties went to poor relief in Antigua. As early as 1841, special provisions were made for the mentally disabled there. There were widows funds and funds for orphanages. The Daily Meal Society which was supported by voluntary gifts, occasional church offerings and occasional grant-in-aid from the island Legislature and the parishes, operated a seaman's hospital, a leper's hospital and an orphanage for girls. In St. Kitts, where the mentally disabled were kept in jails, there was nothing to compare with Antigua's Daily Meal Society in spite of its comparatively abundant treasury and prosperous planters (Hall 1971).

The callous attitude of Kittitian planters towards the working people increased in the latter half of the 19th century. When market prices for sugar increased, workers who cultivated idle or rotating cane lands were forced back onto the marginal mountain lands to make way for more cane cultivation. It would probably be an understatement to say that the working class on St. Kitts felt the depression acutely. One observer noted, "The mass of the people here are in a deplorable state of starvation, which I regret to say is daily increasing. Generally speaking it's no exaggeration to remark that hale strong men and women are now daily seen begging their bread..." (Lewis 1898, St. Kitts Daily Express; also in Richardson 1983:106).

The Kittitian planters' decision to further decrease the already reduced wages in 1896 was, therefore, the last straw. In addition to a further 25 per cent. reduction in wages, some estates, and those belonging to a rich ex-indentured Portuguese, Joaquim Farara (who was branded as an oppressive miser by the

workers), were increasing their work loads.

Farara, who acquired ownership of several estates on the outskirts of Basseterre, began introducing more technological innovations on his Needsmust Estate in 1894. A larger crushing mill and clarifying tanks were installed. The new tanks had a 600 gallon capacity, 100 gallons more than the old tanks. Mill workers demanded a wage increase of half a penny, because they were paid by the amount of sugar which was extracted from a tank of clarified liquid. The workers knew how many clarifiers it took to produce a ton of muscovado sugar and could therefore keep a check on their output.

Larger clarifiers meant more work, not only for the mill workers, but also for cane cutters who were being forced to increase their cutting in order to meet the demands of the larger mills. Farara refused to increase wages, and like the other planters, he opted to decrease wages instead. The workers vented their frustrations and hostilities which had been smouldering through the years of oppression and exploitation.

The revolt which became known as the "Portuguese Riots" erupted at the start of the 1896 harvest season. On Sunday, February 16, workers set fire to Farara's cane fields at Needmust and Pond's. At Stoneford in Old Road; more rioting broke out and more fields were burnt. Cane fires and disorders flared up on other estates, and on Monday, the 17th, crowds of working people from the outlying districts stormed Basseterre. Here they were joined by striking dock workers and boatmen, and the angry workers smashed street lights and looted "Portuguese" shops. [19].

Again, as in 1835; it was the might of the colonial power that subdued the workers. A warship, H.M.S. Cordelia, was summoned from Antigua. Blue-jackets were landed at Basseterre and Old Road. They fixed their bayonets to their rifles and attacked the surging crowds. Five workers were killed and seven others wounded by the time it was all over (St. Kitts Advertiser and Weekly Intelligencer, March 2, 1896; Burns 1954; Beachey 1957; Richardson 1983).

The remainder of the century was even bleaker for the Kittitian working class. Deprivation was compounded by natural disaster. A hurricane in 1899 demolished crops and buildings. The working people had no say in the trends and resolutions of capitalist crises in the 19th century. The crises, on the contrary, affected the very basis of the workers' survival. They were forced to subsist on less.

It was no surprise that in the latter half of the 19th century and early in the 20th, St. Kitts had one of the highest mortality rates in the Caribbean. In 1872, for 1,293 births, there were 1,316 deaths. From 1863 to 1865, of the 2,614 people that died, 1,187 were less than one year old. The still born rate among black 19th working class members on St. Kitts was more than 10 per cent. In the early 20th century the infant mortality rate for St. Kitts was 187 per 1,000 live births, second only to Barbados, where it was 217. This compared with 48 per 1,000 in England (Williams 1944; Richardson 1983).

Colonial officials blamed the situation on the tendency of black workers to "squander their money on inconsequential clothing and baubles" (Williams 1944). Colonial officials characteristic-

ally overlooked the real reasons, however. There was not enough land on which people could make an effort to feed themselves. Wages were very inadequate, food prices were high and housing was deplorable. The Governor, in his 1862 report, claimed that black families of eight or more lived near the plantations in:

wooden erections, about 14 feet square, consisting of one or at the utmost, two rooms. A European lady lately compared them to bathing machines with the wheels off; a comparison scarcely complimentary to the latter. These houses rest on posts or blocks of wood, a foot or two from the ground itself ... The furniture ... consists of a sack stuffed with grass for a bed, sometimes a bedstead, two or three boxes which serve at once for wardrobes and chairs and a looking glass (Report of Lt. Governor Benjamin Pine 1862, in Richardson 1983:102).

Families were crowded in these cramped quarters. Their diet staples, imported dried fish, flour and available local vegetables were supplemented by cane juice. Any interruption of food importation (as in the time of war), threatened complete starvation (Richardson 1983; Parliamentary Papers 1867).

Poverty and malnutrition due to exploitation, more adequately explained the high death rates. Some workers responded by emigrating to Trinidad, the Dominican Republic, and later Bermuda and North America, in spite of another 1879 law which prohibited the emigration of "unauthorized workers" (Richardson 1983). The majority, however, had to endure the harsh conditions.

The late 19th century crisis would only be temporary for Kittitian capitalists. Their problem was finding a market that would bring in more profitable returns. The problem of the direct producers was a matter of survival. By the turn of the century, the Canadian market would become an important outlet. In 1898,

the Canadian Minister of Finance, Mr. Fielding, signed an agreement to admit British West Indian sugar at a preferential rate which was 25 per cent below existing duties. Mr. Fielding signed the agreement claiming that Canada had some imperial responsibilities in the West Indian dilemma. The preferential rate was increased to 33.5 per cent in 1900 and an equal surtax of 33.5 per cent was placed on German beet sugar imports in 1903 (Beachey 1957). [20].

Kittitian and other British West Indian muscovado sugar industries were granted another "saviour" in the expanding refining industries located in Quebec, Halifax and Montreal. Canadian imports rose from 11,000 tons in 1897 to 133,000 tons in 1909. The lumber and fishing industries also absorbed large amounts of molasses. Molasses became a staple food for workers in these Canadian industries. On the other hand, Kittitian and other West Indian populations consumed large quantities of Maritime fish from Canada.

The West Indian industries received an additional boost in 1902, when European governments were finding the ever-increasing burden of bounty subsidies more difficult to bear and agreed to end the subsidies at the Brussels Sugar Convention. Britain, on the other hand, agreed to prohibit importation of any subsidized beet sugar or to impose a duty equal to, or higher than the bounty during the five years which followed the signing of the agreement. With the discontinuation of bounties for beet sugar, West Indian sugar exports to Britain increased from 37,000 tons in 1900 to 129,000 tons in 1909 (Deerr 1949; Beachey 1957; Dookhan 1975).

The price for sugar, however, as we shall see in the next chapter, remained low until the War of 1914 drove it up.

The 19th century, which had begun with the black population on St. Kitts struggling to break the yoke of slavery, ended with their struggle to break the yoke of poverty and oppression. Kittitian planters were to be among the few in the colonies to survive the 19th century crises, but this was at the expense of the working classes. In spite of general stagnation, between 1831 and 1860 when total production exports from the area had declined by about 40 per cent, St. Kitts had managed a growth of about 58 per cent. Labour saving technology and rich soils no doubt contributed to this growth, but labour costs represented almost 50 per cent of the cost of sugar production and Kittitian planters had reduced wages by 75 per cent at the end of the century (Hall 1971; Beachey 1957).

Social and political power were important factors in the Kittitian planters' ability to maintain their industry. Emancipation had not lessened the political commitment to the maintenance of sugar production. The colony had been developed as a sugar colony and there was no conception of any economic alternatives. [22]. To the wealthy planter class which dominated the Legislature on St. Kitts and the absentee owners who were represented by commercial houses, the island was still no more than a commercial enterprise. This was exemplified in the lack of concern for public welfare.

These white colonial rulers were determined to keep the African descendants "in their place" - as labourers on the plantation, disqualified by colour and class from entry into the

competition for higher social and economic status (Hall 1971:157). Few would admit that black labourers who were numerically pre-dominant, could contribute more than manual labour to the society.

The planters had used their power to maintain the subordinate relationship under slavery. It was their hope that the ex-slaves would settle down to be "industrious, docile and respectful servants". They continually bemoaned the loss of "the respectful deportment" of the workers. They used vagrancy and emigration laws to restrict the workers' movements. Licensing laws prohibited their entry into urban trades and petty merchandising for those who could. For example, only 100 licences for porters and 100 for boatmen were issued in the post-emancipation period. In addition, licence applications had to be accompanied by certificates signed by two merchants and the Inspector of Police. Added to all this, was the fact that high import taxes on basic commodities were designed to increase the workers' dependence on money wages, and hence the plantations (Hall 1971; Williams 1970; Dookhan 1975).

The ideological systems of support were also geared towards maintaining this subordination. Day schools for ex-slave children were opposed on the grounds that the "graduation" of the children from "grass gang" workers (gathering grass for cattle) to "weeding" and eventually "great gang" or "first gang" workers (cane cutters), was more important than learning to read or write (MacGregor to Aberdeen 1835, in Hall 1971). These subjects, along with needle-work, were relegated to the weekends. There was a general fear of the:

withdrawal of the younger persons from any proportion of Plantation labour, or trivial occupation, for the purpose of education, or being placed out to learn different trades of Mechanics or Artisans (Colonial Office 7/43 in Hall 1971:51).

The planters could not afford for the "rising young generation ... [to] grow up without the ability or inclination to engage, at any future period in the different branches of Field Labour or Cultivation of the Soil" (Colonial Office 7/43, 1836; Hall 1971).

The clergy who ran the schools were instructed to "devise the best methods of combining industrial training with the other objects of education suited to their (the Negroes') natural portion" (Fitzroy to Stanley 1845, in Hall 1971). Parents were warned not to put

extravagant notions into (their) children's heads, but to teach them to live virtuously and contentedly, and work quietly and regularly, ... and in every other respect to do their duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call them (Cunningham 1845 in Hall 1971:58).

The colonial office also had some instructions for the indoctrination of the ex-slaves:

The lesson books of the colonial schools should also teach the mutual interest of the mother country and her dependencies; the rational basis of their connection, and the domestic and social responsibilities of the coloured races (Gordon 1963:20 quoted in Henry 1985:63).

In other words, as Hall summed it up, the exhortation was, "for the sake of God, Country, Queen and Freedom, we ask you to pay respect and continue to cut the canes" (1971:58).

The Colonial Office, in the early years after emancipation, under the watchful eyes of abolitionist humanitarians, had sought,

at times unsuccessfully, to revoke the most restrictive of the oppressive laws in the colonies. By the middle of the century this stance was abandoned. They sought instead more efficient and economical administration in the colonies. The colonial officials claimed that the ex-slaves were displaying a "regrettable lack of industrious habit" and regretted that so much concern had been expressed for their welfare in the early post-emancipation years. Benjamin Hawes, Under Secretary of State for the colonies declared:

I am perfectly free to confess that a good deal of legislation has been influenced by considerations which no longer, I think, prevail. The well-established character of freedom in the West Indies renders a great deal of that kind of supervision over local legislature unnecessary, which at that time was thought necessary. It was thought as much necessary by the public as by the Government of the day, and though with our present better experience we may look back with regret to some of the impediments which were thrown in the way, both in the cultivation of property in the West Indies, and the supply of labour, we must admit that public opinion prevailed in all quarters, and no doubt it influenced the policy of the mother country towards the colonists, and I think rather, as I am bound to say ... prejudicially (Hawes, Evidence to Select Committee, 1848 in Hall 1971:154).

The Select Committee was so convinced that the planters had been wronged that they probed witnesses for means by which the "Negro might be most effectively taxed so that he might be driven to find wage labour on the estates" (Hall 1971:155). Kittitian planters had the answer - restrict access to land, impose strict laws on mobility, ensure high food prices and reduce already low wages from time to time.

The perpetuation of the ideology which attributed inherent inferiority to African descendants, had entered a new dimension in the 19th century. So-called intellectuals and social Darwinists

supported these ideas, and they were re-echoed in colonial policies.

With the intensification of the Industrial Revolution during the 19th century, British capitalists were more interested in obtaining outlets for their manufactured products and in finding the cheapest raw materials to import. These new directions required the development of colonial policies that would structure the colonies to suit these new purposes (Magdoff 1978). The new policies had included the abolition of slavery and the emergence of a 'free' labour market, along with the increasing use of money and exchange. Local planter class resistance had seen Britain 'imposing' these.

The state, form which emerged in the post-emancipation period, was shaped by the threat of a "free" workforce within, and capitalist developments outside of St. Kitts. In the second half of the 19th century, Crown Colony Government replaced the Old Representative System. Ostensibly, it was because the the old system was unrepresentative:

The population at large consisted of uneducated negroes, [who] neither had nor could have any political powers; they were incapable of contributing to the formation of any intelligent public opinion, and the consequence was that the Assemblies performed their office of legislation under no real or effective responsibility (Duke of Buckingham, Dispatch, August 17, 1868).

In reality, however, the already limited democratic features of the "Old Representative" state form were discarded and replaced by Crown Colony rule as part of a strategy for maintaining power in the post-emancipation era.

The Crown Colony state was a Legislative Council consisting of a majority of senior officials, along with unofficial members nominated from among the colonists by a Governor who represented the Crown. The Governor had veto powers which gave him ultimate executive authority. The Crown now had the power to override all political opposition, as extremely limited electoral rights were exercised in the construction of the law-making and executive bodies (Dookhan 1975; Thomas 1984).

Crown Colony government curtailed the powers of the local plantocracy on St. Kitts. Its introduction was not resisted, however, because the plantocracy was threatened by the increasing possibility of non-white acquisition of franchise and political power, as they acquired the property requirements to vote. The local Assemblies did not yield their powers because the system was unrepresentative. They yielded because they were afraid that they might no longer be able to remain unrepresentative of the non-white population (Hall 1971:77).

While some colonies felt that their bankrupt situation might be remedied, St. Kitts' comparatively wealthy plantocracy expected further reduced costs of operation and a guarantee against bankruptcy (Hall 1971). The colonial office, on the other hand, was driven by a need to curb the growing power of the local Assemblies. The colonial officials also wanted a more efficient administration of colonial resources. Concern over "stability" in the colonies was an added factor. The 1865 Morant Bay rebellion of the exploited workers in Jamaica had ignited the ever-present fear of the revolt of the dominated black masses throughout the region. This possibility worried the colonial officials as well

as the local plantocracy.

The general claim was that the African descendants "were incapable of contributing any intelligent public opinion". Henry Taylor of the colonial office had declared, just after emancipation, that West Indian communities with a majority of "black people just emancipated, still in the depths of ignorance and by their African temperament excitable", together with "propertied but uneducated coloured people" and a few whites "possessed by all the passions and inveterate prejudices, every attempt at a representative system ... must result in oligarchy." If blacks obtained power, he warned, it would mean that an "ignorant and bedarkened mass of voters" would elect a black Legislature, which would be oligarchic and oppressive of whites (quoted in Hall 1971:170).

Taylor proposed Crown Colony government. This was the form that subsequently emerged in the 1860's. By that time, the Carlyle and Gobineau doctrines were added to the popular ideologies. Thomas Carlyle, an admirer of Prussian militarism, in his "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question" in 1849, abhorred the idea that democratic rights and suffrage should be extended to ex-slaves, whom he portrayed as "idle, vegetating guzzlers of rum and pumpkin". He called for labour regimentation, and expounded on a society where the "wisest man" was at the top and the "Demarara Nigger" was at the bottom (quoted in Williams 1970).

Gobineau later damned the black race in 1854, claiming that "the Negroid variety is the lowest", animal in character. "No

Negro race," he claimed, is seen as the initiator of a civilization. Only when it is mixed with some other, can it be initiated into one. Trollope (1859), after a visit to Jamaica, had argued that the Negro race was a "servile race, fitted by nature for the hardest physical work and apparently little else." Trollope, Williams (1970:399) points out, resented the material improvements that people of colour had made which allowed them to vote, sit on magistrates and enter the House of Assembly, and he called for the abolition of the Representative System.

Self-government, colonial officials were claiming, "was only applicable to the English race" (Earl of Newcastle, Address to the House of Lords 1858, Williams 1970:399). It was this ideology that allowed the colonial officials to grant dominion status to 'white' colonies like Canada and Australia, but impose Crown Colony rule on those like the Caribbean, where there was a large non-white majority.

Crown Colony government was designed to contain all local resistance to colonial interests (Thomas 1984b:20). It accomplished this by ensuring a maximum number of authoritarian forms of rule and a minimum amount of control from below. This state structure severely restricted the franchise and ensured that its composition was limited to appointed colonial officials and members of the plantocracy. It ensured that the dominant classes ruled directly. It guaranteed the alliance of class and state power for the consolidation of the dominant sugar industry. In St. Kitts, as in other British West Indian colonies, this combined power was used to retard the development of the working classes, keeping them dependent on the plantation and inadequate wages.

3

MICRO

In the post-emancipation period, the state expanded its policing instruments to ensure stability, which meant keeping the ex-slaves in a subordinate position despite freedom. The new functions included mechanisms to restrict the mobility of the newly emancipated workers, and the judicial system was expanded to deal with violators of these laws. The taxation system which raised revenue to help support the state, also served to control the working class.

Crown Colony government also served to reinforce the racial structure of society. The plantocracy, who controlled the means of production and the colonial representatives were white. The masses, the working class African descendants, were black and the developing intermediate strata were of mixed racial origins. The persistence of the ideology of white European superiority served to reinforce the unequal social organization. During this era, more direct attempts were made to manipulate the ideological structure to shape the ideas and consciousness of the dominated classes.

This was evident in the religious and educational sectors. No serious effort had been made to christianize the African descendants on St. Kitts until slavery was threatened. The established and state-supported Anglican church, had ignored non-whites. The Moravians only began missionary activity on St. Kitts in the late 18th century after forty years in the region (Cox 1984). By the time slavery was abolished, they were fully established. Experience in other territories had taught the missionaries to cooperate with the ruling classes in maintaining

the status quo through religious instruction (Goveia 1965). Their role in the critical period during the abolition of slavery has been noted. After slavery, religious indoctrination was regarded as a necessary form of control. The church-related schools which had been non-existent in the 18th century, also became agents for socializing the dominated into being "good colonial servants" and plantation workers.

While the ruling plantocracy on St. Kitts was allowed to boost its own interests locally, with little interference from the colonial office, conflicts did arise between the local and metropolitan ruling classes. Issues like the introduction of free trade in Britain were opposed by local planters. They also opposed the 19th century Federation imposed by Britain, but with its overarching powers reinforced by crown colony rule, the colonial government could impose its wishes on the local situation.

The British government's attempt to consolidate colonial administration in order to control the colonies and reduce costs, included a Federation Plan for the West Indies. The Plan was to be initiated with a Federation of the Leeward Islands and one of the Windward Islands. The Federation called for a single government under a single treasury. St. Kitts strenuously opposed the Plan because it called for the sharing of its wealth with bankrupt neighbours.

The Leeward Islands Act, establishing the Leeward Islands Federation was passed in 1871, in spite of considerable objections from most of the islands involved. These included St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, Antigua and Dominica. Strong opposition, however, had forced the colonial office to abandon the idea of a

common treasury. Strong resistance also forced the colonial office to abandon the rest of the Federation of the West Indies Plan. The merging of administrations in St. Kitts and Nevis in 1882 and Trinidad and Tobago in 1899 were the only combinations achieved by the colonial office, much to the chagrin of both Kittitians and Nevisians. Long-standing hostility between these two islands, the richer St. Kitts and poorer Nevis, had taught Nevisians that it was their duty to "abhor everything belonging to St. Kitts" (Hamilton to Newcastle 1862, in Hall 1971). [23].

Nevertheless, crown colony rule ensured that the imperial wishes were carried out as far as possible. It also ensured that the structure of production remained under the firm control of the plantocracy. Colonial power would be challenged by the middle and labouring classes in the 20th century, but until then, crown colony rule allowed the plantocracy to govern with tight control. The fear of the mass of non-whites which arose from the ideology of white supremacy and right to rule, was allayed by the presence of the overarching colonial power.

It was a combination of these social, political and economic measures of control which limited the effectiveness of worker resistance on St. Kitts in the 19th century. Here, as in most of the other West Indian islands, the "great social revolution" which had been anticipated at emancipation, turned out to be little more than a change in legal status for the majority of those who had been enslaved. The planters who had opposed emancipation, fearing the complete destruction of their industry, found that the transition to wage labour reduced their costs and helped them to

survive the 19th century crises.

The turn of the 20th century was to see the revival of the sugar industry in those territories in the Caribbean where it had survived. On St. Kitts, this was to be accompanied by an increase in technological innovations. A centralized modern factory would replace individual mills and estate ownership would become consolidated. Low wages, which had been the mainstay of the industry in the 19th century, would persist, however.

It was not coincidental, therefore, that the labour unrest and rebellions which swept the Caribbean plantations in the 1930's, were initiated in St. Kitts. St. Kitts had become the "centre of wealth" in the Leeward Islands, but this had been at the expense of the labourers for whom "conditions were so much worse than elsewhere" (Lewis 1938).

The development of capitalism had forced many changes in the social formation on St. Kitts in the 19th century: emancipation, changes in sugar production and a growing authoritarianism in the state. More significantly, it relegated the island to a peripheral position in the system. The plantocracy proved unable to restore St. Kitts' importance as a sugar producing colony. Their rigidity, over-specialization and integration into the British capitalism, also meant that they were unable to abandon the peripheral role and create an economy with local or regional roots.

With the forced transformation in the mode of production, the determination to maintain the subordination of labour saw the ruling plantocracy using their control of the militarized state to this end. State power was used to crush worker resistance. Various laws hindered worker mobility and through control of

virtually all the land, the plantocracy forced the workers to remain bound to the plantation with no chances of developing into an independent peasantry. This determination also saw the plantocracy manipulating the ideological structures - as in the assumption of direct control of the education system by the state. While the coercion and exploitation brought profits for those who owned the means of production and poverty for the majority of Kittitians who did not, they also fuelled an increase in open forms of worker rebellion. The developments of this era would lay the foundations for more capitalist development in the sugar industry in the twentieth century, but they would also lead to more organized working class resistance.

Notes

1. The Antiguan planters seemed to have realized these facts and opted to grant their slaves 'full' freedom in 1834, instead of implementing the apprenticeship system which was adopted in all the other territories. They argued that it was more profitable for them to do this.
2. This system was eventually discontinued after four years, in 1838 for all slaves, cutting the field slaves service by two years.
3. I am also indebted here to the work of the late anthropologist, Richard Frucht, for much of the detail about the revolt.
4. It appears that in a brief alliance, some whites joined with the free coloureds to petition the legislature in 1832. This (Cox 1984) points out, may have been prompted by the fact that these whites realized that the long, drawn-out dispute (see Chapter 3), given the changing times, would be resolved by direct imperial intervention. They probably felt that it would be better to resolve it on their own terms.
5. This victory was immediately counteracted, when the local Assembly increased the property qualifications for election to the Assembly. According to the members, leaving property qualifications unchanged, would "give ascendancy in the Legislative and Executive Branches to the free people of colour and free Blacks over whites, and effectively convert the Assembly into a Representation of persons and not of Property" (Colquhoun to Murray, Colonial Office/239/23 in Cox 1984:108). The Act existed until 1840, when property qualifications for voter and Assemblymen were lowered. Cleghorn, unlike most other free coloureds, was able to meet these qualifications.
6. Many workers had to provide their own food as well, for many planters opted to allow the ex-slaves to cultivate marginal or idle land instead of providing them with food.
7. Many of the islands were mountainous, and did not possess enough of the large areas of gently sloping terrain which facilitates the cultivation of sugar cane, as in St. Kitts.
8. Job or task work, in which the workers completed the job in their own time, undermined the old strict surveillance routine, to which the planters had become accustomed. The planters also resisted job work because jobbers tended to demand higher wages.
9. The majority, however, still had their rent, and wages joined, which forced them to remain on the particular estate.

10. While there is no indication that these were returned to England, by the early 1850's there was almost no trace of them on the island (Davy 1854:449).
11. There were 23 estates out of cultivation. Of these, 17 were owned by resident planters and six by absentees.
12. Benjamin Buck Greene had a large stake in St. Kitts. Merchant, shipowner, proprietor and lessee of eight estates, and a consignee of the produce of several others in 1848, he had lived in St. Kitts from 1829-1839 as a manager of 16 estates. These estates, he claimed, produced more than a quarter of the island's total sugar output. He produced these statistics in opposition to the complaint that absenteeism was St. Kitts' greatest evil, and resident proprietors were doing much better than absentees (Hall 1971:106). Greene's figures were not exact, but they were a very fair indication (Hall 1971; Richardson 1983).
13. Many of the resident proprietors were also attorneys for absentee proprietors. For example, Wigley and Burt were estate owners as well as lawyers. This meant that they were also their own shipping agents. They consigned their sugar to Thompson Hankey and Company of London, and also represented these merchants on the island. In one instance, they were successful in mediating the payment of a debt of 1,066 pounds and 16 shillings owed to Hankey and Company by one Aston Davoren between 1850 and 1857 (Hall 1957;).
14. It was common for sugar cured under the old methods to lose up to 5 per cent in weight during shipping, as the molasses continued to leak out.
15. This was illustrated in the amusing story of a "ponderous machine" which was imported to improve the "the manufacture of sugar, but, like Robinson Crusoe's boat, the shippers appear to have overlooked the means by which so cumbersome a body was to be transported to its destination, and after many ineffectual attempts by the aid of men, horses and cattle innumerable, it has been left by the roadside, ... until ... some adequate locomotive can be supplied from the place of its embarkation" (Fitzroy to Stanley 1845, in Hall 1971).
16. The Governor's Report in 1860 echoed these sentiments and called attention to French Martinique, where central factories had proven successful, one grossing profits of 22,485 pounds (Beachey 1957:82-83). Beachey also points out that central factories introduced in Trinidad and St. Lucia (1871-73), had reduced the cost of production by nearly the cost of production by nearly 50 per cent between 1884 and 1894, causing one planter to declare that "all elements of successful competition with beet sugar are here (that is in the central factory)".
17. There was only one centrifugal mill on the island at that

time, on Brighton's estate.

18. In these small islands, high duties also encouraged smuggling.
19. It was noted above that ex-indentured Portuguese had come to dominate the merchant and retail trades on the island. They also received credit from the plantocracy.
20. Up to this time, German beet sugar had dominated the Canadian market. About Cd.\$3 million worth of sugar was imported annually. Germany, on the other hand, refused to admit Canadian agricultural products under the favourable conditions of the German Conventional Tariff. Canada retaliated by penalizing German commodities, which included the 33.5 per cent surtax on beet sugar (Rodney 1981; Beachey 1957).
21. Knowles (1930, Vol. II:345-5), claims that Canada's policy of cultivating close trade relations with the British West Indies stemmed from the desire to secure sugar and other tropical commodities, which "she cannot produce within her own borders and so to some extent, to balance her economic disadvantage, as compared with the neighbouring republic" (Quoted in Beachey 1957:174). Canadian banking (Bank of Nova Scotia, in particular), also began to take roots in the West Indies as a result of this treaty.
22. By the end of the century, Jamaica, Nevis, Montserrat, St. Vincent, Grenada and Trinidad had diversified their agricultural production.
23. Anguilla also became part of the St. Kitts-Nevis administration, but the fact that Anguilla was not even mentioned in the union, was a reflection of the neglect accorded that island. Sugar production was never really developed on Anguilla because of poor soils and low rainfall. Anguilla, however, also protested the union. This resentment would later erupt in the 1967 rebellion by Anguillians, when St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla became an Associated State. Anguilla has since reverted to crown colony rule.

CHAPTER FIVE

TWENTIETH CENTURY PLANTATION CONSOLIDATION
AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

The 19th century post-emancipation era had not seen the crushing of the Kittitian plantocracy by the ex-slave masses. The planters remained in firm control of economic and political power. They were confirmed in the ownership of virtually all property, except the workers. This dominant class was still able to realize and maintain profits without slaves and, in fact, without making any but the minimum of concessions to the working class.

The newly freed workers of St. Kitts were 'freer' in the 'naked' sense of the Marxist term, being totally alienated from land ownership, and hence divested of any ownership of the means of survival. The freedom to sell their labour power on a free market in order to subsist was, however, limited. Not only were they restricted in mobility, they were kept at the brink of starvation in the brutal quest by capital to maintain profits in the face of international capitalist crises.

In the first half of the 20th century, the new phase of imperial capitalist development saw an increase in the historical tendency towards consolidation and centralization of land and capital in the sugar industry on St. Kitts. This process, accelerated by the depressions and labour agitation, was further fuelled by renewed confidence in cane sugar with the abolition of bounties for beet sugar and the return of the protected market in Britain, as the British began losing faith in the benefits of free trade.

These developments renewed financial interests in St. Kitts. This resulted in a major transformation in the production of sugar in this colony. The transformation would lead to more intense struggles between the working and the ruling classes, as the ruling plantocracy fought to maintain and increase their exploitation and subordination of labour. The workers, on the other hand, had to battle for their very survival.

The Royal Commission (1896-97), which had been sent out to examine the condition of the colonies during the depression of that decade, had recommended the development of a "proper system of peasant farming", by settling the "labouring population on small plots of land as peasant proprietors". They also suggested crop diversification. These recommendations were reiterated by the Olivier Commission of 1929 and by the St. Kitts Workers League in a memorandum to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1936. These were only recommendations, however, and they were consistently and completely ignored (Dookhan 1975; Augier et al 1960; Union Messenger, 1936). The 1896-97 Commission had also recommended that a central factory be established on the island with British aid, to increase efficiency in the industry. This suggestion was followed through immediately.

The crises of the 1880s and 1890's had seen the ownership of many Kittitian plantations changing hands, as well as a great deal of consolidation. This "concentration of estates and centralization of works" was seen as a "step in the direction of improvement of manufacture" (Berkley 1881, quoted in Merrill 1958:98). By the turn of the century, the number of estates had been reduced to 54 (Richardson 1983). By 1923, J.W. Thurston and

Company Limited and S.L. Horsford and Company controlled half of the cane lands. These were acquired through purchase from absentee owners or through family connections (Union Messenger, June 27, 1923). [1].

The centralization of the manufacturing process of cane production was culminated with the establishment of the British owned sugar factory on the outskirts of Basseterre in 1911. The St. Kitts (Basseterre) Sugar Factory Limited was a public stock company based in London. The majority of the shares, the "A" shares, were held by Henckell Du Buisson and Company Limited, a subsidiary of C. Czarnikow Limited, one of London's largest sugar brokers. Individual plantation owners who supplied the factory with cane, controlled the remainder of the shares. The "B" shareholders had a secondary position, which meant that they received less profits than the London stockholders, or sometimes no profit at all, although the Factory made profits right up to nationalization. This issue would become an increasing source of contention as Factory profits grew and the London holding company increased its returns. In the meantime, however, the local planters who had long resisted a central factory, had finally been convinced, after noting the success of another Du Buisson factory in Antigua (Peat et al 1972; Inniss 1983).

The central factory, equipped with modern cane crushers and boilers capable of extracting 85 to 90 per cent of the sugar, replaced the large number of small steam mills. These small mills had extracted less than 50 per cent of the sugar, and were antiquated in comparison with the large efficient factories in

places like Trinidad and Guyana. With the restructuring of the manufacturing process, the St. Kitts (Basseterre) Sugar Factory Limited (The Factory) came to control all the cane processing, transportation and marketing operations, allegedly sabotaging another central factory venture in the process (Innis 1983:52). The decentralized individual units of production quickly disappeared. Estates became cane suppliers to the modern central factory.

The company installed a light, narrow-gauge railway (about two and a half feet wide) to link the factory to the estates. In 1912 the factory began grinding at the rate of 28 tons of cane per hour, and 3,891 tons of sugar were produced from about a third of the estates on the island. With a ratio of about nine and one half tons of cane per ton of sugar, the factory was far more efficient than the old mills which required about fourteen tons to make the one ton of sugar. Extensions were made to the railway until 1926 when it completely encircled the island (Sugar Technologists Booklet 1982).

Factory centralization and land consolidation were not the only developments in the Kittitian sugar industry in the early 20th century. In this era, sugar was no longer a speculative venture. Planting and processing had become separate enterprises and the planters sought to improve cultivation by increasing the use of artificial fertilisers, and introducing selective and improved varieties of cane. Tractors, trucks and siding cranes would replace labourers and work animals. Contour ploughing was implemented to incorporate the hillsides which had formerly been considered unsuitable for cane farming, and had been relegated to

marginal provision cultivation. These new techniques in cultivation were introduced with the assistance of the Imperial Department of Agriculture for the West Indies, which had been established in Barbados in 1898 for the scientific development of cane farming. The newly established St. Kitts Agricultural and Commercial Society, a planter/merchant organization aided in the introduction and spread of these techniques in St. Kitts.

Sugar production was being converted into a more capitalist, industrially organized activity. The estates and the factory were linked to mercantile houses and large corporations in Britain. These provided the capital, credit and markets which brought about the transformation in the Kittitian sugar industry. By the mid-1930's, under the new, more efficient system, about 30,000 tons of sugar were being produced (Deerr 1949).

The new "efficiency" soon brought large profits to its investors. It coincided with the sugar boom which was stimulated by the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and the consequent reduction of beet sugar exports from Europe (Dookhan 1975:29). The effects of the war saw a rapid leap in sugar prices from 9 shillings and 6 pence per hundredweight in 1913, to 24 shillings and 3 pence in 1916. By 1918 it had reached 33 shillings per hundredweight in London. Britain's extension of preferential treatment for its colonies to the equivalent of one third of the duties in 1919, saw an increase in this war-stimulated boom even after the war.

The year 1920 was a spectacular one for sugar capitalists. At the beginning of that year, sugar prices had climbed to 63

shillings and 6 pence per hundredweight. By early summer it had reached an astounding 95 shillings and 9 pence per hundredweight (Deerr 1949; Dookhan 1975). While prices dropped quickly as beet sugar producers regained their pre-war levels of production, Kittitian and other West Indian markets had preferential markets in Britain and Canada. Canada extended preferential treatment with new agreements in 1920 and 1925 (Dookhan 1975).

An unmarketed surplus of 3.2 million tons of sugar which accumulated on the world market between 1923 and 1929, served to decrease the prices. By 1929 the price had dropped back to 9 shillings per hundredweight in London. In 1930, another 1.4 million tons were added to the surplus, resulting in further price reductions. The fast-growing surplus was due in part to the fact that Cuba and Java, two islands which had the lowest production costs in the world, had increased their production by more than 50 per cent with the increase in demands during the First World War (Dookhan 1975; Augier et al 1960).

Another Royal Commission was appointed in 1929 to investigate the depression in the sugar industry. It pointed to protective measures employed by countries like France and the United States, as the main cause. Britain increased preferences by 4 pounds and 15 shillings per ton, but this was still not up to par with the competitors. The protective tariff war culminated with the International Sugar Agreement of 1937, under which quotas were established for foreign as well as colonial sugars in Britain, thereby guaranteeing a market for Kittitian and other colonial sugar (Dookhan 1975; Augier et al 1960).

The Working Class Struggle to Organize

The modernization and development of the Kittitian sugar industry came about with further underdevelopment in the working class. Land and capital consolidation, scientific cultivation and the new factory system were established alongside the old bases of exploitative social relations.

Conditions had not improved for the workers with the ushering in of 20th century development in the sugar industry. Centralization and consolidation meant more machinery and fewer jobs. Capitalist development also divided the working class into an industrial sector (factory workers) and an agricultural sector (estate workers). The factory workers had to contend with the new faceless corporation which dominated the entire industry. Estate workers still had to face the old owners and managers, a group whose numbers decreased as consolidation of estate ownership and control increased.

New farming techniques saw the extension of cane cultivation into the hillside areas. Not only were the workers no longer allowed to cultivate resting canelands (as they had been briefly in the mid 19th century), the estates extended cane acreage in the mountain plots. These lands had been regarded as marginal and were used as subsistence grounds for slaves. They were subsequently rented to labourers to guarantee the submission of their labour to the estates. Estate owners prohibited any provision farming in the highest areas to prevent the soil erosion that came with forest devastation. During the severe depression of the 1930's, Kittitian labourers would violate these prohibitions, as the need to survive took precedent (Union Messenger 1938;

Richardson 1983).

As cane acreage increased, the workers' means of subsistence decreased and reliance on imported food continued to grow. During the First World War, about three-quarters of the total food consumption was imported. Kittitian workers responded by emigrating or attempting to organize.

The Olivier Commission claimed that between 1897 and 1929, the Kittitian population had decreased by about 43 per cent. The dramatic decline in the population from 31,900 to 18,300, was largely attributed to emigration (both seasonal and permanent). [2]. Depression had brought most of the workers to the point of starvation. Coloureds and blacks trying to escape discrimination and poverty at home, were driven to places like Bermuda, Santo Domingo and the United States. [3].

Between 1901 and 1907, Kittitians made up the huge majority of the Caribbean migrant workers employed to build a floating dry dock in Bermuda. Richardson points out that of the nearly 40,000 pounds remitted to the West Indies from migrant workers in Bermuda during this period, about 30,000 went to St. Kitts and Nevis (Table 5:1). While, as the remittance figures indicate, the overwhelming proportion of the remittances went to St. Kitts, it must be pointed out that the Kittian postal services were often used by Nevisians (Richardson 1983:120).

The higher wages available abroad (compare 24 shillings per week for dock workers in Bermuda, with the 2 or 3 shillings per week for field workers in St. Kitts), was the main attraction for migrant workers for they did not escape discrimination in the new

Table 5:1
Postal Money Order Remittances From
Bermuda to St. Kitts, 1901-1907
(British pounds)

	West Indian Total	To St. Kitts	To Nevis
1901	8,780	6,505	326
1902	9,381	5,992	326
1903	8,437	5,679	543
1904	9,341	5,852	906
1905	4,429	2,886	645
1906	1,587	957	143
1907	991	634	63

Source: Richardson 1983:119.

countries (Richardson 1983). When Kittitian workers were forced to leave Bermuda, they consequently sought places with comparably high wages. Most flocked to the huge American-owned cane plantations in Santo Domingo for seasonal work from January to June or July. There they earned three to four times what they could earn at home. So for the first three decades of the twentieth century, about 10 per cent of the Kittitian population (mainly males), left for seasonal labour abroad returning later in the year on an annual basis (Table 5:2).

This annual migration became part of the way of life on St. Kitts. It began in November and December:

The exodus of labourers to Santo Domingo has begun. Year by year, the people of the labouring class are brought face to face with this necessity. On the afternoon of Wednesday ... four schooners- "Warspite", "Muriel", "Betsy R", and "Eagle" - sailed out of our roadstead,

each heavily laden with its cargo of human freight
(Union Messenger, November 7, 1923).

Table 5:2
Migration to and from St. Kitts and Nevis
(1914-1939)

Year	Emigration	Immigration	Year	Emigration	Immigration
1914	2,752	2,873	1927	3,043	2,773
1915	2,752	3,061	1928	3,877	3,280
1916	2,966	3,145	1929	4,685	4,325
1917	3,623	3,447	1930	3,426	3,647
1918	4,099	3,338	1931	2,996	2,870
1919	4,815	4,700	1932	2,830	2,800
1920	5,589	4,602	1933	2,720	2,301
1921	4,985	4,057	1934	2,423	2,443
1922	n/a	n/a	1935	3,018	2,701
1923	3,224	2,261	1936	3,143	2,481
1924	3,664	2,763	1937	2,403	2,481
1925	3,447	2,651	1938	3,907	2,851
1926	3,567	2,829	1939	4,465	4,356

Note: n/a - No data available.

Source: Richardson 1983:126, citing The Leeward Islands Blue Books, 1914-1915 through 1919-1920 and 1920 through 1929.

In addition, workers from neighbouring islands like Nevis, Montserrat, Antigua and Dominica sometimes travelled to St. Kitts via fishing boats to board these vessels, as St. Kitts was usually

the last stop in the area (Richardson 1983). The trip to Santo Domingo was free, but the migrants paid for their return voyage.

The seasonal migration to the cane fields in Santo Domingo was selective. These migrants were mainly the young and middle-aged members of the black working class, and their migration was seldom permanent. Permanent migration was more common among the migrants to the United States during this period. These were mainly the members of the coloured petit bourgeoisie/ middle class, the artisans, tradesmen, shopkeepers and clerks - a pattern which was apparently typical of Caribbean migration to the United States at the time (Richardson 1983; Frucht 1968). The economic depression had hit this group as well, but manual labour in the cane fields was considered beneath them. The coloured petite bourgeoisie/middle class associated themselves more with the white plantocracy, who ostracized them.

It was their quest for social and political recognition, which was continually frustrated, as well as economic need, that accounted for their migration. In 1903, the St. Christopher Gazette and Charibbean Courier, in an editorial entitled "Hard Times", lamented the "continual exodus of our respectable people to the United States and Canada" (September 14, 1903; also in Richardson 1983:133).

Of the more than 10,000 Kittitians who "disappeared" between 1901 and 1921 (Table 5:3), the overwhelming majority were members of the coloured petite bourgeoisie/middle class who migrated to the United States, and New York in particular. Legal migration to United States was probably confined mainly to this group, because of travel costs. Prospective migrants were required to deposit a

US\$30 bond, in addition to their ticket. The more well-off members of the petite bourgeoisie/middle class were in a better position to handle these substantial costs. In addition, stringent United States immigration laws demanded that prospective migrants pass various disease and parasite examinations, as well as a literacy test. This would make it more difficult for the working class members, who were largely denied formal education (Richardson 1983).

Table 5:3

Population and Loss from Emigration on St. Kitts
1901-1921

	Male	Female	Total
1901 census	12,977	16,805	29,782
Natural increase 1901-1911 *	—	—	1,694
1911 census	10,969	15,314	26,283
Net loss, 1901-1911	—	—	(5,193)
Natural increase 1912-1920 *	—	—	720
1921 census	9,115	13,300	22,415
Net loss, 1912-1920	—	—	(4,588)

* - Births minus deaths.

Source: Richardson. 1983:134, citing The Leeward Islands Blue Books, 1901-1902 to 1922.

In the United States, Richardson (1983) points out, these coloured migrants found themselves undifferentiated from the general black population by the white majority, and were treated with the same discrimination. They were forced to accept employment mainly as maids, janitors, porters and other unskilled jobs - jobs which were beneath them back in St. Kitts. While they, like other Caribbean light-skinned immigrants, sought to maintain their "separateness" from local blacks through clubs and intermarriage, a few began to identify themselves with their "black brethren". A few of these would return to St. Kitts with "new light on the subject", and launch the movement for working class organization.

Emigration was but one response to poverty and discrimination on St. Kitts in the early twentieth century. Those left behind resisted their oppressors through strikes and an attempt to create a formal labour organization. In 1905 there was a small scale, semi-organized strike, which is barely noted in the records (St. Christopher Gazette and Charibbean Courier, January 23, 1905). In the decade which followed, the desire to organize was increased by the return of migrants like J.A. Nathan, who had seen "trade unions in action" in the United States, and had gained inside knowledge of their operation. Nathan, a small retailer, and later Robin Davis, an electrician, along with locals like Freddie Solomon, an undertaker, and G. Wilkes, a barber, sought to spread the doctrine of working class unity (France 1968:#3). [4].

They attempted to take the message to the workers on the estates, speaking to them in groups or singly, about the benefits of organizing: an eight-hour day instead of twelve, laws against child labour and education for children, workers' compensation and

protection against unfair practices by employers.

These efforts to organize alarmed the ruling class. Organizers attempting to approach the people in the villages were threatened with prosecution for trespass. As practically all the villages were on estate land, any attempts to address a gathering without encroaching on estate property was virtually impossible (France 1968:#3).

Prosecution threats did not destroy the drive for labour organization, although it did largely confine the movement to the Basseterre Valley region, where the sugar factory workers were concentrated. These were largely the skilled workers (the industrial working class), and included many of the returned migrant workers. These would constitute the main body of workers who would form the bulwark in the drive for the working class union organization. It would not be until the mid 1930's that the estate workers (the agro-proletariat) throughout the island would become seriously involved.

Planter class opposition to the movement grew to what one observer termed "alarming proportions" (France 1968:#3). There was no legislation providing for the organization or registration of a trade union, and when certain members of the Kittitian population attempted to establish one in 1916, the frantic members of the ruling plantocracy moved quickly with the strong arm of the law to crush it. The acting Governor of the Leeward Islands was brought to St. Kitts to preside over the Island Council meeting on the matter. At that meeting, he passed his infamous bill prohibiting the formation of a trades or labour union.

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A 1916 observer, commenting on the hostile attitude of the planters, claimed:

... a tremendous scare was started in the community having its origin among planters and those who represented estate interests, because the association had as its object to "unionise" labourers so as to place them in the position whereby they would be able to protect themselves as such ... Planters and Government Officials alike, felt that the formation of an Association with such an object, meant that their names were ticked off in some Domesday Book conjured up by their imagination, and that the days of their very existence were numbered. With this urge all sorts of 'subterfuges' were adopted to malign the movement and falsify the good intentions of the organizers (Anonymous quoted in France 1968:#26).

Organizers, forced to abandon the formation of a union at that time, established a friendly society instead. These organizations, which were encouraged by the colonial office, provided for sickness and burial arrangements for members, but were forbidden to deal with wages, work conditions and the like. The St. Kitts-Nevis Universal Benevolent Association was established in 1917, and registered under the Friendly Societies Act of the Leeward Islands in 1918. Locally referred to as the "Union" (probably in defiance of the anti-union legislation), it became a sort of underground union. It was this body which, in 1921, established the Union Messenger, the newspaper which took the "union" message to the workers. The Benevolent Association and the Messenger became the basis for a type of social movement which eventually, would help to bring changes in the structure of Kittitian society.

In the meantime, previous efforts had apparently not been in vain. The law prohibited the formation of a labour organization, but it did not prevent estate strikes like the one launched by St.

Paul's workers in 1918. These, who rebelled against the repressive nature of their working lives, were charged with "breach of contract" and handed prison sentences for the violation of that legislature. The workers were hailed by the working class in general. The 'St. Paul's Martyrs' were cheered by crowds of workers as they marched the several miles from St. Paul's to Basseterre to serve their prison sentences. France, commenting on labour conditions in 1968, claims that "the very sound of the phrase 'breach of contract' today arouses a feeling of horror and resentment in the older estate workers who remember the spectre that it was" (1968:#1).

The establishment of the Union Messenger provided the medium which intensified the working class struggle against the ruling plantocracy. The paper's motto clearly stated its policy. It was: "Dedicated to the service of the people that no good cause shall lack a champion and that wrong shall not thrive unopposed." Edited by the Benevolent Society's President, J. Sebastian, the Messenger began instructing workers about their economic and social condition, and the reasons for it.

The Messenger launched an attack on the poor social and economic conditions which existed for the working class on St. Kitts. The claim that "social conditions in this colony (St. Kitts), [were] so much worse than elsewhere" by Arthur Lewis in the 1930's, was no exaggeration. "Desperate" and "starving" were common descriptions of working class existence on the island (Richardson 1983). Indeed, the 1929 West India Commission had felt that their extreme situation warranted a special report, and the 1922 Wood Commission had noted their suffering.

St. Kitts was a gruesome paradox. This was the island whose treasury was overflowing in the nineteenth century, when most others were bankrupt. This was the colony where grant-in-aid was not necessary, when most of the neighbouring islands relied heavily on it. This was the only colony in the Leeward Islands where the sugar industry had managed to survive and prosper. This was the colony which one correspondent to the Cane Supplier felt could not justify an application for a loan from the British Government during the drought and onslaught of the depression in 1929. This was because the sugar investors could produce no "convincing facts and figures to prove that [they] were in urgent need of help". That would have been "extremely difficult", the correspondent claimed, because the annual reports for the preceding five years had been showing "comparatively good profits; and declaring substantial dividends" (Cane Supplier, September, 1929). In fact, the profits of the Basseterre Factory amounted to more than 50,000 pounds for the year 1929 alone (Union Messenger, April 12, 1930). All this profit was accumulated in spite of a declining market for sugar.

St. Kitts was also the colony which was described as "more closed than anywhere else in the British West Indies" (Lewis 1968). Political and economic power were concentrated within the capitalist class. Under the umbrella of their powerful Agricultural and Commercial Society, the ruling class, which had now expanded to include merchants who were connected with the estates, had defeated the attempt to reinstate representative government in 1922, when this 'privilege' was re-extended to the

colonies. Their counterparts in Antigua and Montserrat also succeeded in this venture, and St. Kitts along with the other Leeward Islands, was left in the "political backyard of the West Indies" (France 1968:#33).

Sugar was still profitable on St. Kitts. The profits were not evenly distributed, however. Workers' wages had not improved when profits soared during the war years. In the 1930's, the majority of the workers, the field workers, were still receiving six pence per twelve hour day, or less. Factory workers averaged one shilling per day, or one penny per hour. Women received about half the wages of their male counterparts, and children received even less (France 1970:#96).

These wages were far below the amount required for the worker's daily subsistence. A Nevis Agricultural Memo calculated that the minimum requirements for the subsistence of one labourer amounted to one shilling and three pence per day. A breakdown indicated the following:

Breakfast	- Bread 2d., sugar 1d.
Dinner	- Meal or flour 2d., potatoes 1d., meat or fish 2d., lard or butter 1d.
Supper	- Rice 2d., peas 1d., meat or fish 2d., lard or butter 1d.

(Nevis Agricultural Memo, October 1938, in Augier and Gordon 1962:263).

One shilling and three pence was nearly three times the average wage. In addition, it did not include provisions for clothing, house rent or repair, house-hold necessities, medical expenses and the like. Consequently, it is no surprise that observers noted

widespread malnutrition and "undernourished bodies [which] were a common sight" (Union Messenger, April 1928). The West India Royal Commission claimed that for the period 1928 to 1937, the death rate for St. Kitts was the highest in the British West Indies. An average of 40 deaths per 1,000 in 1928 was more than double the rate of some of the other islands for the same year and higher than the metropolitan countries. Infant mortality for that year was about 308 per 1,000, second only to Barbados, which had 331 per 1,000 live births (West India Royal Commission 1937; France 1969).

Housing conditions were deplorable. Most workers still inhabited houses belonging to estates and those in the villages continued to survive in the thatch/wood houses they had built for themselves. Most of them relied heavily on remittances for survival.

By the 1930's, conditions surrounding the production of sugar and its sale on the world market had been drastically reorganized. Profitability in this era not only depended on the persistence of inadequately low wages, but also on increased efficiency and productivity. The new conditions surrounding sugar production now demanded large powerful mills, the application of science to the crystallization process, importation of modern machinery and utensils, as well as railway constructions. These had been implemented earlier on the modern plantations throughout the Caribbean, and the Kittitian industry had finally been revitalized in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Of course, labour was still the important factor and St. Kitts was

considered 'favourable for the industry, because there the exploitation' of labour was probably among the highest in the Caribbean.

The technological innovations were aimed at the extraction of more relative surplus value from labour. Given the wage rates and higher levels of technological input, necessary labour was now performed in less time. The Kittitian factory, which was constantly upgraded, had the highest efficiency rate in the Caribbean. A rate of 85 to 90 per cent exceeded the 75 to 80 per cent rate in the Guyana industry, one of the most efficient in the Caribbean. Auty (1975) estimates that the Kittitian industry was the most profitable in the Caribbean during the depression. Despite falling unit reserves, the industry managed to acquire profits which were unmatched. During 1929 to 1934, annual dividends averaged 17,000 pounds sterling, and a 40,000 pound reserve was accumulated. In comparison, the Antiguan industry averaged 7,000 pounds for annual dividends accumulated a 27,000 profit reserve, while the largest Guyanese factories paid 7,000 pound dividends and accumulated an 11,000 pound reserve for the same period (Auty 1975:157).

Overwhelmingly, the greater proportion of this wealth was drained out of St. Kitts and into Britain. The domination of the transnational corporation over the industry ensured this continuous transfer of the surpluses. This, in turn, restricted internal accumulation in this peripheral colony. The unequal distribution of surpluses also became a source of conflict between the local plantocracy and the British capitalists who controlled the industry. The weakness of the local plantocracy vis-a-vis the

more powerful expatriate capitalists, served to weaken the local bourgeoisie and restrict its development as well.

The Kittitian sugar industry continued to realize profits mainly because wages were so exploitative, that even the wages paid to the workers were insufficient for their subsistence. The workers had to depend on other sources for survival. Conversely, then, Kittitian sugar investors extracted not only surplus value from surplus labour, but they also expropriated part of the necessary value of labour which should have been converted into wages. While competition and fluctuation of sugar prices had led to expansion in the scale of productivity and the lowering of costs through technological innovation, the rate of exploitation increased. Efficiency and productivity were increased through the real subsumption of labour under capital. St. Kitts had fully entered the phase of dependent capitalist production, and with the overhauling of actual technology and revolutionary instruments of production, Kittitian capitalists would stay in business.

With the consolidation of the sugar industry, implementation of improved technology and the withdrawal of rented lands from the working class, the planter-merchant class wielded almost absolute power over the lives of the working people. Workers were constrained not only by the basic need to survive, but by other traditional extra-economic ties as well. Credit at local stores was still dependent on "a good recommendation" from the plantation management. With the estate land consolidation by Thurston and Horsford, who already controlled the import and export of consumer and capital goods, workers were expected to patronize the

"Company" stores. This was a feature of class relationships which would persist up to the nationalization era. In addition, workers who "caused trouble" were blacklisted on virtually all the estates and refused credit at all the "Company" stores (France 1969:#63).

The whole social, political and economic structure operated at the behest of the ruling plantocracy. Planters refusing to pay wages for contract or "job" work, were supported by the courts, as in the case of Margaret Pemberton. She took the manager of Douglas Estate to court on March 17th, 1930, for refusing to pay her wages. According to the report, Pemberton and three others were employed to weed a field at the rate of one shilling and three pence (30 cents) per acre. When they requested payment for the job, the overseer, without even checking, claimed that the field had not been weeded, and the job was therefore, not completed. Pemberton and the others insisted that they had finished the job, and invited the manager and the overseer to inspect the field. They refused to do this. After hearing evidence, the Magistrate ruled that Pemberton had not completed the job, and hence did not deserve payment. She, on the other hand, was ordered to pay twenty-one shillings costs! (Union Messenger, April 1930; France 1968:#19).

Not only were the adult workers exploited, St. Kitts was also noted for the exploitation of "small gangs" - child labour. These were paid much less than the older workers and education was therefore discouraged. The state had taken over the elementary schools from the churches in 1915, and state policy on education for the working class was summed up in the words of the Governor of the Leeward Islands, Sir Eustace Fiennes. He spoke at a meeting

of the Federal Legislative Council in Basseterre, in April of 1928:

I do not believe in over-educating the working class. It is the greatest mistake to educate them out of their station. It simply fills their minds with inflated ideas (quoted in France 1968:#19).

In families where both parents worked, and women received half as much as men for their labour, incomes were still highly inadequate, so children had to work for their subsistence. In this way they were opened up to gross exploitation by the planters.

These were the social and economic ills on which the members of the St. Kitts-Nevis Benevolent Association, the "Union", launched their attack. They did this through the Messenger. The Union Messenger was first published as a monthly magazine, and as its popularity grew, weekly and then daily, provided a new perspective on Kittitian life and the world at large. It aimed at exposing poverty, economic exploitation, low wages, and injustices like the Pemberton case.

The notorious "small gangs" were invariably criticized in passionate editorials. These gangs, the editor declared, "robbed the children of getting an education and sapped the manhood and womanhood of our people." The forceful articles were intended to be provocative. The Messenger suggested effective remedies which would bring the greatest good to the greatest number. The wealthy class, it claimed, did not constitute the greatest number, so this was "the root of trouble in the camp" (Union Messenger, quoted in France 1968:#4).

The Messenger urged the state to implement the Land Settlement Scheme, to no avail. Throughout the years, until 1939, the paper lobbied for the right of the working people to become unionized. Commenting on the continued planter opposition to the union, the Messenger stated:

Why is it that associations formed for the purpose of teaching and encouraging the masses to live as human beings, and to instill an interest in the temporal and spiritual necessity of obtaining their due share of this world's goods - why is it that such associations creates a feeling of opposition, whereas associations whose primary object is to provide their members with a decent burial, are welcomed and encouraged? It is difficult to say precisely, but it seems to us to be clearly indicated that the answer to the question we ask is to be found in the psychological sentiment that the dominant and domineering elements of our inhabitants have fully made up their mind, that the aspirations of the labouring people must be bounded east, west, north and south, by a miserable existence having for its climax, a coffin.

It seems the great ambition of Planters and Government Officials alike to keep the labouring masses, body, mind and soul, forever in chains, and to teach them the virtue of providing themselves a coffin, at the exclusion of everything else, and when they have done so, to sing rejoicingly, "We are going home" (Editorial, quoted in France 1968:#4).

The Messenger sought instead, to educate the working class and encourage them to fight for a union. It covered the struggles of working classes in other parts of the Caribbean and the world. It recounted the history of the British working class and the hardships endured in its struggle to organize, and pointed out the similarities in St. Kitts. It expounded the benefits of co-operatives, again detailing the history of the British Co-operative Movement. The paper outlined the concepts of socialism and democracy. The movement was supported in this education

campaign by Charles Halbert Sr., who established a Bookshop and Circulating Library, providing reading material to the public (France 1968:#6). While the majority of the working class was illiterate, the 'Union' message was circulated. Groups gathered to hear it read by those who could read.

It would be an understatement to say that the stance taken by the Union Messenger alienated the ruling class. They boycotted the paper and cancelled subscriptions. They withdrew their advertisements. Members of the Agricultural and Commercial Society, the ruling class association, as well as Government Officials, put pressure on the paper. The St. Kitts-Nevis Daily Bulletin, the newspaper of the ruling class, claimed that the Messenger was "endeavouring to create a feeling of hostility between the different races in the island." The printing plant, The Progressive Printery, was also boycotted by the planter and merchants. Pressure was maintained for several years, but the spirit behind this working class newspaper was not crushed. It continued its criticisms and lobbying.

While the movement alienated the white ruling class, it attracted the support of a few wealthy coloureds who were excluded from the white circle of power. Two of these who became prominent in the working class movement, were Thomas Manchester and his distant cousin, Edgar Challenger.

Manchester, a cotton planter and merchant, would become the leader of the first labour organization, The Workers League. Challenger would become vice president of League and later the first Union President. He came from a family of merchants who had been very successful in the business of supplying planters' estate

needs, before factory centralization and the Thurston and Horsford monopolization squeezed them out. Joining the labour movement was one means of striking back for Challenger. The labour movement would eventually elect Manchester and Challenger into the Legislature, from which they had been excluded.

While the struggle for a union continued, the working class in St. Kitts had to contend with the increasing exploitative and restrictive measures imposed by the ruling class. The Masters and Servants Act was used to prevent workers from seeking better wages on other plantations. Another Immigration law was passed in 1929 to restrict the mass exodus of the working class. Planters had become increasingly concerned by the large number of workers who migrated for seasonal labour on foreign cane fields (Table 5:2).

Under the 1929 Emigrants Protection Act, the conditions of freedom from debt for prospective emigrants were reiterated. This time, the Act required a deposit of six dollars for anyone wishing to leave the island. For workers who made less than twelve cents per day, and whose intention to migrate was to earn money so relatives could survive, this was outrageous. This law, along with the reduction in labour opportunities abroad in the 1930's, saw more workers remaining on the island, and others returning. These workers brought a more militant outlook to the movement.

In 1931, when the Emigrants law was amended in the Federal Legislature by a proviso which stated that in "specific cases for specific periods, the Governor in Council may declare that no sum (of six dollars) may be deposited", the Kittitian plantocracy tried to influence the local Administrator to enforce the payment

(St. Kitts-Nevis Daily Bulletin, December 30, 1931; Union Messenger, January 11, 1932).

Drought in 1929 saw a decrease in production from 19,433 tons in 1928 to 13,724 tons (Deerr 1949). This, along with declining market prices - 9 shillings per hundredweight, down from the record highs in 1920 of 97 shillings, and the less spectacular price of 21 shillings and 9 pence per hundredweight in 1924. Sugar producers on other islands were applying to Britain for financial aid in the form of loans. High profits sustained by the sugar barons on St. Kitts could not support a request for a loan (Cane Supplier 1929). They responded with the now familiar wage reduction measure.

The London Office of the Sugar Factory issued orders to reduce the wages of the workers at the factory. Notices posted at the Factory informed the workers that wages would be cut by one penny. In addition, the "weekly bonus" was to be discontinued. The "weekly bonus" was a conditional payment of an extra day's labour, if the workers produced 800 or more tons of sugar per week. The workers had managed to earn this "bonus" consistently. Altogether, the total wage reduction would amount to 25 per cent, with the removal of bonuses accounting for nearly 17 per cent (Union Messenger, April 8, 1930).

Workers refused to work at the reduced rate and staged a walkout on April 8, 1930. The prevailing state of poverty for the working class, along with the decreased need for the large supply of available labour, given the technological developments, meant that the ruling class could ruthlessly exploit and subordinate labour.

The Messenger rallied to support the workers, claiming that a cut in wages was not an affair for the 'unfortunate labourers' alone. It was, the paper declared, a community affair. The Messenger pointed out that in the previous year, at a sitting of the Olivier Commission, it had been agreed that the workers' wages had reached the "irreducible minimum" and that no further reductions could be borne by the workers. Sugar, the editor claimed, was still being manufactured at a "paying price" at the Basseterre Factory, but the distribution of profits was unbalanced. The editor maintained that:

From this viewpoint, we hardly think that the Factory can justify their action to reduce the wages of their labourers, when by doing so, the shareholders profits will be further increased ... It must be borne in mind that when, during the War Years huge profits were being made, the labourers did not enjoy their ~~proportion~~ in higher wages (Union Messenger, April 8, 1930).

There were no promises of reinstatement or increase in wages from the Factory management. Estate workers feared that their six pence per day would also be cut. In spite of criticism and the walkout, the now 'faceless' exploiters refused to reconsider their decision. These were orders from above, thousands of miles away in Britain. Worker degradation was no concern of theirs. The local ruling class was tied into and subordinate to the colonial ruling class, and these were in control of state power. The police were called in to protect capital's interest.

Labour was not yet organized and workers who had not other means of support, returned to work the following week. They found that their wages were no longer reduced by just 25 per cent. An

extra penny had been cut, bringing the total reduction to 33.5 per cent (Union Messenger, April 23, 1930). This cruel punishment for striking was similar to that received by the apprentices, when they refused to work in 1934. They had been forced to work an extra four and a half hours per week (see Chapter Four).

The increased wage reduction was a blow to the workers and those members of the Benevolent Society who were struggling to establish a union. The Messenger responded with an embittered, scathing editorial entitled "Cracking the Whip":

This week we place on record the fact that the labourers have returned to work. The story has a tail. Like every sin, whether of commission or omission, this one was not to go unpunished. ... They have sinned against the Factory ... Theirs not to reason why. Their audacity in inconveniencing the Factory, the mighty god of this island; their rudeness in doing anything but accept the terms and conditions of labour prescribed by their absentee employers in London, must be visited with chastisement, not with whips, but with scorpions ...

But what was their sin, that they have been so punished? Their action interpreted, they told their employers that there was no reduction in the price of bread, flour, meal, rice, fish, clothing, house rent. They told them that last year the Factory profits amounted to over 50,000 pounds sterling; that it was by the sweat of their brow they should eat bread and that although they gave and were giving ready obedience to this Divine decree by sweating and more sweating, they were still underfed and partly naked and otherwise living (no, not living, but existing) under conditions which are hellish, and so were their innocent wives and children; that they desired to live like human beings!

The owners of the Factory did not lose even a screw, bolt or washer from their plant. There was no disorder. The police were on hand to take care of the King's Peace ... The strikers have been reinstated and at a promise of reduction, because they had sinned in asking to be allowed to work for bread ... O, that bread should be so dear and flesh and blood so cheap! (Union Messenger, April 23, 1930).

The workers' wages were not restored until December, 1932, some two and a half years later (France 1968:#6).

In banning trades or labour unions in 1917, the Kittitian plantocracy ensured their continued control over labour. Like many other British West Indian colonies, there were no laws to protect the workers. The plantocracy had organized themselves into an Agricultural and Commercial Society to protect their interests. Their maintenance of absolute control was ensured by preventing any organization of labour.

In January, 1932, at the start of the harvest season, the estate owners declared that they would offer cane cutters eight pence per ton of cane. These workers had been paid six pence per twelve hour day, since the mid-nineteenth century. Under this new scheme, they were being forced to increase cutting to keep up with increased factory capacity. Dissatisfied workers staged a two-day strike, but like their counterparts at the Factory, the basic need to survive saw them returning to the fields to accept the proposed rate. During the first week of February, one month into the season, some twenty to thirty acres of cane were burnt in the northern section of the island. Labour dissatisfaction was suspected (Union Messenger, January, 20, 1932; February 16, 1932).

The Benevolent Society used incidents like these to encourage more workers to become interested in the movement, and to press for legislation to enable labour to become organized. The Messenger warned that no "scattered group of labourers, without the aid of organization leaders, can take up and discuss advantageously with employers, the delicate and intricate question of wages ... We sincerely hope they (the workers) will appreciate

the real value of dependent organization to keep watch and ward over their interests ... A labourers' strike cannot be maintained without an organization to support it" (February 9, 1932).

While the Messenger tried to convince estate workers that joining the movement was to their own benefit, the Benevolent Society had to fight against the plantocracy's efforts to prevent unionization. The local ban on trade unions had been exposed in the British House of Commons, where it had been used by the Opposition. Copies of the law had been slipped to Arthur Henderson, Secretary of the British Labour Party in London, through the efforts of Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labour (France 1968:#6). With this exposure and the continual lobbying for the right to organize, an amendment to the Friendly Societies Act in 1928, provided for the registration of trade unions with the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

The Messenger declared this move a sham, a shallow gesture, a "Bill designed to handicap or make it impossible for trade unions to exist in the colony" (Union Messenger, April 1931). The fact was, as the Messenger pointed out, that a trade union registered under the Friendly Societies Act would be bound by the rules governing Friendly Societies, and accordingly lose its status as a trade union. Such an organization would not be able to engage in labour/management disputes over wages, work conditions and so on.

The attack on the Bill resulted in an amendment by the Council, which stated that trade unions should be registered with the Registrar of Friendly Societies, but that the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act did not apply. This amendment allowed for the emergence of the Workers League with registration as a

limited liability company, in 1932. The right to picket was still restricted. It was not until 1939, after much political and industrial struggle, bloodshed and injury to workers, that an Act allowing for the organizations of trade unions was passed (France 1968:#4).

The Workers League, under the leadership of Manchester and Challenger, expanded the work of the Benevolent Society. They pressed for union legislation and joined the Caribbean cry for democratic self-government. This was the body which would eventually emerge as the political arm of the labour movement.

Through tireless efforts the Society and the League sought to organize labour. Not only did they attempt to raise consciousness by pointing out workers' woes and championing the cause, they sought to relieve some of the suffering as well. A Committee was set up to investigate reports of the negligence of the sick. Doctors, who were usually associated with the ruling class, often refused to attend to the poverty stricken. Workers on a whole were usually treated with "hostility and indifference" by the state. Those on "poor relief" received one shilling (24 cents) per week, while orphans were allowed half as much.

The League raised funds for an ambulance. It started an annual Charity Day in 1932. In 1935 it opened a Death Benefit Department. Later, in 1937 and 1940, respectively, Savings and Co-operative Departments were established, as well as a National Provident Fund for orphans and others in need (France 1968:#8).

In 1932, the League initiated the long battle for workers' compensation. Management had adopted a callous "men gone, men

here" attitude (Union Messenger), and workers who were disabled on the job could only look forward to poor relief of one shilling per week. In cases like that of William Duggins who was killed on the job, when a factory locomotive collided with the mule cart he was driving at Buckley's Estate, there was no employer liability. His son, who was with him, barely escaped. When the estate manager was informed about the accident, witnesses claimed that his main concern was whether anything had happened to the mules (France 1969).

An inquiry concluded that death was by "misadventure", although the manager of the Factory informed the hearing that for several years the Factory had been "endeavouring to get estate owners and managers to improve the visibility at the estate crossings, to lessen the possibility of accidents" (Union Messenger, April 20, 1933).

Despite persistent lobbying and petitions to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, as well as local authorities, compensation laws were not addressed until 1937. Even then, only a few workers qualified - those who worked with engines or machines. Permanent disability warranted the sum of 42 months wages or 350 pounds sterling (\$1,680), whichever was less. In deaths as a result of injuries, dependents could claim 30 months wages or 250 pounds (\$1,200) or whichever was less (France 1968:#21-23). In 1938, the Moyne Commission, noting that only one-fifth of the workers were eligible for compensation, urged the inclusion of all workers.

It would not be until December of 1937 that the question of minimum wages would be addressed. A Minimum Wage Act was passed in that year as a result of strong labour agitation in St. Kitts, as

well as Antigua. This battle had also been launched in 1932 by the League, but it was fiercely resisted by the planters. Central to this opposition was the exploitation of child labour on the estates. There was "practically no limit to the exploitation of the young generation, who were taken on to work and grouped into 'small gangs'," France recalled in 1985. "Wages were low for everyone, but for children, wages barely existed. The planters used everything within their power to protect this extremely cheap source of labour. The Minimum Wage law was passed in 1937, but it did not come into effect until 1944, after a union/management dispute brought the sugar industry to a standstill (Union Messenger, December 1937; France 1968:#22-23).

The struggle for land for the masses was even more strongly resisted. St. Kitts was the last of the colonies to put a land settlement scheme into operation. This would not be until after World War Two. Various Commission Reports, beginning in the previous century, suggested land settlement. These, like the League's petitions, were ignored. In 1938, the League informed the Moyne Commission that:

We have come to the conclusion that there has been some sinister influence at work, by which this proposal (land settlement) has been shelved for a period of nearly half a century. A land settlement scheme is already in operation in Nevis and in Anguilla, there is a considerable number of peasant settlers. ... The figures of imported foodstuffs are sufficient to answer the query that the island, although dominantly agricultural, does not produce what should ordinarily be its quota of vegetables, small stock, poultry, milk, and eggs, as a result of which the question of undernourishment among the masses, with all its related ills, is a social evil now at a chronic stage (France 1969:#85).

Sugar was still king, however, and the planters held on to the land, or circulated it among themselves.

Visits by noted Caribbean nationalist labour leaders like Albert Marryshaw and Elmore Edwards, the "big guns" of Grenada and Captain Cipriani of Trinidad, were included in the League's efforts to fuel local interest in the labour movement. The Union Messenger had exposed the people to the labour struggles throughout the Caribbean and the world, so large crowds flocked to hear Marryshaw in September, and Cipriani in November of 1932.

Marryshaw inspired his listeners with admonitions like the following:

We cannot succeed without a united front ... You know the old saying "no chain is stronger than its weakest link", ... I want you all, the sons and daughters of the slaves who bore the lash, I want you to realize that these islands are ours. You who are working and sweating, bend your energies to build up the West Indies. The West Indies belongs to you! (Marryshaw, quoted in the Union Messenger, September 10, 1932).

Captain Arthur Cipriani, the white creole planter and Mayor from Trinidad, was president of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association. He declared:

We are all workers ... The only thing that can help you here is a strong, well-managed labour union. ... As a people you have little influence; wealth less; but you have what no one can take from you - weight of numbers, and therefore, I urge you to organize and co-operate and form a labour union (Union Messenger, November 20, 1932).

The Pan Africanist Movement had held its first conference in 1900. This movement protested the colonization of Africans throughout the world and called for their self-government. Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) took

the Pan Africanist Movement's message to the masses throughout the Americas. He would bring his message which had preceded him, to St. Kitts in person in 1937. The Union Messenger which conscientiously covered the Italo-Ethiopian War in 1935, depicting it as one more example of the plight of blacks throughout the world, reported Garvey's speeches on St. Kitts in detail.

Garvey addressed a mammoth crowd. Inspecting his audience, he declared that while he could see at a glance, that the crowd represented all classes, he had a special message for the more unfortunate class - a message of hope and confidence. Misery, he claimed, was hellish, devilish and ungodly. He went on:

The poorest people you find in any town are those who pay more attention to their stomachs than to their brains ... I like people who look like me. They seem to live in spite of the hell that surrounds them. But it is not always going to be so ... Get hold of the land and don't let it get away from you. The men who own the land make the laws (Garvey, quoted in the Union Messenger, November 2, 1937).

He stressed the principles of self-respect, self-reliance, the power of the mind and the virtues of wisdom. "What I would like to steal away," he declared, "is your ignorance, so that when I cross the Caribbean, I can dump it into the deep Atlantic" (Union Messenger, November 2, 1937).

The working class movement became almost synonymous with political struggle in the first half of the twentieth century. Persistent poverty and underdevelopment were combined with largely external ownership of the means of production and external political domination, all channelled through the local plantocracy. The response from the oppressed was an industrial as

well as a political nationalist movement.

Nationalist movements and decolonization were affected by the results of the struggles among the metropolitan centres for the control of the world capitalist system. European imperialism was challenged during the first half of the monopoly phase of capitalism. This intense rivalry which instigated the First World War, saw the emergence of two new powers, the United States and the Soviet Union (Henry 1985). The United States opposed attempts by Britain and France to colonize former German and Turkish territories, and in Russia, Lenin advocated the right of self-determination for colonized peoples. While these were no earth-shaking threats to European imperialism, they fuelled nationalist movements in the peripheries. They were strongest in Asia (India, China, Burma, Indonesia and Vietnam), the Middle East and the Pan African countries. The socialist movement in Europe also influenced many nationalist efforts in the peripheries, although it was ambivalent in its stand on decolonization. It criticized the conservative policy that the colonial government employed in the management of the colonies, which they claimed was in the interest of a small ruling class. Yet the socialists advocated a sort of benign paternalism, which would bring about changes that would gradually lead to some form of self-government (Craig 1977; Henry 1985).

The petty bourgeois/middle class domination of the leadership of the working class movement on St. Kitts, was characteristic of the early struggles in the Caribbean. This group used the proletariat as a political base. In some of the islands,

especially Grenada and Trinidad (under Marryshaw and Cipriani leadership), this led to a greater focus on constitutional matters - legislative issues and political advance rather than working class militancy or industrial action. Education and higher social status, lighter skins, as well as higher incomes or in some cases ownership of property allowed this coloured petty bourgeois/middle class to assume control of the labour movements. In Trinidad, Cipriani, a white planter was invited to become president of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association because he championed the cause of black soldiers who had fought in the war. He, C.L.R. James points out, was somewhat independent of the British plantocracy and was able to oppose them, although he was not of the working class (1982:188).

The creole petite bourgeoisie was not as "exile conscious" as the white plantocracy and this fuelled their quest for their incorporation into the political process, a struggle which they had been waging since the 19th century (Lewis 1968). They lobbied through various Representative Government Associations, but were consistently repressed by the white plantocracy, who preferred colonial authoritarianism to any form of democratic growth which would lessen their influence.

The Wood Commission of 1922 had noted the increasing agitation by the coloured petty bourgeois/ middle classes. The Commission had warned:

It must be borne in mind that in the West Indies there is a considerable population of mixed stock, who while coloured in appearance, possess a large infusion of European blood. Those of mixed race throw up not a few individuals of somewhat exceptional capacity and intelligence, who play a prominent part in the public

life of the communities. We shall be wise if, with these facts before us, we take steps to build upon the foundation of the remarkable loyalty to the Throne by which these peoples are inspired and avoid the mistake of endeavouring to withhold a concession ultimately inevitable, until it has been robbed by delay of most of its usefulness and all of its grace (Wood Commission 1922, also in France 1968:#31).

Consequently, it was pressure from the brown petty bourgeois/middle class and the above realization which was reiterated by the Closer Union Commission in 1932, that had seen the re-introduction of the limited elective principle and the inclusion of a few of the more "responsible" members of the coloured petite bourgeoisie into some island legislatures.

This had not happened in St. Kitts, however. The white plantocracy had been able to block the move for Representative Government in 1922, in spite of protests from the Representative Government Association which had been formed by a few members of the coloured petite bourgeoisie in 1919. Representative Government, the ruling members of the St. Kitts Agricultural and Commercial Society had informed the Wood Commission, "was not suitable for St. Kitts. The St. Kitts-Nevis Daily Bulletin, in support of the plantocracy, had issued a reprint of an article in which they had ridiculed the idea of granting liberty to descendants of Africans in 1834. Countering the petit bourgeois clamour for Representative Government, The Bulletin had declared that there was a "large body of responsible opinion opposed to any change in the constitution" (St. Kitts-Nevis Daily Bulletin, 1922, emphasis added). It was largely this quest for political reforms that was behind the petit bourgeois alliance with the proletariat.

The terms "coloured middle class", "coloured group", "middle class" and "petite bourgeoisie", have been used almost interchangeably in Caribbean literature. At times the references are confusing. This may be due in part, to the fact that in many cases, class lines become blurred in reference to the group which occupied a "middle" position during slavery. These were descendants of African slaves and white masters. They were largely free but were hindered by social and economic restrictions. Some, with the aid of their white fathers, had escaped the degradation of slavery. A few were educated in Britain. For the most part, however, they operated as artisans, tradespeople or small retailers. They consequently, emerged as a petite bourgeoisie or middle class in the islands where they controlled petty commerce, or occupied bureaucratic and professional positions. Their lighter skins and their own identification with the whites, rather than the poverty-stricken black working class, made them a distinct sort of "buffer" group. Occasionally, a black person would achieve such a middle group status, as class lines tended to merge in many of the islands, although the colour/class differences dominated.

C.L.R. James has noted the role of the West Indian petite bourgeoisie or middle classes:

Our West Indian middle classes are for the most part coloured people of some education in a formerly slave society. That means that for racial and historical reasons they are today excluded from those circles which are in control of big industry, commerce and finance. They are almost as much excluded from large scale agriculture, sugar, for example ... For generations their sole aim in life was to be admitted to the positions to which their talents and education entitled them, and from which they were unjustly excluded ... When they did get into the charmed government circles or

government itself, they either did their best to show that they could be good servants of the Colonial Office as any, or when they rose to become elected members in the legislature, maintained a loud but safe attack on government. ... They were not responsible for anything, so they achieved a cheap popularity without danger to themselves (1980:132).

On St. Kitts, the group of mixed descent occupied a higher social status than the large black working class. To unilaterally classify them as petite bourgeoisie, however, would blur the realities. On this tightly controlled island, the professionals - the doctors, lawyers and merchants - were nearly all closely tied to or part of the ruling white plantocracy. The small business sector was dominated by those who controlled the agro-commercial industries, and many of the small operators who survived the general take-over were heavily indebted to the planters and large merchants. [6]. The majority of the Afro-European descendants who remained on St. Kitts after the massive emigration in the early part of the century, constituted a small petite bourgeoisie/middle class: they were artisans and tradespeople. A few were teachers, clerks or small shopkeepers.

The rigid class structure on the island was supported by the "colour bar". In describing St. Kitts as he saw it through young eyes shortly after his arrival from Nevis in the 1930's, Vincent Byron claimed that he gasped when he realized the extent to which some people at the time were prepared to go, in order to preserve the exclusiveness and inviolability of social "class". St. Kitts, to him was the "India of the West Indies":

The social clubs were sacrosanct. I peeped into the Banks, and observed that, save for the messengers, the entire staffs were white. In Government Offices

throughout the town, the majority of the established employees, and nearly all Heads of Department, were white. The Matron, and the Assistant Matron at the Cunningham Hospital, the Head Mistress of the Girls' High School, the Senior Clerics of the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Moravian Churches - all white (Byron, in Independence Magazine, 1983:71-72).

Some of the colonial authorities, he concluded, must have felt that this had to be so if the responsibility, efficiency and dignity of these prestigious positions were to be maintained. Byron claims that a small breakthrough was achieved when Fred Malone, a member of a distinguished coloured family, was appointed Headmaster. This was the rigid class structure on St. Kitts in the early twentieth century. There was no large middle class capable of leading the nationalist movement in the 1930's. The mass of Kittitian Afro-European descendents emigrated to the United States after their quest for recognition and advancement was frustrated.

The majority of the Afro-European descendants, though small in number, constituted the petite bourgeoisie/middle class on St. Kitts. A few blacks also belong to this class. It was from this group that the initial leadership of the working class movement came. They lent some of their wealth and social prestige to the movement. The movement in turn, provided the means by which they could achieve the political recognition which had been denied them.

It was the petty bourgeois/middle class orientation of this leadership, which accounted for the movement's heavy emphasis on constitutional reforms, and the restoration of representative government in particular. Universal franchise was not a burning issue. This became apparent at the Dominica Conference in 1932,

when nationalist labour leaders with petty bourgeois backgrounds endorsed adult franchise as an "ultimate", not immediate aim of the proposed new Federation of the West Indies. They were content to leave the question of voting qualifications to the local legislatures (Lewis 1968; France 1968:#32). It was only in the post-World War Two era, when militant members of the black working class assumed the leadership of the Union, that these changes came.

The Nationalist Movement

The Dominica Conference was hurriedly convened in 1932, when Britain attempted to reduce some of its financial administrative costs by amalgamating the colonies of the Leeward and Windward Islands with Trinidad. A colonial Closer Union Commission was created to carry out this aim. Nationalist labour leaders throughout the Caribbean voiced their opposition to a Federation without any further provisions for self-government.

The leaders, who met in Dominica, included Manchester and Challenger from St. Kitts. The Kittitian representatives were extremely concerned that the forced union would set St. Kitts (which was already in the "political backyard" of the Caribbean), much further back in its chances of obtaining representative government. In St. Kitts, where legislative members were still hand-picked from among the planter class, Federation would crush all petty bourgeois/middle class hopes.

The West Indian National League emerged out of the Dominica Conference, with all labour organizations as members. This body informed the Colonial Office that unless the terms of reference

for the Closer Union proposal were widened to include self-government, there would be no federation. The National League's motto became: "No taxation without representation, no federation without self-government; Crown Colony rule must go" (France 1968:#27-29). National League members voted for a boycott of the Commission if their demands were not included in the proposal. The Colonial Office stated noncommittally, that the Commission would "hear all views", but pointed out that local government was not "strictly" within reference (France 1968:#28; Lewis 1968).

The Closer Union three-man Commission, under the chairmanship of Captain Fergusson, an ex-army general, landed on St. Kitts on its first leg of its Caribbean tour. The Commission met first with the St. Kitts Agricultural and Commercial Society. Sixteen plantation proprietors, a merchant and a steamship agent were present at this meeting. They reiterated the stand taken by the plantocracy when they had opposed sending a delegation to the Dominica Conference. It was the same one they had taken ten years before: no political reforms. Representative government would not ensure the best interests of all classes of the inhabitants, they claimed. The Workers League representatives, on the other hand, argued strenuously for reforms in its meetings with the Commission members (France 1968:#27-30).

The anxiously awaited Report of the Closer Union Commission was vehemently rejected by the nationalist leaders in the southern Caribbean, and especially by those in Trinidad and Grenada. Cipriani claimed that he had never read a more "unsatisfactory, specious, unstatesmanlike, absolutely worthless document."

Marryshaw, after conferring with Cipriani, denounced it as contemptible (France 1968:#30-32). The demand for self-government had been rejected and the absolute power of the Governor was retained. Universal suffrage was "definitely opposed until the ... standard of education in the islands [was] greatly advanced" (France 1968:#32). In support of the decision to deny universal suffrage, the Commission pointed out that the question of universal suffrage was one of the points on which no agreement had been reached at the Dominica Conference (Closer Union Report, Union Messenger 1933).

The Report, or parts of it, was more favourably received in St. Kitts and the rest of the Leeward Islands. It recommended the introduction of the elective principle into the constitutions of these islands. The Colonial Office endorsed this proposal. The elective principle, however, it maintained, would only be introduced in response to public opinion and would ultimately be the decision of the unofficial members (the planters/merchants) in the local Council.

Under this recommendation limited democracy would be re-introduced in St. Kitts. This would mean that the structure of the Legislative Council, which had seven official and seven unofficial members, all hand-picked, would be altered. Qualified voters could possibly elect members of the petite bourgeoisie into the Council as a result of this change.

The plantocracy, consequently, strongly opposed the plan to re-introduce the elective principle. They presented a petition signed by 200 persons voicing their opposition to the Council. The Workers League, in an elaborate campaign, submitted a "People's

Petition" signed by 2,447 persons in St. Kitts as well as Nevis and Anguilla, supporting the introduction of the elective principle. A Merchant's Memorandum with 150 signatures and three Council Members also supported the proposal.

The Legislative Council, however, was dominated by the plantocracy. The ensuing struggle lasted three years. In spite of the overwhelming popular support, the recommendation was rejected. One Council member declared that those who clamoured for an elective system were, "with some notable exceptions, men of straw and not men of substance". These, the member, claimed, had no stake in the community, unlike those like himself, who opposed the resolution. The opposers, he went on, were the descendants of those "responsible for the unique position of ~~prosperity~~" in which the island found itself. Voicing the fears of the other ~~members~~ of the plantocracy, he went on to dismiss the motion as an indication that the "worst elements of Haitian politics" would soon be introduced in St. Kitts (Legislative Debate, December 13, 1934; Inniss 1983; France 1968). [7]. The Council voted to reject the motion.

Letters of protest were forwarded to the Governor of the Leeward Islands and the Colonial Secretary in London by the Workers League. The Colonial Office, having been warned twice about delaying concessions which were "ultimately inevitable", and acutely aware of the recent working class revolt on the island, over-rode the local Legislature, and introduced the elective system in St. Kitts in July of 1935.

The 1935 Working Class Revolt

The class conflicts which were being waged on St. Kitts in 1935, one hundred years after the Emancipation Act had been imposed, were much more complicated. In the centralized sugar industry there was the conflict between the local estate owners and the British capitalist who controlled the factory and the industry. The expatriate London shareholders refused to agree to a more equitable distribution of the profits, and continued to drain most of the surplus out of the colony. The second conflict, which we noted, was that between capital and labour. Workers were struggling against declining wages and increasing work loads. The political struggle against colonial authoritarian rule and the quest for representative government was another source of conflict. This struggle, with its base in the working class movement, was being waged by the coloured petite bourgeoisie/middle class against the white plantocracy and its merchant allies on one level, and British imperialism on the other.

These conflicts were aggravated by the onset of the depression. Contraction on the international market and declining prices for sugar saw increased exploitation of the workers in the form of further wage reductions. This coincided with the decline in remittances from abroad, as doors closed to migrant workers who were being forced to return home. The whole situation was further aggravated by ever-rising food prices. Heightened worker awareness, discontent and impoverisation exploded in the revolt of 1935.

The "Buckley Riots" erupted a few months after the Workers League, in its celebration of the 100th anniversary of the

abolition of chattel slavery, had called for "industrial reform as remedy for economic slavery" (Union Messenger, August 1, 1934). The movement for organized labour was growing, the Workers League was clamouring for worker's compensation, a minimum wage law, and land redistribution. In addition, the whole island was on edge, awaiting the outcome of the quest for the introduction of representative government. All these burning issues were highly publicized.

It was significant that the uprising in St. Kitts was the first in a series which swept the Caribbean in the 1930's. Here, as noted above, various Commissions had observed that conditions were much worse than elsewhere.

The two-day uprising, which had been threatening to explode for many years, came at the start of the 1935 cane harvest season. Workers, citing the economic depression and their extremely low wages, demanded a wage increase at the start of the 1935 season. The workers knew that the industry was still realizing windfall profits in spite of the economic crisis and low wages. In fact, the company had accumulated reserve profits of more than 40,000 pounds sterling since the onset of the depression (Auty 1975:150).

The worker's demands were flatly rejected. The cane cutters resolved that they would not begin the season at the inadequate rate of 8 pence per ton. The strike started at Buckley's Estate in Basseterre, on Monday, 28th January. The workers felt that conditions warranted concerted, island-wide action on the part of all the estate workers. They decided that the quickest way to achieve this was to travel on foot to each of the plantations

throughout the island.

A crowd of about 400 angry workers, led by a drummer, left Buckley's and marched some six miles to Lodge Estate. Supporters joined them on the way. At the Lodge Estate, the owner, Mr. Todd ordered them off his property. Violence broke out when he called for his shotgun. Angry strikers beat him and stoned his buildings. On neighbouring estates, animals were let loose, carts unharnessed and working gear damaged or destroyed.

The following morning, the growing crowd of discontented workers continued their march westward, encouraging and demanding other estate workers to join the strike and the march. At West Farm, marchers were prevented from entering the estate yard by armed policemen, sent from Basseterre. Some of the crowd went through the fields and confirmed that the West Farm workers were in support of the strike.

The numbers continued to swell as the crowd continued its journey. Authorities in Basseterre were informed that the situation was taking on "alarming proportions". A number of "influential men" like the Moravian Minister, the Reverend Mansfield Williams, the Magistrate, the Inspector of Police and lawyer Clement Malone, were recruited to try to persuade the workers to discontinue the march. These men overtook the crowd near Lambert's Estate and urged the workers not to create any "public disorder". The workers promised to keep the peace, and continued their march to Lamberts, Stonefort, Middle Island and Godwin, adding to their numbers.

At Sandy Point, the strikers learned that Buckley's Estate had recruited new workers who had reported for work that morning.

The crowd split up. Some continued the journey, while others headed back to Buckleys. At about 3:00 p.m., the crowd armed with sticks entered the yard of Buckley's Estate. The manager, Mr. Dobridge, and the overseer, Mr. Pond, armed with shotguns, ordered them out of the yard. The crowd, yelling threats, refused to budge. Dobridge opened fire, wounding three persons and then retreated to the house. The crowd moved to the main road.

At about 3:45, armed policemen, led by Major Duke, arrived at Buckleys with the Magistrate. They tried to persuade the crowd to disperse. The crowd refused and demanded the arrest of Dobridge and Pond, for shooting at them. They were not appeased. The Moravian Minister was again brought in to calm the crowd. This time he was accompanied by Mr. John, a Basseterre merchant, and the Workers League President, Mr. Manchester. The Minister was jeered, but Manchester managed to persuade some to leave. The majority of the crowd remained, however.

The Police Chief and the Magistrate interrupted a "grand tea party" at Government House to ask the Governor to call out the Defence Force and cable for a warship. The armed forces were brought out immediately. The Riot Act was read to the angry crowd of men, women and children. They refused to disperse and the police opened fire, pushing the crowd back. Three workers were killed and eight were seriously wounded. Large numbers were arrested on riot charges. The warship Leander arrived the next day to prevent any more uprisings.

Those who had left with Manchester were assembled at the Bay Front, where the leaders of the League distributed a pamphlet

which urged them to refrain from disorder and not to violate the "King's Peace":

The St. Kitts Workers League, in the interest and the general welfare of the various sections of the people of the island, solemnly and seriously advises each and every individual to refrain from any act which may tend to create disorder and especially at this juncture of labour unrest. The League views the present situation with deep concern and on solemn terms declares that everything should be avoided which may end disastrously to the community in general (Workers League, January 29, 1935, in France 1968).

France explains the position taken by the Workers League as being due to the fact that its "hands were tied" by the law which prohibited Trade Unions. While this was true, the conservative and cautious line adopted by the League during this uprising would be typical of its stance even after the Trade Unions was established in 1940. There would be several sporadic wildcat strikes under the conservative, petty bourgeois leadership of the Union in the early 1940's.

While the League lobbied for reforms, its leadership was not prepared to identify with the industrial action taken by the workers. In general, the League did not identify itself as a working class organization, when it was inconvenient. In fact, in his meeting with the Moyne Commission in 1938, Manchester claimed that the League was a political and social organization, created to defend the liberties and promote the interest of any law-abiding citizen over sixteen years (France 1968). Manchester and the other leaders had to maintain their 'respectability'. These, it must be reiterated, were those who in spite of some wealth and social standing, were excluded from the political process. The

working class movement was part of their quest to be included in the power circles. They were supporters of the "King's peace", and this meant stifling worker militancy at times. The Dominica Conference in 1932, at which these petty bourgeois leaders had congregated, had opened with a "manifestation of unswerving loyalty and devotion to the Crown" (Rawle 1932, in Augier and Gordon 1962). Only one member of the League was actually implicated in the worker uprising. He had joined only the week before (France 1968).

The Union Messenger, in rejecting the Governor's "twaddle" report, called for a real inquiry (Union Messenger, January 1935). In his report, the Governor blamed the uprising on "malcontents" and the crowd of "loafers" who had returned from the cane fields in Santo Domingo. An inquiry, the Messenger stated, would "bring to light much of the filth and dirt of existing conditions under which the masses labour" which the Governor's distorted report covered up (Union Messenger February, 1935). This request was ignored, and it was not until 1938, after more uprisings had erupted in other islands, that Britain launched the famous Moyne Commission.

The Governor's report was based largely on information in the St. Kitts-Nevis Daily Bulletin, which published the planters' views. The planters blamed the riot on "agitators" - Kittitian and workers from other islands who had been deported from Santo Domingo after labour opportunities were reduced there. These, the Bulletin claimed, usually "hung around" creating trouble. In support of the planters who blamed these labourers, the Governor declared:

Basseterre has always been the port where labourers from other islands are collected to be transshipped in the labour schooners to Santo Domingo and other "Spanish" sugar islands, and at the end of the season are set down again at the same port to await vessels on to their homes. Many of them either remain in Basseterre for weeks awaiting ships, or even take up permanent residence there. Thus, there is always a bad crowd of "loafers" in that town (Governor's Report, January 1935, in Union Messenger August 1935, and Richardson 1983).

While St. Kitts, as the last port in the chain of islands, was a convenient depot for many migrant workers, and while returning Kittitian migrant workers were generally more militant, in blaming them for the strike, the Governor and planters ignored the persistent exploitation and impoverization of the working class. They claimed, instead, that conditions were improving for the workers. At no time, the Bulletin declared, and the Governor reiterated in his report, "has the labourer been more satisfied with the treatment accorded to him last year, and there is ~~every~~ confidence that he will receive the same terms or even better this year, without coercion". The workers had received a small Christmas bonus the previous year, but their employers had refused to guarantee any additional bonuses or increases. The workers obviously did not agree with the planters optimistic summary, and they showed this in their rebellion.

With the King's peace restored, and the warship in port, work resumed as usual on the estates for the discouraged workers. Wages remained the same. Employers refused to re-hire many of the "malcontents". Many others were kept in prison while awaiting trial. Sympathizing Kittitians in New York formed the St. Kitts-Nevis Labour Defence Committee to raise funds for their defence,

and the Workers League lent their support. Six of the accused were convicted and given prison sentences ranging from two to five years (Union Messenger, 1935; France 1968). Once again the colonial power and the plantocracy who controlled the local state, had used their might to subdue the working class.

Changes, though limited, were in the air. The imperial Government imposed the elective system a few months after the uprising. Under this system of government the Governor and his local administrator would still have veto power. The Governor would nominate two official members (the Crown Attorney and the Treasurer), as well as three unofficial members. Five unofficial members were to be elected. Consequently, nine nominees would be dropped. This concession was a far cry from self-government, but it was a first step. Voting qualifications still restricted the large majority of the population from participating in the political process, but for the petty bourgeois leaders of the working class movement, this was a great accomplishment. They were being given a chance to enter the political arena.

In the 1936 amendment to the constitution, voter qualifications included: (1) An income of 30 pounds sterling (\$144) per year, or (2) ownership of land or real property valued at least 100 pounds (\$480), or (3) payment of rent of at least 12 pounds (\$57.60) per year on real property; (4) payment of direct taxes in the previous year of at least 15 shillings (\$3.60); (5) residence in the territory 12 months previously and (6) the ability to read and write. (Ostensibly, women were allowed to vote but apparently, there were comparatively few who qualified). A candidate for the Legislature had to possess an income of 200

pounds (\$960), per year, or real property valued at least 500 pounds (\$2,400), or occupy land of rental value of at least 50 pounds (\$240) per year (France 1970: #102).

These restrictions meant few members of the working class would qualify. The highest wages in the sugar industry averaged 14 pounds (\$67) per year and the majority of the workers earned about 7 pounds (\$30) or less, that is, if they could be employed for 12 months a year. Most of the jobs were seasonal, however. A preliminary voters list showed 1,168 eligible voters on St. Kitts, 328 on Nevis and 133 on Anguilla, out of a population of about 36,000 (France 1970: #102).

In the 1937 Elections the Workers League candidates, Thomas Manchester, President, and Edgar Challenger, Vice-President, were elected to the Legislature. Another independent candidate, lawyer Clement Malone, who was backed the League, also won a seat. While the League candidates were a minority without powers, they were able to voice working class concerns in the Councils.

The petty bourgeois struggle for inclusion in the political process was interpreted by the colonial officials and the local plantocracy as a move to oust them from political and economic power. This, they failed to see, was not possible at the time, because the persistent dominance by the colonial/planter class was supported by wider social and economic forces (Thomas 1984b).

The "inevitable" political concessions made by the Colonial Office during this era were still influenced by 19th century Taylorism. Fear of black masses coupled with the conviction that the "backward" populations were incapable of governing themselves,

dominated British colonial policy (Lewis 1968:107). As a result, "orderly constitutional advance" based on the merits of bourgeois political democracy and the so-called Westminster model was emphasized (Thomas 1984b). West Indians had to be gradually groomed for self-government until they were "ready". Meanwhile, the Colonial Office, the "trustee", had to control the pace. The franchise would be widened only slowly, and the Colonial Office would increase the local state responsibility as the multi-party system and "honest electoral systems" were developed (Lewis 1968; Thomas 1984b). The fact that British colonial policy operated on a "vicious double standard" (Lewis 1968:108), was not overlooked by West Indians. Dominion status was the accepted goal for "white" colonies, while Crown Colony rule was maintained over those where blacks composed the majority.

Even the liberal minded members of the Moyne Commission (1938) displayed aspects of this ingrained ideology of non-white inferiority. They failed to recommend universal suffrage or self-government, in spite of the overwhelming stress placed on it in all the islands. Instead, they emphasized a social welfare development scheme which would be administered by expatriate colonial officials (Lewis 1968; Dookhan 1975).

The Moyne Commission, while candidly exposing the impoverization of the Kittitian and West Indian people in general, recommended only reforms to "repair the social fabric", not change it. [8]. Their recommendations included improved housing and health services, trade union legislation and the infamous peasant land development scheme along with crop diversification. [9].

The local plantocracies, international capital and the

Colonial Office were alarmed by the militant uprisings that were sweeping the Caribbean. It seemed that the time was over-ripe for concession. The package of reforms, which included the establishment of trade unions and collective bargaining was designed to stifle worker militancy and ensure the development of a stable labour market. Susan Craig noted this expressed design in the confidential notes of a meeting between the Secretary of State for the colonies and a delegation of the West India Committee (1977:63). [10]. It was effective because the design concurred with worker and petty bourgeois belief that trade unions were the most effective means through which to wage their economic and political battles (Craig 1977:63).

Concessions were inevitable. It was hoped that the introduction of labour legislation - compensation laws, minimum wage laws and the like, as well as social reforms, would ensure greater control over labour and create a more stable environment. The elimination of these more obvious forms of exploitation would, it was hoped, reduce the stigma of brutal exploitation associated with the plantation, and thereby attract a larger supply of labour.

Worker militancy had to be curbed by "sober responsible leadership". The prevailing colonial "wisdom" dictated that the colonies should be maintained as producers of raw materials and importers of manufactured products from the centre. This governed the policies of both Conservative and Labour Governments and emerged in the Commissions report. There were therefore "limits" to the amount of industrialization for these colonies (Craig

1977). Local Governments could not conduct or finance speculative industrial enterprise (Moyne Commission 1938). The essence of colonialism had to be maintained. The answer to the problems of growing worker militancy, was found in the petty bourgeois struggle for recognition. It was the class aspirations of these labour leaders that were manipulated and used to introduce the process of reforms and phased constitutional "developments", while maintaining the interests of imperial capitalism.

This sober and responsible trade unionism was also encouraged and moulded by the British Trade Union Congress. Walter Citrine, a member of the Moyne Commission, had encouraged the establishment of responsible trade unionism in his meetings with working class leaders, and afterwards, in his work with the Colonial Office Labour Advisors and Labour Departments in the West Indies. The separation of industrial disputes and militant political action was stressed. In addition, when it became obvious that the labour movements were inherently and obstinately political, every effort was made to ensure that the political stance was not militant (Craig 1977; Lewis 1968).

The "sober and responsible" leaders of the Workers' League were perfect candidates for curbing labour militancy on St. Kitts. They had demonstrated this in their attempt to diffuse the worker uprising in 1935. To be sure, they were ostracized by the ruling plantocracy because of their working class associations, but they were not militants. The "Father of Kittitian politics and trade unionism", Thomas Manchester (Independence Magazine 1983), firmly believed that "Crown Colony rule, with its acknowledged weakness and disadvantages should be superseded by a higher and more

equitable form of government". He saw government as an intermediary body. The Workers League, however, he maintained was not a "disorderly body". It stood for:

Law and order, giving due respect to Religion, Respectability, Authority and any and all branches of life that by their conduct demand respect of the League; but at the same time the League stands uncompromisingly for the destruction of evil by constitutional method in the Social, Political and Economic contract (Manchester, Open Letter to the people, in the Union Messenger, November 23, 1932 and Independence Magazine September 1983).

The leaders of the Workers League had long pressed for trade union legislation. They, the League leaders argued in the Legislative Assembly and before the Moyne Commission, were the perfect candidates to act as liaisons between employers and employees to avoid clashes and secure cooperation. They were ignored by the plantocracy, but readily accepted by the Commission.

Most of the recommendations of the Moyne Commission were not enacted until after the War, but trade union legislation was enacted immediately. This was no doubt influenced by the threat of more worker uprisings, given the spiralling cost of living during the war. Indeed, France (1970:#118) claims, "it was as clear as crystal that if the embargo against Trade Unionism was still in force during the distressing war years, nothing might have saved the country from another outburst like the 1935 Buckley Riots."

The Trades Union Act was passed in St. Kitts in December, 1939. The die-hard members of the plantocracy resisted this legislation to the end, but the "higher powers" in the Colonial

Office realized that change was inevitable and the law was imposed despite objections. [11].

With much assistance from the British Trade Union Congress (TUC), the Workers League launched an organizing campaign. The TUC provided the rules, regulations, guidelines and training. Leaders with the "capacity to handle the business of the Union" had to be chosen, the TUC emphasized (France 1970:#118). On February 8th, 1940, the executive of the Workers League were returned as leaders of the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union, with Edgar Challenger as President.

Later that year, the sugar interests created the St. Christopher Sugar Producers Association, an organization designed specifically to deal with the Union. This opened the way for a new level of conflict between labour and capital.

Enlisting union members was not as easy as was expected, however. Organizers faced difficulty in the country districts with the estate labourers. Most of these were bound by credit ties to the plantation, and feared economic reprisals. By 1946, only 500 out of 7,000 were unionized. An intense campaign added 500 more during that year (Frucht 1979).

Union membership was open to all workers, but the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union emerged as a union of the workers in the sugar industry because this industry, which dominated St. Kitts, was by far, the largest employer of labour. (This association of the Union with the sugar workers would later account for the lack of support which the Labour Party, with its base in the Union, would receive in Nevis and Anguilla - islands from which the sugar industry had virtually disappeared). Factory,

estate, dock and railway workers were all represented by the Union, but it was the factory workers who were more active and had the larger representation. Factory workers had been the centre of the workers' movement since the beginning. They were more militant than the estate workers who were more dispersed and under the control of estate owners. Estate owners, it was noted above, had hindered the early spread of the movement by preventing labour organizers from visiting the workers on the estates or in the estate houses where the workers lived.

The depression and the onslaught of the war aggravated the desperate condition of the workers. Dependency and heavy reliance on external sources for food, were acutely accentuated during this period. The Leeward Islands Legislature passed a Land Settlement Act (1938), which would allow local governments to acquire land through purchase. This would in turn, enable landless labourers to buy or lease settlement lots from the government. In St. Kitts, this scheme was thwarted by the plantocracy, who consolidated land ownership within their own circles. Intermarriage and familial ownerships, as well as corporate consolidation by the Boon and Marshall families who owned Thurstons and Horsfords, respectively, was responsible for this consolidation (Booker Report 1968).

The Workers League and the Union established a Labour Advisory Committee, which pressured the local Government to enact the land settlement scheme. The Committee accused the Government of "dragging its foot" on the issue. [12]. It was not until 1942, when the threat of starvation loomed largest, and worker militancy became more strident, that the Government began to take steps

towards providing land.

Two small estates, Saddlers and Fahies were acquired. Under the Agricultural Small Holdings Act #12, allottees were required to cultivate cane on two-thirds of their lots. The few who obtained land were insignificant, compared to the large proportion of the population without access to land. The Government tried to persuade estate owners to volunteer some of their arable land for cultivation. When the proprietors refused to cooperate, a law requiring each proprietor to plant food crops on 20 per cent of their arable land, was enacted (Crist 1949).

This law was violently opposed by the planters who, encouraged by the ruin of the European beet sugar industry in the course of the war, were bent on taking full advantage of the increased demand for sugar by utilizing every available acre of land for cane cultivation. Through strong protests and block lobbying, they succeeded in reducing the required acreage to 15 and eventually, 10 per cent (Crist 1949). Even so, they were able to evade the legal requirement, by ignoring it, or relinquishing only the precipitous hillside slopes which, they claimed, the workers had always "naturally selected" for cultivation (Sugar Industry Commission Report 1949; Richardson 1983).

After the war, when soil erosion continued to pose a threat to the cane lands below, the planters began restricting cultivation on the slopes again. Private estates and the Government sought protection against deforestation by employing rangers to prevent workers from using the trees for charcoal production (St. Kitts-Nevis Agricultural Report 1950; Richardson 1983).

Planter resistance during the war years was matched by

increased militancy on the part of the workers. Wages were still inadequately low.. A 10 per cent war bonus in 1939 had not offset the high increase in the cost of living. Food prices had increased by more than 15 per cent. The sugar producers argued that in spite of their profits, increasing wages would be economically unsound, because there was always the possibility of drought, which would reduce yields and profits (Richardson 1983).

The 1937 International Sugar Agreement had guaranteed a market for sugar in Britain, and the war allowed for almost unlimited supplies. In 1939, a record export of 37,336 tons of sugar brought a \$538,300 return to the Kittitian industry. Dividends of \$105,652 were recommended for "A" shareholders (France 1970:#119).

Workers began agitating for higher wages. The newly established Trades and Labour Union was following a cautious line. Factory workers decided to take matters into their own hands. The harvest season had started on February 5th, 1940. The workers requested a wage increase from the factory management to compensate for the escalating food prices, brought on by the war. They were rebuffed. When the workers persisted in their demands, they were told that a wage increase would be considered. The answer, a resounding no, in the form of a strongly worded notice posted at the factory, came on April Fool's Day.

The workers retaliated with a wildcat strike, which was condemned by the planters and the Government. A majority vote in the Legislative Council on May 16th denounced the workers action, claiming that it was "crystal clear that the selfish aims of a few irresponsible people (were) the direct cause of the unreasonable

stand taken by the strikers, a stand damaging in the extreme to their real interests" (Administrator, Legislative Council, May 16, 1940; France 1970).

The workers nominated a two-man representation to negotiate with the factory, and established a games committee to encourage solidarity. Sympathizers donated food and money. The planters, however, backed by the Government, had resolved to crush the strike. The Government threatened to mobilize troops against striking workers. Seventy-five workers were fired. One of these was Robert Bradshaw, a machinist since 1932, who had become very active in the League. He was one of the rising black militant workers who would replace the more cautious petty bourgeois leaders of the Union. Bradshaw became president of the Union and was elected to the Legislature in 1946, when property qualifications were reduced. He would later become the country's first Premier and nationalize the sugar industry.

With the legalization of the Union to represent sugar workers, a tradition of negotiating with the Sugar Producers Association (estate and factory representatives) before each harvest season was established. Deadlocks between these two organizations usually resulted in delays in the start of the harvest season and increasingly favoured the working class.

A 1943 deadlock resulted in the creation of a wage board by the Government. The Union also forced an annual bonus for estate workers, and the introduction of a three shift eight-hour day for factory workers in the place of the two twelve-hour shifts (Manifesto of the St. Kitts-Nevis Labour Party, 1975). It would not be until 1951 that bonuses for factory workers would be won.

This strike and another in 1944 were both instigated by the more militant working class members of the Union. The strikes highlighted the underlying serious differences between the petty bourgeois leaders and the rising working class militants. These differences led to the resignation of Challenger, in April 1943, and his successor, Sebastian, in February 1944. Sebastian was replaced by the more aggressive Bradshaw (Inniss 1983).

In 1946, when the Union launched a membership drive for estate workers, the Sugar Producers Association tried to reduce Union credibility by refusing to negotiate and granting a wage increase. In 1948, the Union staged a thirteen-week strike that lasted from February to April and delayed the harvesting of the crop. This strike was prompted by factory and estate employers' attempt to end the payment of bonuses. This was strongly opposed by the Bradshaw-led Union. The Union also demanded that the system of cutting of cane by the ton instead of by the line, should be abandoned. The Union argued that it was "the inalienable right of the worker to be able to satisfy himself as to the quantity of work done" (Inniss 1983:64). This issue had been the cause of a two-day strike by cane cutters in 1932. This time, under a militant organized banner, it occasioned an island-wide strike, which brought the industry to a standstill. Angry workers burnt about 10 per cent of the canes during the deadlock. It was one of the most unified strikes yet. Estate workers refused to look after animals and dock workers refused to unload the ships bringing sugar industry supplies. The workers retained their bonuses, but the planters remained firm on cane being cut by the

line (France 1970:#121).

This strike brought yet another Commission from Britain. Once again, the poverty and misery of the workers, and the overwhelming reliance on imported food was noted. Yet, it seemed that Commission members were more impressed by the increasing prosperity, mechanization and modernization in the industry. St. Kitts, they were convinced, should continue its "development" as a sugar island, because they felt that the wealth from the industry would boost job creation (1948 Commission, Richardson 1983).

Increasing mechanization had been the industry's response to growing labour militancy. By 1949, any remaining work animals had been replaced by trucks and tractors. In 'modernizing' their side of the industry, estate owners financed research on breeding and testing new varieties of cane. They tested different fertilizers, experimented with ratooning, cane spacing, insecticides and herbicides. They analyzed the soils, and management implemented recommendation of the annual reports from their laboratories (Merrill 1958; Richardson 1983).

More intense use of artificial fertilizers and cane varieties yielded an average of 32.09 tons of sugar cane per acre by 1953 (Merrill 1958:99). Merrill notes, that during the 1950's on one of the largest estates (some 600 acres of cane land), about four hundredweight of sulphate of ammonia and two hundredweight of potash were added to each acre of land at planting or ratooning time. Cane crops on the high mountain lands received an additional two hundredweight of superphosphate of lime (Merrill 1958:101). Weeds were kept down through imported herbicides and pesticides were used to eliminate insects. These insects moved on to plague

the workers' hillside provision grounds instead (Richardson 1983: 165, citing Mills 1974). Under such intense fertilization, about 409,000 tons of cane were harvested in 1954, yielding nearly 52,000 tons of sugar (Merrill 1958, quoting Colonial Reports for the Leeward Islands, 1953 and 1954).

The "Iron Man", the Broussard cane loader, was also introduced in the 1950's, further increasing unemployment in the seasonal industry, and increasing worker exploitation by speeding up the process. With the introduction of the loader, cane cutters were required to cut two rows of cane instead of one, to make room for the machine, and work by the ton was re-introduced. To diffuse worker resistance to this increasing mechanization and exploitation, the planters abolished the practice of hiring gangs under a head cutter who set the pace. The work process was individualized, competition among workers was increased, while cooperation was undermined (Frucht 1979). With the factory operating on three eight-hour, instead of two twelve-hour shifts, and the loaders doing the work of packers, increasing demands were made on the cutters.

With this increasing exploitation, many estate workers began withdrawing their labour from the plantations, as emigration avenues re-opened after the war. Planters began bringing in workers from Anguilla and Montserrat, and in 1960 and 1961, from Barbados and St. Lucia. Nevisians also continued to provide labour for the plantations throughout the 50's and the 60's (Merrill 1958; Richardson 1983). Kittitian labour withdrawal did not pose the threat of a labour shortage. It did, however,

signify a form of protest against the "despicable and undignified" conditions under which they were forced to labour.

After the war, Kittitians resumed their tradition of migration in search of a 'better living'. Life elsewhere in the metropolises and the United States Virgin Islands was one to which they aspired, a hope which could never be realized in their homeland, where the majority of the population was huddled into slummy, overcrowded, ribbon settlements that lined the roads and the plantations.

After the war, as before, the Kittitian plantation villages were a graphic testament to the cruel subordination and exploitation of working people in the Caribbean. The island's sugar industry was among the most 'progressive' in the area, but the workers existed in what were the "worst examples of rural poverty" (Richardson 1983:151). Various commentators praised the 'progressive' sugar industry and simultaneously lamented the living conditions of the poor. Disease and malnutrition were rampant in the wooden shacks which were bundled in the ghauts below the cane fields. Poor sanitary facilities or lack of them created a stench. Conditions were so poor that one observer noted in 1949, that "if it were not for the fresh air and sunshine in which people spend their days, disease would certainly be an epidemic" (Crist 1949; cf. Royal Commission Report 1945; Richardson 1983). In 1938, the St. Kitts Legislature was informed:

It will serve no purpose to describe the hovels in which most of the agricultural labourers and many of the domestic servants live, nor to moralize upon the consequences of living in such surroundings, it is sufficient to remark that they are a standing menace to the general health of the community, and that in these

surroundings it is almost impossible to practise cleanliness and hygiene. These hovels should be replaced ... (Memo of the St. Kitts Unofficial Members, November 9, 1938, in Augier and Gordon 1962:264-265),

Some found escape in the United States army bases in the Virgin Islands and Trinidad, a few in the oil refineries in Curacao and Aruba and a few in the cane fields on St. Croix. The majority, however, flocked to Britain in the fifties and early sixties. The Kittitian population decreased significantly during this era (Table 5:4). Some 15,000 persons left the islands of St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla between 1955 and 1964 (Richardson 1983:146). The majority of these were men from St. Kitts. They were largely the educated and skilled or semi-skilled workers: mechanics, welders, carpenters and masons. Many sold their possessions or borrowed money to buy their passages. Some of the men who made the early journeys saved enough to send for their wives and children and help support other family members 'back home'. [13].

Table 5:4
Population of St. Kitts, 1946-1970

	Male	Female	Total
1946	13,581	16,237	29,818
1960	17,913	20,200	38,113
1970	15,820	17,820	33,737

Source: Richardson 1983:146.

By the 1960's, employers, especially those in the sugar factory, were complaining that the most "competent" workers had been lost to emigration, leaving "second and even third raters" to carry on (The Democrat, April 23, 1960; Richardson 1983).

When the doors to the United Kingdom were closed, young legal and illegal immigrants from St. Kitts headed for the United States Virgin Islands looking for work. They usually found jobs as construction workers, maids, waiters and gardeners (Richardson 1983). With the depletion of the younger population, cane harvesting was left to men whose ages averaged 45 and over. Hillside farming also further declined as reliance on remittances increased.

Remittances became a necessary part of subsistence. Richardson (1983:155) points out that between 1957 and 1959, the average annual sums remitted to St. Kitts via the post office alone was over \$1,300,000. Much of this financed more migration, but most of it helped the recipients to survive. Table 5:5 depicts the money order remittances from 1962 to 1975.

What all this points to is the precarious nature of subsistence for the majority of Kittitians. Dependence is a marked characteristic: dependence in the sugar industry on metropolitan capital, markets, fuel and parts; heavy dependence on imported food and other goods; and dependence on remittances (by a large proportion of the working class) to buy these items. External fluctuations on the world market create havoc on the island, as in 1949, when the British pound was suddenly devalued from US\$4.03 to US\$2.80. This in turn meant a 30 per cent reduction in the value

Table 5:5
Postal Money Order Remittances to St. Kitts
1962-1975, in Eastern Caribbean Dollars
from the United States and the United Kingdom

Year	From the U.S.	From the U.K.
1962	168,555	778,487
1963	210,476	685,894
1964	274,471	688,801
1965	259,835	687,288
1966	250,803	606,742
1967	202,800	513,619
1968	159,384	528,361
1969	73,557	507,342
1970	77,531	473,976
1971	81,102	477,571
1972	65,061	586,535
1973	23,218	753,025
1974	5,885	954,893
1975	2,606	1,041,757

Note: The E.C. dollar was valued at about U.S. \$0.60 in 1962, \$0.50 in 1967 and \$0.37 in 1976.

Source: Richardson 1983:155, citing data provided courtesy of the General Post Office, Basseterre.

of Caribbean currency. Prices increased dramatically on imports from the United States. Caribbean currency continued to float with the British pound (which fell to about US\$1.60 in 1967) until 1976 when it was attached to the United States dollar. (Richardson 1983:147). Bradshaw, the President of the Labour Union, deplored the "disaster of devaluation ... forced upon the colony" (Union Messenger, October 8, 1949).

The Working Class and the Nationalist Movement

The political battles initiated by the petite bourgeoisie were continued by rising black union leadership. Bradshaw and others continued to press for further constitutional advance - which meant universal suffrage, without financial literacy requirements, local self-government and especially the reduction of the power of the government.

While the earlier League and Union Leaders were largely the well-educated petite bourgeoisie, men like Bradshaw and later, Southwell, had no conventional educated background. Bradshaw was a "self-taught" man, who prided himself on his wide vocabulary, and flamboyant oration.

In 1944, after serving as chief clerk in the Labour Union Office, Bradshaw was selected as the Union's third President, replacing Sebastian, who had resigned. Like the past presidents of the Union, Bradshaw was also elected to the Legislature in 1946. It was under Bradshaw's aggressive leadership that constitutional changes were brought about after the war, alienating middle class and petty bourgeois affiliates in the process. Bradshaw,

straddling the leadership of the Labour Union and the Labour Party, waged a "political-cum-industrial" battle against a bitter, reactionary sugar plantocracy (Lewis 1968).

The Kittitian plantocracy, threatened by the growing influence of the Labour Union and the Labour Party, created their own political party, The St. Kitts Democratic Labour Party in 1949. Founding members, like J.L. Wigley, V.S. Brookes, H. Addain and W. Herbert and the members of the Sugar Producers Association in general, also supported the Democrat newspaper, their new mouth-piece (Inniss 1983:65).

Colonial agents who sought to separate union and political issues, warned of the dangers of "conflict of interest" and "rule of obligation" on the part of Legislative members who held trade union appointments. Bradshaw, like many other West Indian trade union based political leaders, was not prepared to run the risk of losing union support by resigning when he became a government minister (Lewis 1968).

With continued local agitation, the slow process to nationhood through a series of constitutional changes, was set in motion. St. Kitts was probably the centre of the most aggressive opposition to continued colonial political domination in the Leeward Islands, during the post-World War Two era. Bradshaw was a firm believer in self-government and a United West Indies. In 1946, Bradshaw organized a candle light procession calling for the ousting of Administrator Greene.

In 1950, he launched "Operation Blackburne", a rally protesting the traditional practice of colonial appointments of governors and administrators to Caribbean colonies, without

consultation with the local people. "Operation Blackburne" was organized when the Colonial Office rejected the idea that West Indians should be consulted about appointments and also considered for the posts (Southwell 1951; Lewis 1968). When the new Governor of the Leeward Islands, Kenneth Blackburne arrived on St. Kitts, he was consequently greeted with Bradshaw's organized protest. The local plantocracy condemned the protest as treasonable and sacrilegious and lamented the growing power of "men of working class origins ... as an evil of the first magnitude". They, Inniss points out, believed that the supremacy of these men of working class origins in the State, meant "the supremacy of ignorance over instruction and of numbers over knowledge" (1983:66). Governor Blackburne was hastily withdrawn as a result of this protest and replaced by Thomas Williams. An unsuccessful campaign was also launched for his removal and that of his Administrator on St. Kitts, Colonel Howard, in 1956 (St. Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla Commemorative Magazine, 1968).

The positions held by expatriate Governors and Administrators, with their overarching powers, would continue until the 1960's. This absolute power invested in the Governor, as in his power to certify bills rejected by the Legislative Council, was used with increasing frequency during this era to curb the growing labour blocs in the Legislature. This power was employed in the 1952 to restrict the Labour Party's chances of a sweeping victory, after universal adult suffrage without property or financial restrictions was conceded, and the number of elected seats was increased from five to eight. The Wigley-led Democratic

Party strongly contested the elections, but Labour won all eight seats (Southwell 1968; Lewis 1968).

An elected majority in the Legislative Council was not accompanied by concomitant powers. The elected members represented a minority in the Executive Council which was dominated by official and nominated members. A committee system, whereby three elected members were elected to the Executive Council to become "Members" for certain departments of Government, was introduced. These "Members", Bradshaw, Member for Trade and Production, Williams, Member for Social Services and Davis, Member for Communications and Works (later replaced by Southwell in 1955), had no responsibility for departmental policy, however. They were associated with the departments in name only. The real power remained in the hands of the Governor, his Administrator and senior colonial officials, who were the Directors of these departments (Southwell 1968; Lewis 1968).

In 1956, a quasi-ministerial system was introduced and the number of elected members in the Executive Council was increased to five. Bradshaw, Williams and Southwell assumed the ministerial portfolios for Trade and Production, Social Services and Communications and Works, respectively. This, however, was a pseudo cabinet without a head, and with limited effectiveness. The strategic portfolios of law, finance, and control of the police were reserved for colonial officials. The governor still had exclusive powers over defence, foreign policy and any matters relating to imperial interests (Lewis 1968:134). Southwell, one of those 'quasi-Ministers' claims it was a:

Twilight Ministerial System with a lot depending on the Administrator and none of the Ministers having any responsibility for the work of the others. The Administrator was in fact, the President of the Legislative Council, the Chief Minister, Minister of External Affairs, Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and what have you (Southwell 1968:38).

The powers of the Governor and Administrator were virtually unaffected. They retained powers of veto, and the Constitution placed them above any restrictions by the Executive Council. This distribution of power was a constant source of conflict between the Labour elected representatives and the colonial officials. In 1957, the Labour members challenged the fact that the Administrator held the contradictory positions of leader of the administrative government, President of the Legislative Council and Speaker of the House. In a motion on Constitutional Reform, Bradshaw demanded that an elected member should assume the position of Speaker. It was not until the early sixties, however, that this change was brought about (Lewis 1968:126).

The continued domination of the local state by the Colonial Office through its official and nominated members restricted the powers of the labour elected members. The anti-Labour sentiments of the colonial officials were channelled down into its local civil service ranks. These were not "politically neutral instruments of public administration". They displayed thinly veiled hostilities towards the Labour members, viewing them as upstarts (Lewis 1968:127). The colonial authoritarianism displayed by colonial officials was perhaps most clearly demonstrated in 1958, when the Administrator renominated a member who had been dismissed by the Legislative Council, without

consulting the local members. [14]. The Governor justified this action, claiming that they were acting upon "Royal Instructions". He further declared that nominated and official members were exempt from the principle of collective responsibility, because they were not responsible to the Legislative Council or the electorate. Angry labour members protested the negative effect that this policy had on the cabinet system, and lobbied for the abolition of the powers of the Administrator. An Administrator, they argued, should not be able to assign subjects to ministers at a whim. They also argued that the Crown Attorney should be stripped of voting powers, and that Finance should be controlled by an elected member. Cabinet, in general, they maintained, should be responsible to, and removable by the Legislative Council. The Labour members summed up their demands by pointing out that:

There comes a time in the life of an emergent people, when the penultimate stage to self-determination is no longer tolerable because of its own political and psychological limitations and because of the accentuated zeal with which the subject people must naturally press onward to the visible goal (Workers League Memorandum, 1958, quoted in Lewis 1968:127).

The constitutional advances of 1956 had been conceded in preparation for the Federation of the West Indies. The long-represented Federation of the Leeward Islands was dismantled, for each territory was supposed to enter the Federation as a separate unit, and hopefully realize their struggles for self-government within and supported by the regional structure. One of the anomalies of the federal constitution, however, Lewis points out, was that the constitutional advancement of each unit was to remain

in the hands of the Colonial Office (Lewis 1968:130).

This Federation experiment [15] which lasted from 1958 to 1962, aroused the hostilities of the larger colonies, and served to delay and complicate the struggle for internal self-government, especially in the case of St. Kitts and other small colonies. The office of the Governor remained intact with full veto powers.

The post of Chief Minister was created in 1960. In 1967, after much lobbying and the failure of the attempt to impose a federation of the smaller islands in 1965, St. Kitts, in conjunction with Nevis and Anguilla, was granted "independence" in association with Britain, or associated statehood. Britain retained responsibility for foreign affairs and defence, while the colony came under internal self-government. Complete political independence was finally acquired in 1983.

While the aspirations of the local politicians were consistently frustrated throughout the decolonization period, each concession was the result of fierce struggles. The real power lay with the economic bourgeoisie, those nominated members of the Legislature and their colonial counterparts. Behind the closed doors of their private clubs, like the all-white St. Christopher Club, the "black-balling" and plotting was carried on (Lewis 1968:128).

The decolonization process, which was restricted to the political institutions, gradually increased local political power. Through various constitutional changes, the more extreme measures of class control which had been channelled through the state, were reduced. With the acquisition of internal self-government in

1967, the power of the Bradshaw-led, union-based party increased. Union leaders were Government Ministers.

During the previous quarter of the century, the outstanding achievement of the political-industrial combination, was a comparative humanization of the work process in the sugar industry. The Union, through its political leaders, fought long and hard for concessions like an eight-hour working day, overtime pay, minimum wage legislation, pensions and retirement bonus schemes for sugar factory workers; sickness benefits, a Slum Clearance and Housing Ordinance, boots and protective clothing for workers in "ice rooms" and waterfront workers and a yearly bonus, which was conceded after a fifteen year struggle (Manifesto of the St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla Labour Party, 1975; Lewis 1968).

These efforts were strongly contested by the plantocracy. Estate and factory management were forced to accept the Union, but sought to undermine and exclude its leaders, keeping them out of "pertinent" industry matters. They resisted the laws allocating estate land to food production, kept labour ignorant of the financial relationship between the Sugar Factory and its parent company in London. They consolidated and interchanged plantation ownership through endogamy and discrimination, keeping non-whites out of the ownership and management network. The colonial government had been forced into acquiring land for the peasant development. Strong planter resistance had limited this to a few small planters. Estates were reduced to 38 from 50 at the turn of the century. The ownership was even more concentrated than this number suggests. Wade Plantations, Marshall Plantations, Blake Plantations and Farara Plantations consisted of two or more

estates. Wade Plantations, for instance, consisted of four estates and had personal connections with at least one other plantation (Richardson 1983). Thurston and Horsford controlled the majority of the cane lands and in 1972, had direct control of about 90 per cent of the lands (Peat et al 1972).

Sugar production averaged 50,000 tons per year from the late 1950's to the early 1960's. Wartime and post-war arrangements had placed the industry in a much stronger position. Wartime reserve funds had been legislated for maintaining and safeguarding of the industry. The United Kingdom's Ministry of Food had been the sole importer of sugar from 1939 to 1952, and was also the agent for redistribution throughout the Commonwealth (Parry and Sherlock 1971). Sugar manufacturing associations acted on a regional basis in the interest of the industry, negotiating prices and providing scientific research facilities.

The Commonwealth Sugar Agreement (1951), guaranteed the sale of about 900,000 tons of Caribbean sugar in the United Kingdom. In this protected market, Caribbean producers were paid almost double the price per ton above the world market price for their quotas. This guaranteed price peaked at 42 pounds, 6 shillings and 8 pence per ton in 1953 (Parry and Sherlock 1971; Merrill 1958). In that year, the International Sugar Agreement sought to control over-production by dividing markets and prescribing quotas. The Commonwealth Sugar Agreement was operated within this arrangement. Of the 51,579 tons produced in St. Kitts in 1953, its quota of 30,883 tons was sold at the guaranteed 42 pounds 6 shillings and 8 pence per ton (Merrill 1958:101).

The British subsidy for the Caribbean quota, which averaged more than twice the price on world market, was indicative of the dependence of the Kittitian and other sugar industries on Britain for continued prosperity. While enjoying these inflated prices, Kittitian planters became even more resistant to land allocation schemes.

In 1966, the Labour-controlled Government, worried about the increasing negative balance of trade, as food imports continued to sky-rocket, passed the Local Food Production Ordinance. Plantation owners were required to allocate not less than two per cent and not more than 20 per cent of their total arable acreage to vegetable cultivation (Government Ordinance #24, 1966). The Chief Agricultural Officer and Department of Agriculture was empowered to enforce this law. Plantation owners were required to provide detailed information about their estate cultivation. Like the 1942 law, this one was opposed and disregarded. Plantation owners claimed the law invaded their private property rights, and cited dry spells, poor marketing arrangements, insufficient seeds and labour shortages as hindrances to their compliance with the law (Mills 1980).

The acquisition of associated statehood or limited self-government by the Labour Party in 1967, which coincided with declining profits for the estate side of the industry heralded a new phase of inter-class conflict in the sugar industry. This, as we shall see in the next chapter, culminated in the nationalization of the industry.

The development of monopoly capitalism had seen increasing consolidation and centralization in the sugar industry on St.

Kitts in the early 20th century. With the increasing implementation of technology, the industry entered a new phase increasing production realizing even greater profits. St. Kitts became notorious for its profitable sugar industry. This was at the expense of the exploited and impoverished working class. New technology, monopoly of land and control over social and political process, allowed the "sugarcrats" in alliance with British capitalists, to appropriate larger surpluses through reduction of wages.

With increasing exploitation, this era also witnessed increasing class conflict. Working class resistance was bolstered by an alliance with the petite bourgeoisie, who were in search of social and political power. The struggle resulted in significant gains for the working class and in a strong nationalist movement. With the acquisition of associated statehood, the Kittitian labour-based ruling party assumed control of the state. This would usher in new developments in the social, political and economic process, which will be examined in the next chapter.

Notes

1. These two companies also controlled imports.
2. St. Kitts, it is noted elsewhere in the dissertation, also had a high death rate.
3. Lack of direct shipping routes from St. Kitts to Central America, meant that only a very small number of Kittitians worked on projects like the Panama Canal, which attracted thousands of labourers from the Caribbean. Richardson (1983) points out that of the approximate 20,000 British West Indians who died in the Canal Zone between 1906 and 1923, only 112 were from St. Kitts and Nevis.
4. Comrade Joseph N. France, a veteran member of the Trades and Labour Union, has been the Secretary for the 47 years of its existence. The tireless Secretary has also served as a Minister in the Bradshaw Government. He is also the Editor of the Labour Spokesman Newspaper, the successor of the Union Messenger. Comrade France, well advanced in years, still shows up religiously, at The Masses House, the office of the Labour Union, the Labour Party and the Labour Spokesman, for his various duties. It was there, that Mr. France took time out to share his wealth of experiences and insights with me. I am indebted to him for much valuable information on the Union: its history, struggles and so on. I am especially indebted for the unique opportunity of obtaining verbal accounts of an the experiences of an actual and prominent actor in the struggle.
5. The plantocracy's determination to restrict power to their own circles, meant that St. Kitts and other Leeward Island colonies would lag some 20 years behind the rest of the Caribbean in terms of political and constitutional development.
6. Throughout the 19th century, a direct line of credit ran from import houses to small shopkeepers.
7. "Haitian politics" was a reference to the Haitian Revolution, the process by which the oppressed overthrew their oppressors, and took control of the state.
8. Lewis (1968:84-91) notes that while the Report of the Commission depicted in "damning detail, the social and economic servitude of the West Indian proletariat", its weakness lay in the general timidity of its recommendations.
9. These were not new recommendations. They had been the subject of many petitions and appeals since the turn of the century. The Workers League had lobbied various visiting colonial officers and the local Government, for the implementation of The Land Settlement Scheme, for many years. In their meetings

with the Moyne Commission, The League members submitted a memorandum outlining the local problems and the solutions recommended by the League. They also stressed the need for trade union legislation, federation of the colonies, and nationalization of the manufacturing side of the sugar industry.

10. The West India Committee in London represented the interests of the plantocracy in the West Indian colonies.
11. While the planters unwillingly gave in to the Trade Union legislation, they voted for an amendment which would make strikes without previous notice illegal. This amendment was subsequently withdrawn, however. (France 1970).
12. The Workers League was especially critical of the Government's failure to outbid competitors for Lamberts, a 538 acre estate which was put up for sale in 1939.
13. The metropolises were certainly not "paradises" for emigrant workers. There, they faced discrimination, exploitation and industrial poverty at times. By the 1960's, resentment against these immigrants climaxed with the Commonwealth Immigrants Act to curb the influx (Richardson 1983).
14. Constitutional and political struggles were further complicated by Nevisian resentment of its subordinate position in the association with St. Kitts. Nevisians have clamoured for alterations in this relationship since it was imposed in 1882.
15. Bradshaw, who fully believed in the possibility and necessity of a Federated West Indies till his death in 1978, had been elected as the Federal Minister of Finance. He blamed the failure of Federation on those politicians who, he claimed, were "pursuing selfish gains and forgetting the masses".

CHAPTER SIX

NATIONALIZATION OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

Class conflict on St. Kitts saw the rise of the labour leaders to assume control of the state. They were supported by the large black working class and the sugar cane field and factory workers in particular, as well as segments of the middle class - the top black civil servants. Many of these would assume deputy minister roles in the government. A small group of merchants of Portuguese, Lebanese and Syrian descent who had been excluded from the white controlling class, also supported the Labour Government. In fact, Bradshaw, the Labour Party leader, married into one of these families.

The Labour Government was opposed by the estate and factory owners, their attorneys, managers and merchants. The crumbling of the colonial political structure, crown colony rule, had forced the planter class out of the political process. This class shifted its support to the People's Action Movement (PAM), the new political party which became the legal opposition in 1965. PAM was established to replace the deposed Democratic Party by members of the petite bourgeoisie with roots in the plantocracy, as well as black intellectuals and professionals. The party also gained the support of other segments of the petite bourgeoisie like small retail store operators, taxi and bus operators. It also attracted teachers from the middle class and disillusioned Labour Party supporters.

The next stage in the class conflict would culminate in the nationalization of the industry by the Labour controlled state.

The sugar industry, since its establishment, had been supported by the state. It was state military control which helped to maintain the subordination of labour. By the time of nationalization the state had expanded its support of the industry to include financial aid.

Active state financial involvement was established in 1947 under colonial rule. As part of the CSA package, the British government stipulated that a proportion of the increased price that it offered for sugar be allocated for the industry's future needs. The Special Sugar Funds legislation was consequently enacted by the Kittitian Legislature. The cess or export deduction was allocated to three funds: The Price Stabilization Fund, a Rehabilitation Fund and a Labour Welfare Fund (White Paper, 1976; Peat et al 1972).

The Price Stabilization fund was intended as a buffer for the sugar producers' annual incomes against variations in international sugar prices. Improvements and maintenance of field and factory assets were to be covered by the Rehabilitation Fund. The Labour Welfare Fund was to be used in expenditure on projects for the improvement of the general welfare of workers in the industry. The cess, which was fixed at 2.75 pounds sterling (EC\$13.20) per ton, was paid to Crown Agents in the United Kingdom by sugar brokers or the factory, but the local government held the trusteeship. Of this \$13.20 cess, \$1.20 was allocated to the Price Stabilization Fund, \$6.00 to the Rehabilitation Fund, and \$6.00 to the Labour Welfare Fund.

The funds were usually utilised under mutual agreement

between the Government and the sugar producers until the mid-sixties, when the new Labour controlled state increasingly used legislation to allocate most of the three funds to finance wage increases. This was in light of persistent opposition by the sugar producers to grant any increase in wages. Between 1965 and 1968, about \$700,000 of the Price Stabilization Fund was used to finance wages.

In 1969, the Government established a new fund called the Special Wages Increase Fund. \$4.80 out of the \$6.00 per ton for the Rehabilitation Fund was redirected into Special Wages. By the end of 1970, all the funds except the Special Wages Fund were virtually exhausted. In 1971, another act legislated that workers be paid a five per cent bonus out of the Labour Welfare Fund. This was to be refunded out of the future earnings of the other three funds (Peat et al 1972).

By 1970, some 700,000 pounds had been granted to the factory for expenditure on improvements and rehabilitation. A similar sum was granted to the estates (White Paper, 1976). Government expenditure on the industry was increasing. By 1969 the government was ready for more active involvement in the industry. Public ownership of the industry, which had been an expressed aim of the labour movement since the late 1930's and 40's, became one of the main issues of the late sixties. The time was ripe - the planter class had lost control of the state and intra-class conflict between the estate owners and factory management was coming to a head. Estate owners were complaining about heavy losses and blaming the British capitalists when the Labour Government passed the Sugar Industry Act in 1969, stating the

need for public control of the industry (White Paper, 1976; Manifesto of the Labour Party 1975).

In 1970, the Government established the Sugar Industry Board to prevent the impending "collapse of the industry". The industry had operated very profitably until 1965, reaching its peak in 1960 with a record production of 50,200 tons of sugar. The year 1965 ushered in a decade of low world prices due to a world market glut, as well as gloomy predictions for the future of the industry. In addition, the local government was endeavouring to keep local prices for sugar lower than export prices. Local planters complained of declining profits, increasing losses and rising wages. Production began declining. Acreage reaped dropped from about 13,800 in 1960 to 9,700 in 1970 (Table 6:1). The Government was convinced that the planters were trying to sabotage the industry (White Paper 1976; Mills 1980).

In August of 1970, the Government submitted proposals (prepared by Hawkins and Parker) for the complete integration of the industry under the state, as a "means of rescuing it from the real danger of collapse", to the owners of the estates and the factory. The St. Kitts Sugar Association which represented the estate and factory owners, appeared favourable at first, and called for a feasibility study. The London interests, however, objected and indicated a preference to sell.

Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Company of London, were commissioned to carry out the study in August of 1971. In July of 1971, before the study could be launched, the Government informed the Sugar Association:

Table 6:1

Sugar Production 1960 to 1984

Year	Tons Cane Ground	Tons Sugar Produced	Acres Reaped	Acres Cultivated
1960	432,900	50,200	13,830	n/a
1961	391,900	47,800	12,310	
1962	413,000	43,200	12,010	
1963	350,657	39,924	11,850	
1964	377,495	43,629	12,470	
1965	342,171	33,920	11,250	
1966	348,335	38,729	12,570	
1967	327,779	39,195	12,270	
1968	321,410	35,390	12,180	12,570
1969	383,819	36,001	10,570	12,624
1970	325,679	27,163	9,700	12,487
1971	271,517	25,371	9,760	11,818
1972	243,295	26,531	10,540	10,809
1973	210,501	23,828	8,600	9,693
1974	217,219	26,101	8,974	
1975	206,034	25,103	8,525	9,237
1976	320,801	35,551	9,800	10,755
1977	351,924	40,729	11,140	12,000
1978	361,596	38,993	10,933	12,000
1979	384,433	39,710	9,454	11,269
1980	351,543	34,749	10,445	11,790
1981	337,515	32,357	10,027	10,187
1982	349,600	35,955	8,948	10,316
1983	276,207	27,762	10,160	10,681
1984	298,375	30,954	10,358	11,718

n/a - data not available

Source: National Agricultural Corporation Statistics,
1985.

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MICRO

One thing is abundantly clear and leaves no room for doubt, and that is, that without immediate, far-sighted, objective, statesmanlike action, the Industry will collapse about everyone's ears and ruin, chaos and confusion will set in (Government letter to the St. Kitts Sugar Producers Association, July 5, 1971, also quoted in The White Paper 1976).

The Government recommended that the Association accept the proposal for the "New Company" to rehabilitate and manage the whole sugar industry. It was stressed that the State must become a partner in the new company, not by buying assets, "but in return for assuming a leading role in finding finance for the rehabilitation of the industry, as well as for the cultivation and reaping of the 1972 crop" (White Paper 1976). The Government called for immediate action. The Association did not object to the Government's proposals, but insisted that the feasibility study should be completed before any action was taken.

Peat, Marwick and Mitchell submitted an interim report in January of 1972 and a final report in February. They recommended an urgent restructuring of the industry and the formation of a central company which included the Government, in particular. The London Company refused to accept a minority position in a central company and restated its 1970 preference to sell its interests to the Government. By this time, the estate owners had come to oppose the formation of a central company as well, and they rejected the report.

Meanwhile, the estates which were operating at a loss, were being neglected. When the owners failed to finance the 1972 harvest, the Government passed the Rehabilitation Loan Act to raise loans of \$3.6 million from local banks to "rescue the

industry from its perilous state" (White Paper 1976). Later in the year, the Government established the Sugar Industry Rescue Operation (SIRO) to revitalize the industry in an agreement with the estate owners.

Under the SIRO contract, the estate owners agreed to Government participation in estate management for a period of three years, using estate equipment. The State assumed responsibility for the cultivation and harvesting of the 1973, 1974 and 1975 crops, and reimbursed the estate owners for their expenditure on the 1973 crop. The agreement also stipulated that both parties negotiate a long term solution to the sugar industry problem during the three-year period.

In the interim, the Government initiated negotiations with the estate owners for the purchase of their land. In January of 1973, the Association agreed to sell some of their estate lands to the government. In October, the Government made a formal offer which included the proposal to form a company which would operate all the estates with participation by the Government, the estate owners and "outside interests". The Association still opposed the idea of a joint or central company, and in November of 1974, after a long delay, they rejected the Government's offer. They also rejected a subsequent offer in December of that year (White Paper 1976). Their decision to renege on the agreement to sell, may have also been influenced by the fact that during 1974 world market prices for sugar sky-rocketed.

Failure to arrive at an agreement at the end of the SIRO contract, saw the Government passing the historic Sugar Estates

Land Acquisition Act 1975, which vested the plantation assets in the state. The Act, which was subsequently ruled unconstitutional, declared that the state was to "take over, by law, absolute ownership and control of all the really productive land ... for our mutual benefit and for the benefit of our posterity forever" (Labour Spokesman, February 1, 1975).

The National Agricultural Corporation (NACO) was established to manage the estates. Its duties were "to foster the development of the sugar industry, engage in the planting, cultivation and harvesting of sugar cane ... directly or indirectly assist in the development of any other agricultural industry, and encourage other industries on land which is deemed unsuitable for sugar cane" (The National Agricultural Corporation Act #27, 1975).

The Government later paid for estate buildings and equipment and Buckley's Estate. It was not until 1985, however, under the new PAM Government that the title to the lands was finally settled in court. The Government agreed to compensate the former owners for the lands.

In December 1976, the state assumed control of the entire industry when it acquired all the Factory Company assets of the St. Kitts (Basseterre) Sugar Factory Limited, for one million pounds sterling. These assets were vested in the St. Kitts Manufacturing Corporation (SSMC), which became responsible for the processing of the canes (White Paper 1976).

The nationalization of the Kittitian sugar industry was facilitated by inter-class as well as intra-class conflicts. The first was the traditional planter/working class conflict. The political power of the planter class had been gradually eroding

with the phasing out of crown colony rule. When the labour leaders finally assumed full control of the state in 1966/67, legislation was increasingly used to resolve union/management disputes, usually in favour of the Union.

During the late sixties and early seventies wage disputes delayed the start of the harvest season for up to two months each year. Increasing mechanization had reduced the number of workers required by the industry, but Kittitian workers had responded to persistent exploitation by emigrating or withholding their labour. A shortage of labour was therefore, one of the critical problems affecting the industry. Table 6:2 records the employment shortfall on the 39 estates during 1969. Given these circumstances, the strength of the Union was significantly increased during this era.

Table 6:2
Estate Employment Shortfall for 1969

Worker Category	Number Required	Number Employed
Planters	50	37
Hoeing Gang	146	98
Small Gang	443	400
Farmers	917	592
Day Workers	339	273
Trimmers	37	30
Total	1,932	1,430

Source: St. Kitts Sugar Association 1970; Bai 1972.

This led to more intense struggles between the workers and the estate and factory management. The Union demanded wage increases and better working conditions. It also protested increasing mechanization and importation of workers. Between 1966 and 1970, wage increases of 4%, 1%, 4%, 2% and 7% respectively, were negotiated. These gains were obtained as a result of State intervention after the union/management negotiations ended in deadlocks. Initially, these increases came out of the Price Stabilization Fund and after 1968, out of the Special Wages Increase Fund.

The year 1970, was a significant one for the sugar industry workers. A two-month deadlock delayed the start of the harvest season until March. The workers benefitted from a 7% increase in wages. The rates for cutting burnt cane (cane from which the leaves had been burnt) were also increased. Estate managers had insisted on lower rates for burnt cane for years, because it was easier to cut. The Union argued that cutting burnt cane was dirtier work and it sped up the productive process, because burnt canes had to be harvested within three days to prevent spoilage. Estates benefitted from burnt cane because labour time and therefore, overall wages were reduced and a larger crop was harvested. The Union was in a stronger bargaining position because the shortage of labour and declining production forced estate owners to give in. \$1.51 per ton was granted for burnt cane on estates where it was mechanically loaded, and \$1.20 per ton on estates where it was hand loaded. \$1.57 per ton was the rate for unburnt cane.

The sugar industry had been experiencing labour shortages in

the post-World War Two period as Kittitians emigrated in search of a better life, or withdrew their labour from the despised low-wage industry. Planters had been forced to import cane cutters from neighbouring islands on occasion. Consequently, the labour shortages also accounted for the incentive bonus schemes which were introduced in 1970. The first was aimed at increasing the productivity of the cane cutters. Those cutting 12 tons or more per week became eligible for the following bonuses:

Tons per week	Bonus
12 - 14	2%
14 - 16	4%
16 - 18	6%
18 - 20	10%
over 20	15%

(St. Kitts Sugar Association 1970). Only a few workers actually benefitted from this scheme, for the majority of workers were in the over-fifty age category, and not strong enough to cut the two or more tons per day which qualified them for a bonus.

Another incentive bonus scheme was aimed at increasing overall production. The annual bonus for all workers when production totalled 35,000 tons was fixed at 5%. A further 1.5% was to be awarded for each 2,000 tons over 35,000. This annual bonus had fluctuated wildly and had dropped to 2% by 1969.

Natural geography aided the workers in their resistance to further mechanization in the industry. Harvesting machines threatened more labour displacement. Nevertheless, the Government introduced four of these machines in 1970. They were found

unsuitable for harvesting on the Kittitian terrain and returned to the manufacturers. Massey Ferguson (Export) Ltd. was subsequently invited by the Government to study the possibility of mechanized cane harvesting on the island. The Massey Ferguson report concluded that only twenty per cent of the cane acreage was suitable for mechanical harvesting and recommended the introduction of the Massey Ferguson 201, and the Don Mizzi DM#740, a chopper type machine. These were introduced in 1971 in spite of worker opposition (Peat et al 1972).

The worker/planter class conflict was increased during this period by the more militant stance adopted by the young members of the Union. This not only created conflict between some of the older and younger Union members, but intensified the overall class conflict as well. Black Power, black awareness and the need for revolution were emphasized by the members of Young Labour. It was Young Labour who pressed for the Sugar Industry Act of 1969, which called for the nationalization of the sugar industry. At their annual convention in 1969, about 150 delegates from 15 different branches of Young Labour passed a resolution stating that "the Government shall acquire the Sugar Industry as a matter of urgency". Young Labour had backed up this resolution with a strong political education campaign to obtain support for the passage of the Bill (Labour Party Minutes, 1969; Bai 1972).

Young Labour also advocated specific measures to address the social evils in St. Kitts. They called for measures to extract heavier taxes from the rich, minimum wage legislation and guaranteed income legislation for the working class.

While all of Young Labour's demands were not met, the growing

militancy was influential. In 1969, another form of labour exploitation, the Factory Apprenticeship Programme came under attack. Under this scheme, the Factory took on thirty school leavers each year for training in its machine shops, in welding, electricity, carpentry and locomotive running. They were mainly sixteen-year olds and were apprenticed for a period of five years. The apprentices received little money, were not allowed to join the Union, but they were guaranteed jobs at the end of their training. In principle, they were supposed to attend classes in the morning and work in the factory in the afternoon. In reality, they were overworked and had little classroom instruction. In addition, in spite of a job guarantee, less than half of the apprentices were ever actually hired. For example, only twelve of the thirty who completed the apprenticeship programme in 1969 received jobs (Bai 1972).

In 1969, some apprentices defied Factory orders and joined the Union. They demanded changes in the system and were threatened with expulsion. This culminated in a Union-sanctioned three-week walkout by the apprentices. Under pressure, the Factory was forced to allow the unionization of all its workers and eliminate the exploitative elements of the apprenticeship system (Bai 1972:107).

The discriminatory hiring practices in the sugar industry also came under heavy attack during this period. The racial hierarchical structure was even more glaring during this era when the Black Power movement was at its strongest. The bulk of the workers in the industry were landless blacks. The resident owners,

their attorneys and managers were largely white - a close-knit group which excluded non-whites from their circles. The factory management and supervisory personnel were all white expatriates. At the time of nationalization, there were about thirty-three people on the monthly payroll in the general office at the Factory. Most of these were expatriate whites from Britain or New Zealand. The General Manager and the engineers were recruited in Britain on long-term contracts. The secretaries were recruited from among Kittitian whites. A few black workers held key positions in the crystallization section (See Appendix A). These, however, were not Kittitians, but Guyanese recruited for their skill in the area. Even so, they were supervised by white expatriates. The hierarchical racial structuring in the industry was strongly resented by Kittitian workers. They were categorized as unskilled or semi-skilled with hardly any opportunity for advancement (Peat et al 1972).

The privileges awarded white expatriate workers in the industry caused even more local resentment. Kittitian workers lived in dilapidated houses in the ghauts or on the roadside, while the expatriates occupied luxurious company houses, drove expensive cars and socialized in the all-white clubs or tennis courts. Discrimination and frustration drove many Kittitians away from their native land, but it also fuelled the class conflict and the call for nationalization of the industry.

The second conflict was that between British capitalists and their local counterparts. The local estate owners had long contended that the profits from sugar were unevenly distributed in favour of the British capitalists who controlled the industry. At

the time of nationalization the Factory Company was composed of the St. Kitts (Basseterre) and the St. Kitts (London) companies, as well as the Sugar Installations Limited. Sugar Installations, a subsidiary of the Basseterre Company, was created in 1959 during the industry expansion period to provide extra storage facilities at the Basseterre pier. About 25 per cent of the share capital of the St. Kitts (London) Company was owned by Henckell, Du Buisson and Company Limited and its directors. 16 per cent was owned by C.Czarnikow Limited, the parent company of Henckell, Du Buisson, while 59 per cent was owned by about 220 shareholders on the London Stock Exchange. The London Company, in turn, owned all the "A" preference shares and 50 per cent of the ordinary shares in the Basseterre Company. The remaining 50 per cent was controlled by St. Kitts shareholders, 80 per cent of whom were estate owners. The Sugar Installations was a wholly owned subsidiary of the Basseterre Company, which meant that its preference shares were also held by the London Company. Both the Basseterre Company and the Sugar Installations had in issue, 8 per cent cumulative preference shares with a nominal value of about 250,000 pounds (Peat et al 1972; White Paper 1976).

Under the Companies' financial arrangements the Preference shares were to be given first priority and repaid at par value plus a premium. "A" shares were fixed at 5 per cent dividends per annum and "B" deferred shares at 4 per cent. "A" shares received the remainder of the profits, after allocating 50 per cent of the net proceeds.

The London Company controlled the Basseterre and the Sugar

Installations Companies through its control of the preference shares in both companies. Henckell, Du Buisson in turn controlled the London Company and the entire Board of Directors. Henckell managed all three related companies and deducted 25,000 pounds per annum from the Basseterre Company for its management services. Factory improvements and increased production in the late 1950's had seen the London Company moving to obtain a greater monopoly of the preference shares. Between 1947 and 1963 the Factory increased its assets and stores by 1,663,964 pounds and 190,715 pounds respectively. All the capital requirements were derived from the profits made by the Basseterre Factory. The Factory was also the source of the entire income of the London Company (Sugar Commission Report 1967; Booker 1968; Peat et al 1972).

Table 6:3

Average Annual Income (After Tax) of the London
Company From the Basseterre Factory
(British currency)

Years	Interests	Preference Dividends	"A" Ordinary Preferred Share Dividends	Total
1949-59	3,600	—	41,700	45,300
1960-63	2,900	9,200	31,200	43,300
1964	—	12,300	26,000	38,300
1965	—	12,000	5,800	17,800

Sources: St. Kitts Sugar Commission Report, 1967, also cited in Bai 1972).

The London Company accumulated about 558,000 pounds in net profits (after tax), between 1947 and 1959, an average of about 46,400 pounds per annum. Between 1947 and 1965 the Company also retained an additional 395,000 pounds (out of a total income of 790,000 pounds) for reinvestment in the Factory Company (Sugar Commission Report 1967). This reinvestment, which included the acquisition of additional cumulative preference shares, served to further strengthen the London Company's control over the Basseterre company and guarantee their increased expropriation of surpluses.

By 1970, the London Company "A" shareholders were receiving about 40,000 pounds per annum in dividends and 18,000 pounds in redemptions. Their profits were automatically deducted as expenses before the divisible surplus which included payments to the estates, was calculated. In contrast, the aggregate annual profit for the estates which totalled about 208,333 pounds between 1951 and 1955, had dropped to about 5,208 pounds by 1965. One out of every four estates recorded outright losses during that year (1965). Thus, although overall profits for the industry increased under the CSA agreement, actual profits which remained in St. Kitts were declining.

The unequal distribution of profits and the declining returns for the estates in the 1960's aggravated the longstanding conflict between the Factory and the estates. Estate owners, demanding a more equitable distribution, turned in desperation to the labour controlled state for help in 1969. Their cause was aided by the fact that declining profits affected the workers' annual bonus which had dropped to about two per cent. A Review Committee for

the Cane Price Formula was established as a result. This Committee recommended that the estates should receive 61 per cent of the net proceeds. The London Company, however, continued to expropriate the majority of the surpluses through depreciation costs (Peat et al 1972).

It was this open rift between British and local capitalists that allowed the State to assume control of the industry, after the estate owners claimed that out-right losses prevented them from carrying on cultivation.

The local industry had been weakened by increased labour agitation for higher wages, labour shortages and expropriation of surpluses by the controlling capitalists in the centre. Production fell from an average of about 50,000 tons in the 1950's and 41,000 tons in the 1960's to about 27,000 tons in 1970 (Table 6:1). The State viewed this situation as "critical" and because it was felt that it was the state's "duty to ensure the continuation of an efficient and prosperous industry", it intervened to "save" the industry (White Paper 1976; NACO Statistics 1985).

Petras (1978) claimed that nationalization is but part of the state bourgeoisie's attempt to cash in on expansions in the capitalist market and consolidate its position in the process. State capitalist accumulation develops by playing off the working and capitalist classes against each other. While Petras' claim is not depicted as clearly in the Kittitian case, as it is in the Guyanese case, for example (Pierce 1984; Thomas 1984a), the Kittitian state bourgeoisie did play both sides in their

acquisition of the sugar industry.

The State intervened to resolve labour/management disputes, usually in favour of labour, but used funds which it (the State) allotted to the industry to increase wages. When it was convenient, the state moved against foreign capital to protect local interests, but did not antagonize either side. The state bourgeoisie had its roots in the working class, so its actions had to be interpreted as favouring the working class. Hence, the state nationalized the sugar industry in the name of the "people".

The Government's decisive takeover of the industry in 1975 was undoubtedly influenced by the price explosion for sugar in 1974. Declining production on St. Kitts meant that they were not able to capitalize on the price rise as much as countries like Guyana, where production had expanded. However, like other Caribbean Governments, St. Kitts withheld some of its sugar from the Commonwealth market for trade on the free market. In January of 1974, the free market price stood at 200 pounds per ton while the CSA price was a mere 61 pounds per ton. By February the CSA price had increased to 83 pounds per ton, but by August, worldwide production shortfalls saw the world market price jumping to 360 pounds per ton. By November it had soared to the unbelievable 650 pounds per ton. St. Kitts managed to sell some 2,800 tons to the United States and 3,050 tons to Venezuela at the free market price during that year (NACO Statistical Report 1985).

The Government used \$1.17 million of the 1974 windfall profits to boost flagging worker interest in the industry. A special bonus, "Goat Water", was introduced in 1975 and workers were granted a 25 per cent bonus during that year and another 25

per cent in 1976. After the price bonanza, this bonus dropped to 7 per cent in 1977 and worker bonuses reverted to the pre-NACO rate of 5 per cent in 1978 (Manifesto of the St. Kitts-Nevis Labour Party 1975; NACO Statistical Report 1985).

State ownership and management replaced the private and expatriate capitalist control of the industry. The industry saw improvements in the early stages after the takeover, mainly because of a brief price explosion on the international market, and tax exemptions. NACO divided the estates into three areas and four sections and replaced the white expatriates with local managers. The cultivated acreage and worker employment, which had declined significantly during the early seventies, increased (Tables 6:1 and 6:4). By 1979 field employment which had dropped to about 2,000 in 1972, had increased to nearly 5,400. By 1977 sugar production, which had fallen to an all-time post-depression low 23,828 tons from 8,600 acres in 1973, had risen to about 41,000 tons from 11,200 acres (Table 6:1). By this time world market prices had dropped to about 85 pounds per ton and the state owned industry was being plagued by rising production costs which even the free market price could not cover.

The industry's expenses and working capital requirements began to exceed its revenue. By 1982 NACO, which has been insolvent since 1980, had accumulated losses of about EC\$36.9 million. By 1984 liabilities exceeded assets by EC\$27 million - the bank overdraft alone amounting to over EC\$41.6 million (Tables 6:5, 6:6; Economic Report 1983, 1985).

Nationalization brought further changes in the nature of

class relationships on St. Kitts. It brought a definite end to the stranglehold by the old plantocracy and, from a nationalist point of view represented a real advance - the industry was now in the hands of the local state. The real benefits of nationalization, however, depend on the use to which the productive assets held by the state are put and the social and economic transformations which emerge after the fact.

Table 6:4
Employment in the Sugar Industry During Crop Time
1971-1984

Year	Field Employment (NACO)	Factory Employment (SSMC)	Industry Employment (Total)
1971	2,500	734	3,234
1972	2,074	651	2,725
1973	2,644	537	3,181
1974	2,366	526	2,892
1975	4,543	540	5,083
1976	4,542	563	5,105
1977	n/a	n/a	n/a
1978	4,425	645	5,070
1979	5,375	n/a	n/a
1980	3,557	701	4,258
1981	3,255	672	3,927
1982	2,806	580	3,386
1983	3,221	770	3,991
1984	3,221	770	3,991

Sources: Sugar Industry Production Statistics, NACO, SSMC.

Table 6:5
Sugar Industry Production Costs, 1975-83
 (EC\$ 000)

Year	Field Total	Industry Total	Cost of Prod./Ton as % of Revenue/Ton of Cane
1975	6,752	n/a	67.4
1976	11,728	n/a	97.4
1977	13,700	n/a	102.6
1978	16,191	33,569	155.9
1979	17,614	34,777	142.4
1980	20,140	38,120	139.0
1981	23,790	36,566	194.4
1982	26,100	41,965	153.1
1983	21,542	43,300	156.1

Sources: NACO Estimates; Economic Report 1985.

Table 6:6
Revenues and Costs of the Sugar Industry,
 1978-1982 US\$ (cents) per pound

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	Average 1978-82
Costs*	14.2	14.7	18.4	19.0	19.6	17.2
Revenues (aver.)	13.9	16.8	16.8	19.1	13.1	15.9
From sales						
to: UK	20.2	19.3	19.8	18.2	15.2	18.5
USA	10.3	10.6	20.0	29.2	13.1	16.6
Other+	9.1	9.1	9.2	10.5	12.4	10.1
Aver. Profit /(loss)	(0.3)	2.1	(1.6)	0.1	(6.5)	(1.3)
Free Market Price, Av.	7.8	9.7	28.7	17.0	8.6	14.4

* Excluding taxes. + Domestic and Caribbean Markets.

Source: Economic Report 1983, using NACO and SSMC data.

With nationalization, the Kittitian State assumed the traditional role of the planter class. While changes were made in the ownership and management of the industry, for the most part the roles and relationships have remained the same as under private ownership. The sharp distinction between those with authority and those without has been maintained. It is evident that nationalization, in spite of Government rhetoric, was not meant to allow workers to assume roles as owners of the industry. The Union still negotiates with NACO and SSMC managers as it did with estate and factory management. Workers in the industry are still paid some 30 per cent less than average, in spite of sizeable wage increases during the last decade. NACO managers, on the other hand, are paid less than SSMC managers, reflecting the old discrepancy between the returns to the British factory owners and the estate owners.

While there were no open conflicts between the Union and the State management under the Labour Party regime, the old tensions and deadlocks have resurfaced since 1980 when PAM assumed control of the state and the industry. Union/management disputes are still being resolved by the State to date. Now, however, they are being resolved in favour of the dominant interest - the State. Each year the PAM Government, which claims that the Union leaders are acting out their political roles as government opposition at the bargaining table, resolves the deadlocks by fixing the date for the start of the harvest without Union consent (Labour Spokesman January 30, 1985; Prime Minister's Radio Address, January, 1985; Interviews with Union and Government Officials, January 1985).

Union leaders claim that this practice is part of the strategy which the PAM Government has used to undermine the Union's influence and the Labour Party's position. The attempt to destroy the Union, the Union leaders claim, has seen the Government eliminating the Union's source of income by discontinuing the traditional practice of collection dues from the workers' wages. Workers find it harder to relinquish the already inadequate income, once they have it in their hands, Union officials claim. Union Secretary for nearly five decades, J.N. France, claims that these acts by the State "destroy the value of collective bargaining. The workers begin to feel that the Union cannot help them. It divides the workers" (France in 1985 Interview). NACO and Government officials respond by claiming that dues should not be automatically deducted from union members' wages, and the Union should find another way to collect dues from those who wish to pay them.

In 1982, PAM eliminated the "Goat Water" bonus. At the 1983 start-of-crop negotiations, the Union demanded its reinstatement, declaring, "No Goat Water, no crop." The Prime Minister in his annual start-of-the-crop address, claimed that the industry could not justify the payment of Goat Water. Admonishing the workers not to strike, he declared, "You are hungry; you need food; start the crop!" (Labour Spokesman, February 3, 1983). The Union went on strike, supported by about two-thirds of the workers. The Labour Spokesman claimed that NACO pressed women and school children to cut the canes, threatening them with eviction for their estate-owned homes (February 12, 1983). The Factory ran out

of cane, picketing workers were harrassed and one woman was allegedly beaten by the police.

Nationalization on St. Kitts, like many other Caribbean nations, has not moved beyond the act of state acquisition of property. No fundamental changes in the social relations have accompanied the process. Nationalization has merely converted a once foreign dominated industry into state property, a process typical of most developing countries in the Third World (Thomas 1984a). No radical land reform programmes have been initiated to date, although there has much talk about agricultural diversification and a few food crop experimental projects have been undertaken. There has not been much follow-up on these foreign-funded experiments, however. While non-sugar industries have been expanding rapidly, non-sugar agriculture has been moving at a much slower pace. In 1985 there were about 250 acres devoted to vegetable crop production. The bulk of this cultivation is on marginal or eroded lands which NACO has withdrawn from sugar production (Economic Report 1985; NACO Industry Report 1985).

The Labour Government had committed itself to continuing the production of sugar as the mainstay of the economy. The PAM Government, on the other hand, now maintains that sugar cannot sustain the country's economic development and is committed to a development strategy based on diversification into light industry and tourism. Sugar, however, still dominates the economy.

Nationalization has certainly not contributed to the workers' sense of the industry belonging to them. Worker despondency is prevalent. It is reflected in poor worker attendance which drops drastically after Easter each year (NACO Industry Report). This

accounts for an increasing number of "out of cane" work stoppages at the Factory. Few cane cutters work a whole season. In 1983, for example, out of 891 cane cutters who worked for 50 days or more, only 87 worked for more than 100 days and cut an average of three tons of cane per day (NACO, SSMC Industry Report 1984, 1985).

Disillusioned workers complain about the highly political nature of relations in the industry. They claim that neither the Government nor the Union are concerned about their (the workers') interests. In 1985, workers were particularly grieved about the lack of available work during the dull season, from July to December. NACO, under PAM, has adopted a two-day week during the off-season for all workers. In doing this, it has disregarded the 1977 incentive programme which was introduced under the Labour Government. Under this agreement, a 90 per cent attendance record guaranteed 4 days of work per week during the out-of-crop season; while a 75 and 50 per cent attendance guaranteed 3 and 2 days respectively. A less than 50 per cent attendance record meant that there was no guarantee for out-of-crop employment (NACO; Economic Report 1983). Workers now claim that there is no point in maintaining a consistent attendance record during crop time under these conditions.

Worker incentive is further damaged by the disparity between the early harvest wages and those for the remainder of the season. In 1984, male cane cutters averaged \$170 - \$180 per week, about \$28 - \$30 per day. Female cutters averaged about \$60 per week. By the end of the cutting season in June, the average had dropped

drastically to about \$14 - \$16 per day for male cutters and about \$10 per day for the women, for a two-day week. Female field workers averaged about \$10 per day, about two-thirds of their male counterparts' earnings. These women were forced to boost their income with additional group work on a 'job' or contract basis. This discriminatory wage for hard manual labour is partially responsible for the lower number of female workers in the industry. Women had withdrawn their labour from the estates at much higher rate than men immediately after emancipation. Today they are concentrated largely in the non-sugar manufacturing and service industries (NACO Statistical Report 1985; Economic Report 1985).

Young men enter the industry only when there are no alternative forms of employment and their attendance is very sporadic. The workforce in the sugar industry, it was pointed out in Chapter One, is largely composed of men in the 50 plus age bracket. These are the workers with the higher attendance records, although they do tend to assert their 'independence' by deciding not to work on a particular day. (NACO Statistical Records 1985, Economic Report 1983, 1985).

The enthusiasm which accompanied the State acquisition of the sugar industry, was not shared by the workers. It was confined largely to their leaders who were part of the state bourgeoisie. Lee Moore, President of the Union and ex-Chief Minister in the Labour Government, claimed in a 1985 interview that the Union leaders wanted the workers to believe that the industry was theirs (the workers') and urged them to abandon the traditional "we versus they" position. The message, he added, did not get

across. Moore maintained that the Labour Party's attempt to convince the workers was thwarted by the PAM opposition which was attracting various "malcontents". According to Moore, PAM destroyed worker confidence by emphasizing that "Your Union, your employers and your Government are now one. Your Union, which is your Government, is negotiating with your Government" (Moore in a January 1985 Interview).

Disillusioned workers, especially the younger ones, joined the cry for diversification into the light industry and tourism which PAM promoted. As North American consumerism increased, workers called for more jobs which were not in the despised low-wage sugar industry. PAM provided an alternative. It promised an economy similar to those of the other Caribbean nations to which Kittitian workers were drawn. It was on the basis of these promises that PAM's petty bourgeois leaders assumed control of the state in 1980, after the Labour Party was further weakened by the death of Robert Bradshaw, the man who had led the Union and dominated Kittitian politics for more than three decades.

It was the introduction of universal adult suffrage and the consequent change in the class composition of the electorate that brought an end to planter-class domination of political power. The rise of the Labour Party to assume control of the state represented the culmination of a long struggle and a major step in the decolonization process. These developments, along with intra-capitalist class conflict, in turn facilitated the nationalization of the sugar industry, but they did not lead to working class control of the state or the industry.

The Kittitian state's nationalization of the sugar industry was part of a wave of nationalization of key industries which swept through the Caribbean in the mid-1970's. In the Kittitian case, international capital was not alarmed - this industry was already being categorized as non-viable. The sugar capitalists could only foresee increasing labour conflicts and declining production on St. Kitts, and an ever-increasing glut on the world market. The British capitalists, who had already lost interest, received compensation for their investments, so they were not too perturbed. In addition, the whole structure of the sugar industry dictated that it would remain peripherally integrated into the international capitalist market. Marketing arrangements and industry requirements - machinery and machinery parts, fuel, herbicides, fertilizers and so on, were all imported from the capitalist centres.

The Kittitian state may have assumed control over the local sugar production, but it was in no position to control the marketing of this product. Sugar remains an export-oriented industry influenced by colonial ties. The historic servicing of the needs of mass markets in Europe (and now the United States) still persists. Preferential trade agreements are still necessary for the marketing of sugar and producers still hope for a "bonanza year" (Thomas 1984a).

St. Kitts and other members of the ACP states have to negotiate quotas and prices with the EEC (their largest market) on an annual basis. It is because of persistent and intensive lobbying that this protected market still exists for ACP sugar. The ACP producers are probably aware, however, that the protected

markets in the capitalist centres will soon disappear. This reality becomes more apparent with declining prices and quotas, larger gluts and the fact that the capitalist centres are self-sufficient in sugar. In fact, the EEC which was once the leading sugar importer, is now the leading producer and exporter (Thomas 1984a). The United States, on the other hand, has been reducing its quotas of foreign sugar imports throughout this decade.

The precarious nature of the sugar industry has been noted by Kittitian and other ACP producers. Costs of production exceed returns even on the protected markets. In 1986, prices were at their lowest in over fifty years. In October of that year, prices on the London market were being quoted at about US\$150 (EC\$405) per ton. By December, the prices for May 1987 were being quoted at US\$143 (EC\$386) per ton, about one-sixth of the cost of production in any Caribbean country (Caribbean Contact, February 1987).

The production of sugar in St. Kitts and the rest of the Caribbean may have aided the development of capitalism in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but as one commentator notes, it is now "wishful thinking and gross self-deception to expect any major profitability to ever return to sugar cane manufacturing as an export-oriented industry" (Gomes 1987). ACP producers realize this and anticipate the death of the industry unless other uses can be found for sugar cane.

Research on the industrial potential of the by-products of sugar cane was launched over a decade ago. Researchers have estimated that there are about 10,000 commercially viable

chemicals to be obtained from sugar cane. Thomas (1985) summarizes the state of research and development in sucrose technology. Sucrose, he claims, is now a chemical with a high commercial value, given its potential for use in the manufacture of a wide range of products including adhesives; acetone; acids, plastics, paints and pharmaceuticals (antibiotics in particular).

Kittitian or other ACP industries should not hope to benefit from this expansion in the potential for sugar cane, Thomas notes, because international capital is already in firm control of these developments. The work of the Sugar Research Foundation is financed by MNC's like Nippon, Ryoto-Mitsubishi and Tate and Lyle Limited. Tate and Lyle, one of the companies which dominated sugar production in the Caribbean until recently, is the organization, Thomas claims, which is "most consistently committed to a comprehensive programme of technical work in the area of sucrose chemicals during the last decade or so".

There is still some ambiguity surrounding the fate of the sugar industry on St. Kitts. There are policy statements which indicate that the Government is aiming at making it more efficient. Expatriate "technical experts" have advocated the rehabilitation of the industry to accomplish this. They advise more investment: replacing and upgrading old machinery, equipment and transportation material; more mechanization, especially in harvesting, to reduce labour problems; a reduction in "manpower" costs or restraint on the growth of wage expenditures; and improvements in management (Economic Report 1983; 1985). One ODA-funded study has recommended the merging of field and factory operations. World Bank officials see this as sound strategy

because centralized management would cut costs and allow the industry to operate on a "fully commercial basis" (Economic Report 1985:15).

The Government committed itself to an estimated EC\$137.2 million rehabilitation programme in the early 1980's. However, there is no clear indication of its present plans for the industry. There was an eight per cent increase in production in 1984, but the Government has now indicated that it is moving away from sugar production. This has been backed up by its aggressive attempts to develop tourism and light manufacturing industries.

What ~~is obvious~~, however, is the fact that as the Kittitian state embarks on its new development strategies, the legacy of the past, sugar, still dominates and surpluses from the new capitalist industries are not being appropriated by the workers. These surpluses, like those obtained from sugar production, continue the historic drain out of the economy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding chapters we traced the development of the sugar industry on St. Kitts. It was argued that this historic allocation of the island's resources and the social relations employed in the production of this commodity for export accounted for the integration of St. Kitts into the world capitalist system and its consequent underdevelopment.

After the elimination of its indigenous population, St. Kitts was transformed into an agricultural periphery - a sugar producing colonial outpost, integrated into and dependent on the emerging capitalist system in Europe. Ownership, demand, markets, and accumulation were all located in the centre. The preservation of the sugar industry, the corresponding worker exploitation and expropriation of the majority of the surpluses by British capitalists were maintained by various forms of worker subordination, state control and authoritarianism. While the Kittitian sugar industry became one of the most profitable in the Caribbean, Kittitian workers became some of the most impoverished.

The ensuing class conflicts eventually led to the control of the state by the local labour leaders and, finally, state control of the industry. Nationalization brought home the fact that the capitalist sugar industry could not provide development for the people. The answer to the question of whether a small country like St. Kitts can develop economically, if its resources are utilized for the production of a commodity like sugar for the world market, seems to be definitely in the negative. This

réalization is reflected in the state's recent adoption of the popular industrialization by invitation development strategy.

The reality is, however, as has been demonstrated in the experiences of numerous Caribbean nations, that dependent capitalist development is not capable of bringing about real development. St. Kitts' embarkation on this development strategy was initiated by the Labour Government under pressure. It has since become one of the main aims of the new petty-bourgeois controlled state. The various tax concessions and incentives outlined in Chapter One have been extended and re-extended to foreign capital.

Early infiltration by United States capital has been expanding. So far the emphasis has been on assembly-for-export light industries which exploit local labour, and unskilled female labour in particular. By 1980 there were some twenty-seven of these industries, employing an estimated 2,200 persons (Independence Magazine, September 1983). About 84 per cent of these workers were women. The industries are based on a high level of material imports. Little domestic value (about 15-20% of the export value) is added. Tourism, which is also growing, has a similarly high material import content (Booker Report 1984). The main attraction for these industries is the cheap, easily exploited labour and while the Kittitian Government may boast about its expanding industries, little benefit accrues to the workers. This is reflected in continuing outward migration and reliance on remittances and foreign aid.

On the other hand, foreign MNC's (predominantly from the

United States) with subsidiaries on St. Kitts have been declaring huge successes. In fact, Harowe Servo Controls Inc., a subsidiary of Bowmar Instrument Corporation of Newbury, California, which has been operating in St. Kitts since 1975, was billed as a "Caribbean Basin Success Story" by the United States Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration in 1983 (Caribbean Business September 1983; Business America August 1983). Harowe generated about US\$14 million in sales in 1982. The company's success was attributed in part to the successful operation of its subsidiary on St. Kitts. Harowe's directors admit that their assembly of parts overseas was an attempt to lower labour costs. The company first sub-contracted work in Singapore for two years before transferring to St. Kitts because of rising labour costs. The corporation was obviously satisfied with its cheap labour source on St. Kitts. In 1978, it bought out the business of the local sub-contractor through whom they had initially operated and began operating as a wholly-owned offshore subsidiary (Caribbean Business, September 1983).

Other industries like Transducer Systems Inc. (TSI) of Pennsylvania, the AIE Division of Vernatron, Analysis Programming Corporation, Best Form, a lingerie company and St. Kitts Apparel, an affiliate of Fashion Trading of New York were all claiming successes and planning expansion in 1983 (Caribbean Business, September 1983).

The promoter behind most of these industries has been Donald Marsden, an associate with Louis Berger International, one of the largest international consulting firms, which operates in about seventy developing nations. Marsden operated in St. Kitts under a

Joint agreement between his company, Berger International, and Coopers and Lybrand of Washington, one of the world's largest certified public accounting firms. Coopers and Lybrand had been granted a US\$5 million grant from the United States Agency for International Development to provide technical assistance to the member countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), which include Antigua/Barbuda, Dominica, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent, as well as Belize (Caribbean Business, September 1983).

Marsden, as advisor to the Kittitian Government, was commissioned to provide "technical expertise" and to assist the Government in attracting new investors from the United States and elsewhere. He heralded St. Kitts as "most attractive to potential investors considering investment in the Caribbean." Among the advantages, he cited "location, good communication and transportation with the outside world, a cooperative and pro-business government, a friendly people without militant labour attitudes and a dynamic private sector." In addition, he emphasized, "It is a small country and you can come in and easily manage the situation" (Marsden, quoted in Caribbean Business, September 1983).

In 1983, a World Bank Report also claimed that on St. Kitts:

the experience with export-oriented, mainly assembly-type industries has been on the whole satisfactory. The private sector, both local and foreign, has a favourable perception of the Government and this is expected to result in new industries locating in the country (Economic Memorandum 1983:ii-iii).

What becomes obvious from all this is that with its new form

of 'development', St. Kitts is becoming further entrenched in its role as a periphery in the capitalist system. The external requirements of American capital combined with the development needs of countries like St. Kitts have initiated a new process of peripheral capitalist domination. Consequently, St. Kitts is now trapped between two peripheral roles - the old agricultural role and the new industrial service role.

This dependent capitalist development is not for the benefit of the workers. Companies are allowed unlimited repatriation of profits. Real development depends on the appropriation of the surpluses by the people. Marsden's statements are indicative of the role that these new capitalists hope to play in St. Kitts. They expect to control the productive process. So far, the State has made this very easy. For example, while relatively few locals own land, by 1983, the State had initiated a process by which non-residents could buy and sell property slated for tourist development (in Frigate Bay) "without the usual government formalities and licensing" (Investing in St. Kitts and Nevis, 1983).

This incentive was part of the attempt to develop the tourist industry. Like many other Caribbean states, the Kittitian Government claims that the type of tourism that is encouraged on St. Kitts will not "adversely affect the social fabric of the country". Government rhetoric aside, "quality tourism", "quantity tourism" and assembly-type industries are all affecting the social and economic fabrics of St. Kitts and the Caribbean. It is evident in the "tourist-catering". It is evident in the general

increase in the cultural domination that accompanies economic and technological domination: in the consumer tastes and consumptive patterns channelled through various forms of mass media. The television which beams directly from the capitalist centres in local homes is the major instrument in the propagation of patterns and attitudes inimical to local development.

The ever-increasing demand for metropolitan consumer goods is reflected in the astronomically high level of imports. Imports into St. Kitts more than doubled between 1978 and 1981 and have been averaging nearly US\$50 million since 1980 (Economic Report 1983; 1985). In its 1985 Economic Report the World Bank urged a reduction in the growth of domestic consumption levels - levels which have been exceeding the GDP since 1981.

With declining domestic and national savings, the Government has had to rely on external financial sources to finance public expenditure, including attractions for foreign capital - a new international airport, a deep water port, factory shells and so on. Official grants and loans, mostly on concessional terms averaging a four per cent interest rate, increased from EC\$34.5 million in 1981 to EC\$56.3 million in 1983, a 63.2 per cent increase (Economic Report 1985).

The Kittitian state's dependent capitalist development strategy is not an attempt to reverse the historical relations of dependency and exploitation. There are no plans to bring about a social or economic transformation. On the contrary, the purpose is exploit labour in a manner similar to the way that it has been exploited in the historic production of sugar.

The Kittitian state equates development with a growth in the

GDP and the generation of foreign exchange. It is therefore, not concerned about the immediate and long term effects of dependent capitalism. If this was the case, it would take note of the lessons of four decades and the experiences of numerous Caribbean neighbours who have embarked on this development strategy, only to open up their people to new forms of exploitation.

The development route being taken by the Kittitian state is indicative of the need for development strategies based on particular historical materialist studies. As this study has argued, any successful strategy or policy for development must be constructed in the light of the legacy of historical developments. The basis for the Kittitian development policy is the ahistorical dependent capitalist development model which is based on modernization theory.

This model, it was pointed out in Chapter Two, sees development in terms of levels of capital intensity and output of manufacturing industry and ignores such fundamental phenomena as class, domination/subordination and colonialism/imperialism in general. The subservience of the local economy to foreign capital which this model promotes, only serves to increase dependency and underdevelopment. The "wooing and fawning" advocated by the model, alienates the control of the productive process without bringing about development. We have noted the effects which this strategy is already having on the Kittitian economy, even though its implementation is relatively new. Because of the ahistorical nature of the model, the advocates of dependent capitalist development fail to identify the similarities between the model's

promotion of labour exploitation by the new capitalists and the historic pattern developed under colonial sugar production.

An adequate framework for analysing underdevelopment must include the factors excluded by this model, but, as this study has demonstrated, it must also be able to address questions like race and the role of the state without dismissing them as epiphenomena.

The complexity of analysing changing relations of production in the context of international capitalist relations even in a small social formation like St. Kitts, is evident from this undertaking. The historical materialist analysis used in this study has served to identify the main forces behind the process of underdevelopment in this context. The specific patterns of social relations, political power and ideology were shaped by those relations which were centred around the production of sugar for export - a reality which included the domination of a large black labour force by a small white planter class who controlled the land and consequently, the means of production and expropriated the surpluses.

One of the additional benefits accruing from this analysis has been the means to give voice to the subordinate classes whose perspectives have been submerged in colonial historical records. While there is still much work to be done in this area, it is hoped that this study has been able to do a small part of this necessary work.

The theoretical and empirical fact which emerges from this analysis is that a redirection of surpluses is necessary to bring about real development on St. Kitts. The historical legacy of peripheral capitalist development has been the impoverishment of

the working people. Class relations determine the division of surpluses and consequently, class awareness is necessary for their redirection.

Nationalization was a radical move aimed at restructuring class control of the means of production. This move did not see the state socializing the means of production or embarking on a "non-capitalist" path towards this end. It did, however, transform the state bourgeoisie, which rose to power with the aid of the proletariat, into the dominant class. When the petite bourgeoisie assumed the role of the state bourgeoisie, new forms of dependency were emerging. These state capitalists who found themselves unable to develop the economy, consequently began surrendering more control to the new foreign capitalists.

In light of the failings of the new state bourgeois attempts at development, more thought must be given to that aspect of theory which emphasizes that state capitalism cannot spearhead the move for social and economic development because the structures of this institution were designed to maintain colonial dependency. On St. Kitts, the non-capitalist path theorists' vision of an alliance of the petite bourgeoisie with the proletariat and the national bourgeoisie to bring about socialist development is not realistic at this time. In fact, I would agree with those who argue that this type of development cannot emerge until the state bourgeoisie commits "class suicide", the power is transferred to the masses and they, the masses, are mobilized to exercise this power (Magdoff 1978). The working people of St. Kitts must be allowed to participate in the development process and that means

the restructuring of the productive process to meet their needs. A political party, state bourgeoisie or bureaucrats cannot act in their place.

I am aware that such rhetoric, when taken seriously, is considered "dangerous" in capitalist circles and such attempts are open to political and economic sabotage. The Caribbean Basin, once an agricultural outpost of European centres, is now the "well-guarded backyard" of the United States. This leading imperialist centre is noted for its intolerance of any divergence from the capitalist path. There are Caribbean peoples who realize, however, that until we can break the concerted fear of alienating the United States, until we can stop the drain of economic surpluses produced in the area and engage in serious radical planning (outside the boundaries of traditional imperial authority) to redistribute these surpluses (a by no means easy task), we are doomed to capitalist domination.

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APPENDIX A

The Sugar Cane Manufacturing Process (St. Kitts).

The sugar cane is harvested after twelve to eighteen months, depending on the cane variety and the level of rainfall on the estate. Controlled burning of the trash cover before reaping is a common practice. This facilitates both the manual and mechanized harvesting, and speeds up the production process in the factory although it usually reduces sucrose content.

The Basseterre Factory houses the mill and the sugar processing plant. Most of the machinery is electrically powered. Two steam turbines served by five bagasse and one oil fired burner provide the power. There is a high degree of automation in the mill and the plant. The Factory, which is usually in operation six days per week on three eight-hour shifts during the crop-time, is designed to operate at a maximum rate of 150 tons of cane per hour. It usually operates at a rate of 110 to 120 tons per hour, however. In recent years there has been an increasing number of "out-of-cane" hours. Cane is delivered to railway sidings by estate vehicles. The railway is used to transport the cane to the Factory, and the sugar to the storage facilities at the pier.

Sugar cane is composed of about 72 per cent water, 15 per cent fibre, 10 per cent sugar, 2.5 per cent non-sugar and 0.5 per cent dirt (Thomas 1985a). The manufacturing process includes milling, clarification, evaporation and crystallization.

Milling removes the fibre (bagasse). During this stage, the cane is slivered with rotating knives and crushed by heavy rollers

to remove the juice (water and sucrose).

Clarification removes the dirt. At this stage, lime is added to the juice to reduce acidity and the limed juice is then heated to 240 degrees fahrenheit. The juice is then transferred to the clarifier - a large tank with trays. The dirt sinks to the bottom of the trays. This mud is then washed and filtered to recover any remaining sucrose.

In the evaporator, most of the water is removed from the juice, leaving a syrup containing sucrose, the non-sugars and a little remaining water.

In the final stage, crystallization, the residual water and the non-sugars are removed from the syrup. Slow vacuum pan boiling at low temperatures allows the sucrose to crystallize without being destroyed. The crystals, which are now surrounded by molasses (mother liquor), grow larger as the crystallization progresses. This process may include up to three different boilings to retrieve the sucrose from the molasses. After this, the mixture of crystals and molasses (massecuite) is released into crystallizers (open containers) where it is cooled. After cooling, the molasses is removed from the sugar crystals through centrifuging - a process by which the molasses is forced through a fine screen while the massecuite is spun at a high speed.

Throughout the entire manufacturing process, process control is maintained by laboratory sample checks.

Sources: National Agricultural Corporation; St. Kitts Sugar Manufacturing Corporation; Thomas 1984a.

APPENDIX B

Archival and Historical Sources

Archival and historical works form the major source for this work. Of tremendous help to any study on slavery in the Leeward Islands is Dr. Elsa Goveia's classical work, Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the 18th Century. I have drawn extensively on her work for Chapter Three, for her data includes documents from the Public Records Office in London, a source which is out of the reach of students without the financial resources to travel to Britain. Dr. Goveia quotes extensively from Original Correspondence, Sessional Papers, Parliamentary Acts and Entry Books of Commissions and Instructions. Douglas Hall's work, Five of the Leewards 1834-1870, another valuable source for that period, also relies on first-hand examination of these records. Their data sources have been verified by many other scholars who have been able to check them.

Records of particular importance to St. Kitts include:

Original Correspondence - Secretary of State - C.O. 239/1-37

The Sessional Papers - Minutes of the St. Kitts Councils and Assemblies - C.O. 241/11; C.O. 241/12; C.O. 241/17; 241/18.

Original Correspondence - C.O. 152/66; 152/68; 69; 71; 72.

Acts of the St. Kitts Legislature - 240/4.

Colonial Records which were available for examination, included the handwritten copies of Council and Assembly Minutes which are available at the Government Archives in Basseterre. This archival source also includes Ordinary Records, Proceedings

of the King's Bench, Common Pleas and a Register of Slaves.

Old local newspapers are also housed at the Government Archives. Copies of the Union Messenger and the Labour Spokesman are also on file at the Masses House, the headquarters of the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union and the Labour Party. Workers League and Union Files are kept at the Masses House.

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