

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

WHITE LABOUR IN BLACK SLAVE PLANTATION SOCIETY AND ECONOMY:  
A CASE STUDY OF INDENTURED LABOUR IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
BARBADOS

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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## ABSTRACT

This study was prompted by the need to fill a gap within the labour historiography of the English speaking West Indies. From the 1950s, the number of works dealing with Black slavery and Asian indentured servitude have been rapidly increasing. In this upsurge of interest in West Indian history the study of white indentured servitude, the basis of the early plantation economy, remained largely unworked. This study attempts to evaluate the importance of white indentured labour to plantation development in Barbados, the most valuable colony within the English mercantile system of the seventeenth century. The use of indentured labour, which was recruited from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland for commodity production in the first half of the century, provided the basis for the gradual transition to Black slavery. This process is analysed to show the development of the ideologies of race and colour, and their application to the division of labour in the West Indies.

The transformation of the English institution of indentured servitude, with its pre-industrial, moral, paternalistic superstructure, into a market system of brutal servitude, is a central theme of the work. The contradictions of white labour in a Black slave economy and society, at the levels of ideology and entrepreneurial economic thinking, are analysed to show the failure of the white servants to entrench themselves in the West Indies, either as peasants or as a proletariat. Finally, the study explores the West Indian dimension of the European labourers' experience in the New World, where the majority found a life more oppressive and fruitless than that which they had left behind.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This thesis is dedicated to the struggles  
of the West Indian working classes.

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ABBREVIATIONSJournals

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| American Historical Review                            | A.H.R.         |
| Caribbean Studies                                     | C.S.           |
| Caribbean Quarterly                                   | C.Q.           |
| Economic History Review                               | Econ.Hist.Rev. |
| Hispanic American Historical Review                   | H.A.H.R.       |
| Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society | J.B.M.H.S.     |
| Journal of Economic History                           | J.E.H.         |
| Journal of Caribbean History                          | J.C.H.         |
| Past and Present                                      | P.P.           |
| William and Mary Quarterly                            | W.M.Q.         |

Others

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Public Records office                       | P.R.O.   |
| Colonial office (in P.R.O.)                 | C O.     |
| Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series   | C.S.P.C. |
| Calendar of State Papers, Venetian Series   | C.S.P.V. |
| Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series   | C.S.P.D. |
| Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series. | A.P.C.C. |
| British Library                             | B.L.     |
| Royal Commonwealth Society                  | R.C.S.   |
| Barbados Archives                           | Bar.Arc. |
| High Court Of Admiralty                     | H.C.A.   |
| Bridgetown Public Library (Barbados)        | B.P.L.   |
| Barbados Records in Archives (Barbados)     | RB.      |

As long ago as 1944, Eric Williams stated that '... white servitude is of cardinal importance for an understanding of the development of the New World ....'(1) No one, however, appears to have agreed, and the subject remained largely unworked by recent historians of early West Indian economy and society. The importance of this subject and the seriousness of its neglect becomes clear when it is realised that indentured servitude was the dominant method of labour organisation in the early English American colonies.

During the first half of the seventeenth century, when England was building her colonies in the West Indies, the European labour market was more important than the African market. Bruce, in his analysis of English colonisation in this period, noted that '... the servants are entitled to be studied first, not only because they exceeded the slaves in number...' (2) but also because the slaves '... played but a small part in the economic life of the community in comparison with the white servants.' (3) It was the profitable exploitation of indentured servant labour which made possible the smooth transition to 'sugar and slavery' during the Interregnum.

This thesis deals specifically with Barbados for two clear though not unrelated reasons. Firstly, Barbados has been used by historians as a kind of 'Weberian model' from which important generalisations can be made concerning plantation development in the West Indies. The important structural and ideological

---

1. Williams, E., Capitalism and Slavery (London, 1975), p.20.

2. Bruce, P.A., The Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century (New York, 1935), vol.1, p.572.

3. Ibid. p.573.

features which characterised the 'plantation mode of production' were first developed, matured and concretised in Barbados. Like industrialising England, Barbados was a society and economy of 'firsts'. Large scale slavery and servitude and the rise of a powerful planter class all occurred first in Barbados. Secondly, Barbados became the metropole of the English West Indian colonies, and operated<sup>ed</sup> within the mercantile system as a centre of trade, finance, government and political expansionism.

During the seventeenth century, Englishmen, Irishmen, Welshmen, and Scots poured into Barbados with hopes of raising a quick fortune. The normal method of recruiting this labour was by indenture. Potential servants would sign a contract to serve between five and ten years, according to the 'customs of the island', (1) after which they were granted either £10 or its commodity equivalent, and in exceptional cases a small strip of land. The system was useful to those who wanted to emigrate to the colony and did not possess the capital to finance the voyage. (2) It was also useful to those with small sums of capital who preferred to use their funds after a period of adjustment to the colony. The servant contracted to work, while the master contracted to feed, clothe and house the servant according to standards defined by local customs. Large numbers of servants were also sent to Barbados by successive English Governments; some of these were political prisoners, convicts, rogues, vagrants and religious non-conformists. They were generally placed under ten year indentures on arrival in the colony.

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1. Harlow, V.T., A History of Barbados, 1625-85 (N.Y., 1969), p.293.

2. See Appendix 2 for a specimen of Barbadian indenture contracts.



Striking similarities developed between servitude and slavery on the plantations. Indentured servants were bought and sold as property on the open market, taxed as capital, alienated in wills and deeds of sale, used as security in mortgage agreements and accepted as financial instruments on the money market. The Servant trade and the Slave trade were also closely linked, especially in the shipping and marketing of the cargoes. These similarities shocked Parliamentarians. When two Barbadian servants petitioned the House of Commons in 1659 concerning their 'enslavement' in the sugar estates(1), they wanted to know '... by what authority so great a breach is made upon the free people of England....' (2) During the debate one Parliamentarian commented that if the cruel system of servitude in Barbados was not terminated, the lives of white men '... will be as cheap as those of negroes'.(3) Throughout the seventeenth century, planters, servants, and observers compared servitude and slavery and reported on the common experiences of servants and slaves. 'White slavery' was the term commonly used to describe servitude during the rise of the sugar industry in the mid century.(4)(5)

Early colonial servitude was studied largely by late Victorian scholars. Between 1685 and the 1920s, a proliferation of works dealt with the institutional structure of servitude and the general experience of servants in Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, New England and Pennsylvania. This historiographical trend was primarily a mainland one; the West Indies

- 
1. Burton, T., Parliamentary Diary, 1656-59 (London, 1828), vol. 4. p. 257.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid., p. 268.
  4. Observations on the Island of Barbados, 1667, C O.1/21, no. 170.
  5. see appendix 7.

were not studied during this upsurge of interest in colonial servitude. The central problem which emerged from these very detailed works lay in the conception of servitude as a mere transplantation of traditional English labour systems and ideologies into the colonies. The refusal to conceptualise servitude as indigenous to the plantation economy meant that these studies concentrated on interesting, but quite minor differences in the systems of servitude between the various colonies.

In 1926, Harlow published a history of Barbados which dealt briefly with indentured servitude. He was interested primarily in the 'treatment' of servants on the plantations and offered no structural analysis of the system. He concluded, however, that the subject should be further investigated if only because '... the conditions under which white labour were procured and utilised in Barbados were persistently severe, occasionally dishonourable, and generally a disgrace to the English name.' (1)

In 1947, Smith produced the first comprehensive study of servitude in the English American colonies. (2) This work was conditioned by a limited conception of America as a place where the 'social scum' and other misfits of English society were dumped; servitude being used as the traditional method of forcing individuals to work who otherwise would have existed in a debauched and unproductive condition. Smith's analysis of the legal structure of the various colonies was excellent, but he

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1. Harlow, V.T., A History of Barbados, p.307.

2. Smith, A.E., Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607-1776 (Chapel Hill, 1947).



failed to realise that no mere study of the laws, no matter how perceptive, could give a proper interpretation of servitude. Recent works on Black slavery have demonstrated this point quite clearly.

Surprisingly, historians over the last two decades have continued mostly to ignore the problem of indentured servitude and its role in early West Indian development. Dunn, in his remarkably well researched study of the rise of the seventeenth century planter class, paid little attention to the subject. (1) Recently, however, Galenson has published work on the servant trade to America as part of the debate on the social origins of the early colonists. (2) His quantitative method has produced results which have revised many of the views developed by Smith during the 1940s concerning servitude and servants.

In contrast to the above authors, the writing of this thesis has been influenced by certain polemics on economic development and social change, especially that between Dobb and Sweezy (which stressed the need to specify the central elements of

- 
1. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713 (N.Y., 1972).
  2. Galenson, D.W., 'Middling People or Common Sort? The Social Origins of Some Early Americans Re-Examined' W.M.Q., vol.36, (July, 1978), pp. 499-541.
    - 'The Social Origins of Some Early Americans' W.M.Q., vol.36, no.2 (1979), pp.264-87.
    - 'The Indenture System and the Colonial Labor Market; An Economic History of White Servitude in British America'. (Harvard Ph.D., 1979).

feudalism and capitalism and the nature of the transformation from one to another) (1) ; and more specifically by the more recent debate between Frank (2) and Laclau ,(3) which brought the Dobb-Sweezy polemic into the plantation economies of the New World. These debates are important in the conceptualisation of indentured servitude as either a transplanted labour institution of pre-industrial England, or an indigenous colonial institution designed to facilitate capitalist production. It follows from the views of Genovese, who argues that the Barbadian planters were modern capitalists, (4) that indentured servitude was essentially a system brought into being to advance capitalist accumulation in the West Indies. The working experiences of the servants and the legal systems designed to keep them in subjection will be analysed within this context. If Barbadian servitude was more brutal than elsewhere in the English Empire, it was because the opportunities for capital accumulation in Barbados were unparalleled in the seventeenth century. (5). Over the last three

- 
1. Hilton, R., The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism (N.Y., 1963).
  2. Frank, A.G., Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America (N.Y., 1969).
  3. Laclau, E., 'Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America', New Left Review, no.67 (May-June, 1971).
  4. Genovese, E., The World the Slaveholders Made (N.Y., 1971) p.28.
  5. Beckles, H.Mc.D., 'Land Distribution and Class Formation in Barbados, 1630-1700: The Rise of a Wage Proletariat' J.B.M.H.S., vol.36, no.2 (Feb., 1980), pp.136-44

decades historians have written about 'sugar and slavery' in the West Indies; this thesis deals with another relationship which should be, for historical chronology, a point of departure - 'sugar and servitude'.



SECTION ONE.                    SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS TO 1660.

Part A            Land Distribution and the Formation of a Capitalist  
Planter Class.

The dominant characteristics of English colonisation in the New World during the seventeenth century were fundamentally different from those of the Spanish and Portuguese, who had arrived there over a century earlier. The English were set apart by the socio-economic rigour of a new commercial capitalism, which linked the colonies to the English economy by a complicated system of merchant financing. (1) Their primary objectives were rapid capital accumulation and the international creation of 'power spheres' to be manipulated by mercantile interests. (2)

This was in startling contrast to the Englishmen who had arrived in the Caribbean during the Elizabethan era; men of aristocratic breeding, professional soldiers, navigators with scientific interests, romantics and privateers, who were interested mainly in raiding Spanish colonial wealth. Given the opportunity, they would have followed their Spanish enemies and mentors into the medieval grandeur of subjecting the aboriginal population, establishing themselves as lords, and living on expropriated tributes as the Conquistadors did; preferring the adventure of gold and silver hunting to producing various agricultural staples for trade on the European market. In this way they would have transferred their fast decaying feudal institutions to the New World, in the hope that a new environment would allow them to continue for ever.

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1. Frank, A.G., Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment (Lon., 1978), pp. 13-14.
  2. Hobsbawn, E., 'The General Crisis of the European Economy in the Seventeenth Century', P.P. Nos. 5-8 (1954-5), pp. 33-5.

The seventeenth century brought new types of adventurers to the West Indies, the merchant-financiers and the capitalist planters, who were interested in commodity production and international marketing. The English settlements were determined by the international political forces of the time. No European nation in the first quarter of the century was able to oppose, in a meaningful way, Spanish hegemony in and the region. Spain was in control of the larger/more desirable islands of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica and Hispaniola which formed the Greater Antilles of the Northern Caribbean; the English were, therefore, forced to settle the Lesser Antilles which had been ignored by the Spanish(1). St. Christopher was settled in 1624, Barbados in 1627, Nevis in 1628 and Montserrat and Antigua in 1632.(2) These little islands in the Eastern Caribbean were to become the backbone of the English Seaborne Empire, and the prime locus of capital accumulation in the New World during the seventeenth century. (3)

The English colonists desired to make quick fortunes and return to England within the shortest possible time. By now, interest in gold hunting and the myth of Raleigh's El Dorado had subsided, and it was clear to the English that any successful colony in the region would have to be based upon agricultural production. The Barbadians, free from the effects of Anglo-French rivalry which crippled the other islands, were the first to get down to the task of raising commodities with an explosive dynamism which typified their development over the century. The joint-stock company or merchant syndicate, the early

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1. Parry, J.H., 'The English in the New World', in Andrews, K., et al., eds., The Westward Enterprise; English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic and America, 1480-1650 (Liverpool, 1978), p.2.
  2. Ibid.
  3. See appendix 34.

Tl. - The Physical Size of the Seventeenth Century Caribbean Colonies.  
 ( in sq. miles )

| <u>Greater Antilles</u> |             | <u>Lesser Antilles</u> |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
| <u>Island</u>           | <u>Size</u> | <u>Island</u>          | <u>Size</u> |
| Cuba                    | 44,164      | Guadeloupe             | 583         |
| Hispaniola              | 29,530      | Martinique             | 425         |
| Jamaica                 | 4,411       | Barbados               | 166         |
| Puerto Rico             | 3,435       | Antigua                | 108         |
|                         |             | St. Christopher        | 68          |
|                         |             | Nevis                  | 50          |
|                         |             | Montserrat             | 32          |

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expression of capitalist organisation and business ethics, was the colonising agent of these islands. Following the tradition of the Virginia Company, Sir Ralph Merrifield, a prominent London merchant, organised the joint stock company which settled St. Christopher in 1624. The Company brought to the island private enterprise and a large number of indentured servants for the production of tobacco. This tradition established the pattern of Barbadian socio-economic development over the following two decades, within which time, at least 30,000 people from Britain poured into these English islands.(1)

The colonising expedition to Barbados, which landed about 17 February 1627, was organised by Sir William Courteen, a London merchant with Dutch connections and a long established involvement in the East India trade.(2) It was the result of a business proposition which Capt. John Powell, mariner to the Courteen family, had placed convincingly before the Knight. Powell had visited the island in 1624 and considered it ideal for an English colony; not only did it possess a rich and abundant arable soil, but its location to the east of the other islands made it difficult to approach from the Spanish mainland settlements.

Courteen, after obtaining a patent from the Monarch, equipped four ships under Powell's management, and by July 1628 the Courteen Syndicate had made a solid investment of £10,000 in Barbados to prepare it for commodity production.(3) The Syndicate had hopes,

1. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.16.

2. The exact date of settlement is still in dispute.  
See - Harlow, V.T., A History of Barbados, p.46.  
For original references - Egerton Mss. 2395, f.602 B.L.  
Sloane Mss. 2441, f.6. B.L.

3. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.49.

not only of recovering this cost, but also of making a substantial profit in the following three years. It was private enterprise based upon merchant capital from the beginning. The problem of developing a system of land tenure and distribution to facilitate these objectives was, therefore, of critical importance to Courteen, and the experiences of the Virginia Company greatly influenced his policies. During the final six years of the Virginia Company's existence (1618-24), a significant level of profits was accrued by the reorganisation of the colony's system of land tenure. Company land was issued to the tenants who were transported from Europe at the Company's expense. They were to supply their own labour and share their profits with the Company. (1) Despite killing off over 3,000 indentured servants, this policy brought a moderate level of economic success to the Virginian economy. (2)

Courteen's land tenure system was similar to that of the Virginia Company, though with important differences. As leader of the Syndicate and proprietor of the colony, he provided all equipment to the colonists who supplied their own labour. The colonists did not own the land; they worked for the Syndicate and handed over all crops to its agent. In return, they were paid a wage out of which they maintained themselves and their indentured servants. (3) The colonists were displeased with the system. The land was distributed by the Syndicate's representative

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1. Morgan, E., 'The First American Boom, Virginia 1618-30',  
W.M.Q., vol. 28 (April, 1971), p. 169.

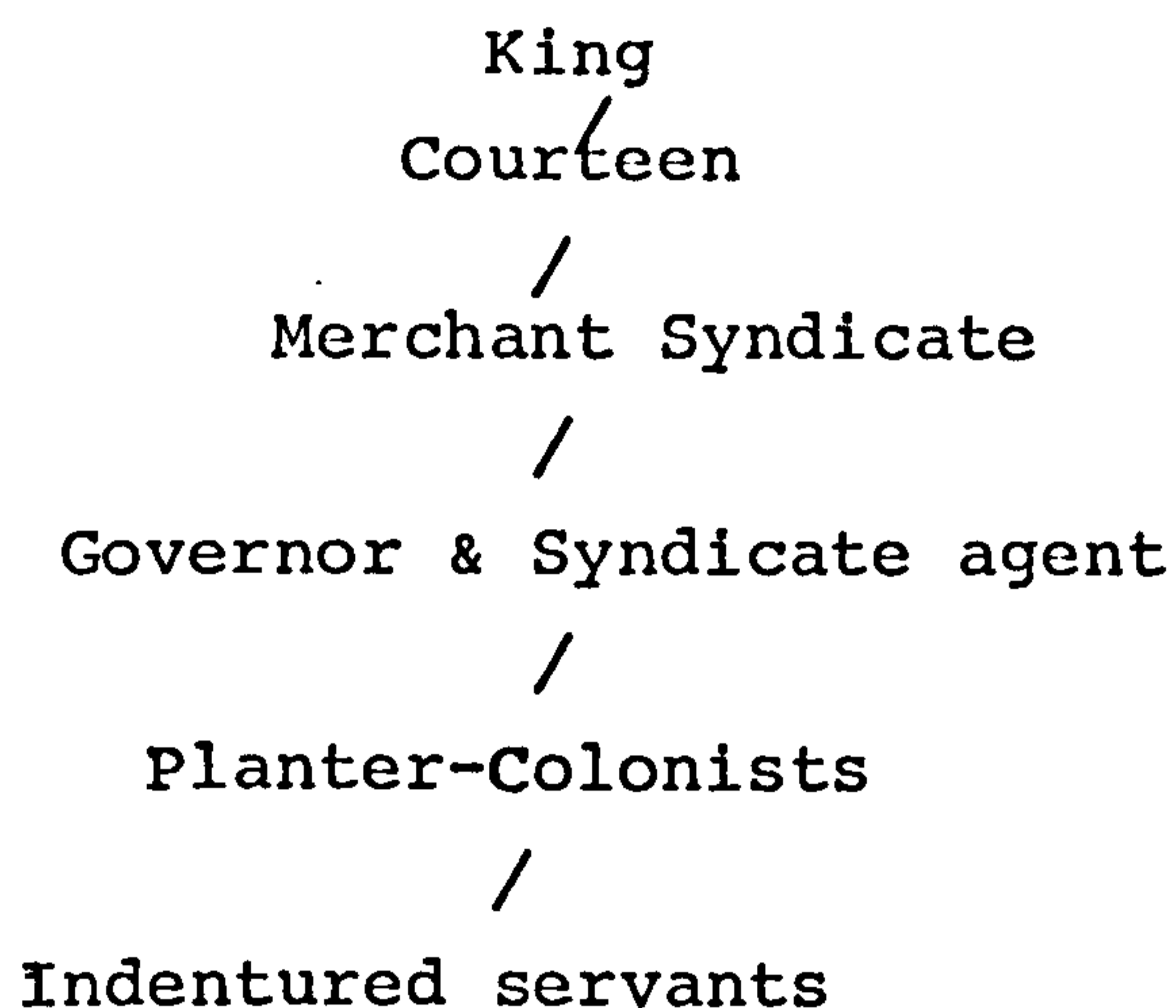
2. Ibid., p. 170.

3. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p. 50.



and agent, William Dean, according to the needs of the colonists ; the wage was fixed at £100 per annum.(1) By 1628, the social hierarchy established as a result of this policy of settlement was as follows:

Fig.1- Social hierarchy of Barbados, 1627-28 (2)



It was Company enterprise, but it lacked the essential institutional and social qualities for the rapid development of a 'capitalist mode of production'. Private ownership of land was suppressed and the planters were kept as paid workers rather than as a class of pioneer capitalists. They felt exploited by the remote Syndicate's rule and the tyranny of its agents. The contradictions inherent in this system were serious obstacles both to the development of a planter capitalist class and the colony.

The fatal experiences of the Virginia Company were about to be repeated, as political factions developed opposed to each other and all opposed to the Syndicate. It was exclusive government by a merchant company, described by Adam Smith as the worst of all Government for any country. The planters were very reluctant to import into the colony large numbers of indentured servants.

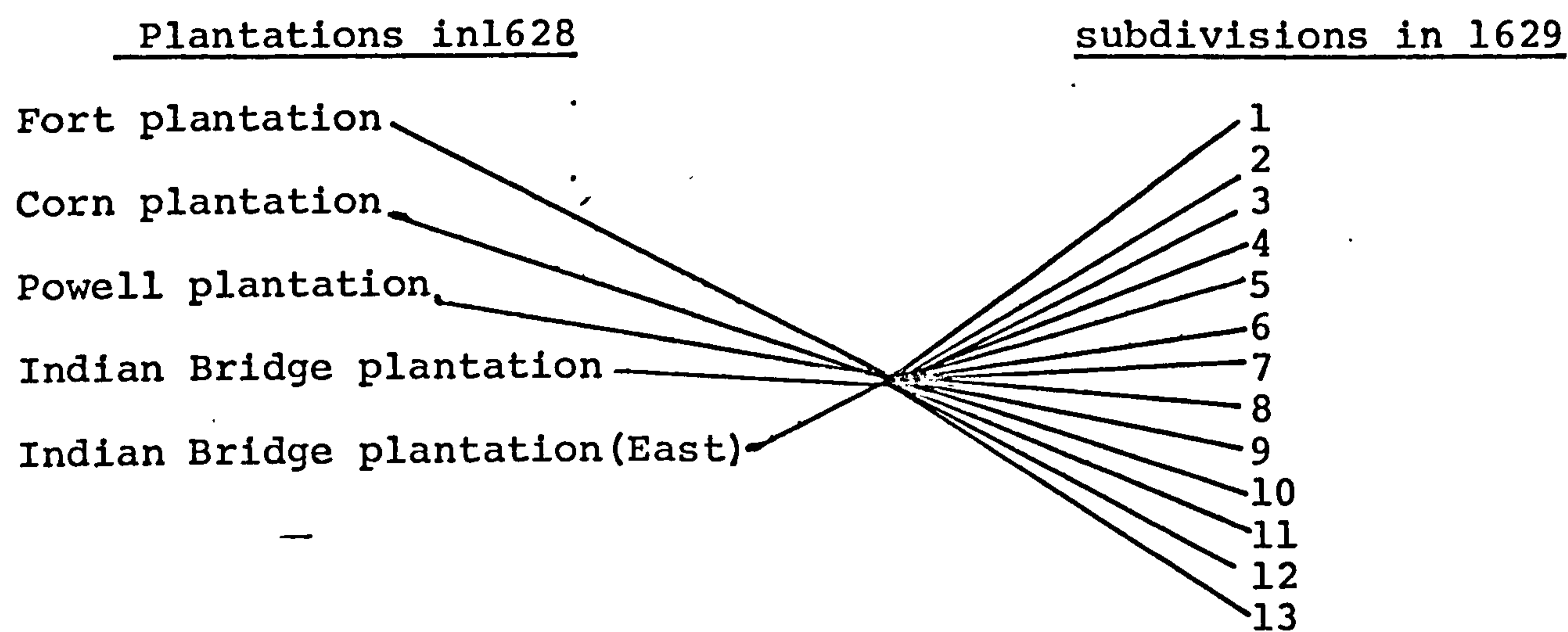
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1. Forbes, A.B., et al., eds., Winthrop Papers, 1498-1649 (Boston, 1929) vol.1, pp.356-62, vol.2, pp.66-9.

2. There were a few Indians brought from Guiana to assist the colonists in the cultivation of tropical foodstuffs. They were initially received as free persons and, therefore, their social status was above that of the servants.

As a result, the labour base of the colony remained undeveloped and the level of capital formation low. By 1628, the total population of the colony amounted to only 1,850 (60% of this total were indentured servants). Only five plantations were cleared and in production; later, in 1629, they were expanded and subdivided into thirteen units. This was a slow process, and the formation of a planter class remained significantly stunted. (1)

Fig.2-Plantation Development in Barbados, 1628-9 (2)



It was at this stage, in 1629, that a political revolution took place which had significant consequences for the future of the colony. Sir James Hay, the first Earl of Carlisle, challenged Courteen for official control of the colony. Both men had acquired royal patents and had dispatched their representatives to the colony. By 1629, the Earl of Carlisle had taken effective control of the

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1. Egerton Mss., 2395, ff. 602-3. Also, Davis, N.D., The Cavaliers and Roundheads of Barbados, 1650-52 (Georgetown, 1887), p. 38.

2. Sloane Mss., 2441, ff. 6-8.



colony and was recognised as Lord Proprietor of the English Caribbean. (1) Carlisle was faced with the task of dealing with the widespread discontent of the colonists over the Courteen land policy. They wanted private ownership of land guaranteed by law, and a political structure which would give them some control over their economic activity. The system of land distribution and tenure was, therefore, of central importance. Carlisle was sensitive to these demands, and like Proprietary rulers in general, he was aware that the amount of revenue obtainable depended on the economic success of the colonists. He immediately instructed his Governor to nullify Courteen's system and <sup>to</sup> sell the land in large units to the colonists in return for a quit rent of forty pounds of tobacco annually. (2) Furthermore, each colonist was left to provide his own capital and labour and <sup>to</sup> pursue his own management policy.

Carlisle's system of land tenure immediately reduced the possibility of men without substantial sums of capital becoming landholders. At this stage, the embryonic planter class was composed of men who already had capital or access to credit facilities. This system of land tenure also provided that each planter, in addition to his allotted acreage, was to be given an extra ten acres for every indentured servant he employed. (3) This was to encourage the colonists to import as many servants as possible in order to expand the labour base of the colony, and to create an active market in servant labour. (4) Plantations were kept large for economies of

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1. Harlow, V.T., A History of Barbados, p.6.
  2. Edwards, B., The History, Civil and Commercial of the Br. Colonies in the West Indies (Lon., 1794), Vol.1. p.336.
  3. Anon., Some Memoirs of the First Settlement of the Island of Barbados... (Barbados, 1741), p.18.
  4. Littleton, E., Groans of the Plantations (Lon., 1689), p.14.

scale and not fragmented into a proliferation of subsistence units as in Virginia, where it was accounted the most important reason for economic stagnation. Thus, from the beginning of Carlisle's rule, the conditions were set for the development of a planter class and a large labour base composed of indentured servants.

The first issue of land grants under Carlisle's regime was the allocation of 10,000 acres (one tenth of the island) in the St. George valley to a London Merchant House in return for financial services rendered in the establishment/colony. (1) These merchants were

T.2 Members of the London Merchant House who owned 10,000 acres (2)

Marmaduke Rawdon

Edward Forster

William Perkins

Robert Wheatley

Alexander Bannister

John Farrington

Henry Wheatley

John Charles

Robert Swinnerton

naturally committed to the development of large estates and the integration of the colony into the Atlantic economy. They wanted to break into the potentially lucrative West India trade at an early stage, and saw Barbados as the prime place to consolidate a base. Led by Rawdon, they obtained the services of John Swan, a surveyor, and George Bulkley, a plantation operator, to organise their land into large tenanted estates. (3) Richard Ligon's map of the late 1640s shows that these plantations were of 200 acres or more. (4)

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1. Add.Mss., 33845, f.7.

2. Schomburgh, R.H., The History of Barbados, comprising a geographical and statistical description... (Lon., 1848), p.262.

3. Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America (Lon., 1708), vol.2, p.1.

4. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados ... (Lon., 1657). Includes a map of the island showing the settlement pattern of the 1640s.



Carlisle's early economic vision of the colony as a stronghold of mercantile capitalism in the New World was carefully, and at times brutally, implemented by his Governors who, during the 1630s, allocated land only to men with capital. The success of this policy can be seen from an analysis of the land grants between 1629 and 1638. These data

T.3-Land Grants in Barbados 1628-38 for 10 acres and over.(1)

| <u>Year</u>                  | <u>Acres Granted</u> | <u>No.of Grants</u> | <u>Ave. size</u> |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1628                         | 6,400                | 64                  | 100.00           |
| 1629                         | 15,872               | 140                 | 113.37           |
| 1630                         | 14,235               | (50)*               | 284.70           |
| 1631                         | 2,749                | 31                  | 88.67            |
| 1632                         | 4,138                | 63                  | 65.68            |
| 1633                         | 905                  | 20                  | 45.25            |
| 1634                         | 3,511                | 64                  | 54.85            |
| 1635                         | 9,055                | 106                 | 85.42            |
| 1636                         | 9,810                | 98                  | 100.10           |
| 1637                         | 7,604                | 139                 | 54.70            |
| 1638                         | 50                   | 1                   | 50.00            |
| <u>Totals</u>                | 74,329               | 776                 | 95.78            |
| Plus the merchant allocation | 10,000               |                     |                  |
|                              | <u>84,329</u>        |                     |                  |
| Total acreage of the island  | 106,000              |                     |                  |
| Balance in 1638              | 21,671               |                     |                  |
| 20% of island.               |                      |                     |                  |

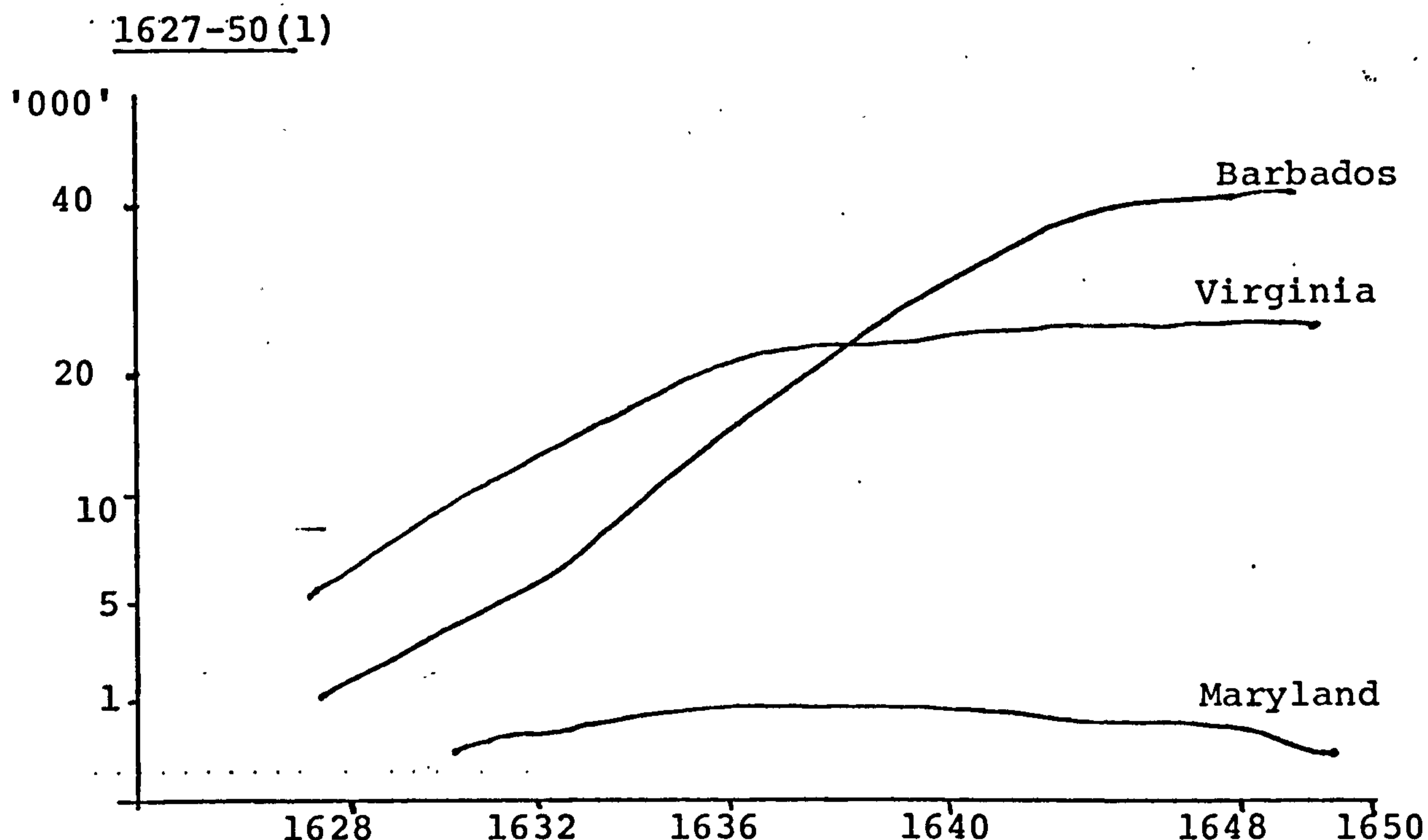
suggest that a small number of men had engrossed 80% of the land and were in a position to consolidate political power in the colony. An estimate of 1667 confirms that land was unevenly distributed and largely owned by a small elite. This calculation gives the number of landholders for the mid 1640s as only 8,300 out of a population of over 30,000.(2)

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1. Anon., Memoirs of the first settlement, p.1-25 .\*In Lucas Mss. vol.29 this total is given as 45 acres. (Deeds of Barbados and Misc., ff. 1-11. Bridgetown Public Library, Barbados)
  2. Some observations on Barbados, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.528.



The population data show that the planter elite commanded large gangs of indentured servants who constituted the majority of the inhabitants; out of a white population of 30,000 in 1645, at least 21,000 were servants. The rapid rise of the Barbadian population relative to Maryland and Virginia can be shown as follows:

Fig.3- White Population Growth of Barbados, Maryland and Virginia



1. Barbados data: Egerton Mss.2395, f.602

Capt. Warner to Sec. Windebanke, 10 Sept. 1636,  
C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p.240.

Harlow, V.T., A History of Barbados, p.338.

Observations on Barbados, 1677, C.S.P.C.,  
 1661-68, p.529.

Virginia/Maryland: Menard, R., 'Immigrants and their Increase: The Process of Population Growth in Early Colonial Maryland', in Land, A.C., et.al., eds., Law, Society and Politics in Early Maryland (Baltimore, 1977), p.89.

The deeds of the island show that the majority of land transactions were for units of over eighty acres, (1) and that the buyers were men of 'recognised' families with capital, seeking social mobility through the acquisition of land. They formed the backbone of the growing planter class which was monopolising resources. This was in stark contrast to their cousins in Virginia, where a more horizontal social hierarchy developed out of the situation of 'open resources'.

In this early stage of Barbadian development, men who were to become sugar magnates in the 1650s, such as Drax, Fortescue, Pearce, Perkins, Read, Hilliard, Hethersall, Fletcher, Yeamans and Applewhite, were engrossing and consolidating large estates. The large size of these transactions of consolidation can be tabulated from the deeds as follows:

T4. - Plantation Sales in Barbados of 100 Acres or more,  
(1630-1644). (2)

| <u>Year</u>   | <u>No. of Sales</u> | <u>Total Acres</u> | <u>Average Acres per Sale</u> |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1630-32       | 2                   | 300                | 150.00                        |
| 1633-35       | 2                   | 420                | 210.00                        |
| 1636-38       | 6                   | 1,600              | 266.60                        |
| 1639-41       | 24                  | 5,536              | 230.60                        |
| 1642-44       | 16                  | 3,942              | 246.30                        |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>50</b>           | <b>11,798</b>      | <b>235.96</b>                 |

These sales were not spread evenly over the island. The parishes of St. Lucy, St. Joseph, and St. Thomas were under-represented because of topographical and geological obstacles to arable farming in these regions. There were two sales of estates of 1,000 acres; the first

1. Innis, F.C., 'The Pre-Sugar Era of European Settlement in Barbados', J.C.H., Vol.1 (1970), p.10.
2. Inventories and Deeds of Barbados, 1630-50, RB.3/1, Bar.Arc.

was purchased in 1640 by Capt. Futter in the St. James parish, and the second in 1641 by Thomas Hethersall, in the parish of St. John. (1)

At this early stage, there existed<sup>a</sup> a top echelon of about two dozen men who dominated the Colony's political and military structure. They used their education, wealth, political and legal skills to discriminate against the larger section of the white community with great success.

T.5-Offices Held by Large Planters in 1639. (2)

| <u>Owners of 500 plus acres 1630s</u> | <u>Acres</u> | <u>1639 Administration</u>           |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| Capt. Henry Hawley                    | 4,500        | Governor                             |
| Richard Leonard                       | 1,000        |                                      |
| Capt. Thomas Hethersall               | 1,000        | Councillor                           |
| Capt. William Hilliard                | 1,000        | Councillor                           |
| Capt. James Futter                    | 1,000        | Councillor                           |
| Capt. William Hawley                  | 820          | Governor's brother & Governor 1636-8 |
| Capt. William Fortescue               | 500          | Councillor                           |
| Daniel Fletcher                       | 600          |                                      |
| William Perkins                       | 500          |                                      |
| Richard Peers                         | 500          | Deputy Governor 1633-34.             |

In Gov. Hawley's Council of 1639, seven out of the eight Councillors were captains in the militia as well as being substantial landholders. Along with the four Councillors listed in the above table were Capt. James Drax with 400 acres, Capt. Bowyer with 330 acres, Capt. Reade with 100 acres, and Capt. Shelley with 100 acres; all large estates by Barbadian<sup>and</sup>/West Indian standards.

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1. Futter's and Hethersall's plantations are shown on Ligon's map.
  2. Deeds of Barbados, 1630s. R B.3/1, BAR. ARC. See also, Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, chapter 2.



This political unity expressed itself in a high form of class consciousness; the logical development of which was the formation of the powerful West India lobby in London which consisted largely of absentee Barbadian planters. That the conceptions and consciousness of men appear to be truly the efflux of their material interests is consistent with the empirical data derived from the experience of the planter class during this period. The planters developed a method of articulating their material objectives consonant with their class position, which was remarkable because as a class they were not homogeneous. Many of them had been engaged in a bloody war on opposing sides in England, and had come to the colony as disgruntled Cavaliers and Roundheads trying to repair lost fortunes and make new ones. (1) They had brought with them their very different political and religious views which were hardened by war and intolerance ; yet they were able to transcend these divisive forces to achieve unity for the common exploitation of servant labour.

Richard Ligon, who arrived at Barbados in 1647, was astonished by the level of socio-political cohesiveness achieved. He noted that the planters were so '...loving, friendly, and hospitable one to another; and though they were of several persuasions, yet, their discretions ordered everything so well as they never were any falling out between them.' (2) Cavaliers or Roundheads, conformist or non-conformist, their economic aims were sufficiently strong to

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1. This emigration and its impact upon Barbadian politics and society is excellently analysed by Davis, N.D., Cavaliers and Roundheads of Barbados.

2. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.57.

transcend their religious and political differences. They used 'gentlemen's agreements' and other non-legal methods, in quite remarkable ways, to eradicate or reduce their extreme differences on the superstructural level. One striking method employed to foster class cohesiveness was explained by Ligon. It illustrates the planters' determination not to allow politics and religion to interfere with the process of accumulation. He noted that they '... made a law amongst themselves, that whosoever nam'd the word Roundhead or Cavalier should give to all those that heard him a shot and a turkey, to be eaten at his house that made the forfeiture.' (1) Furthermore, noted Ligon, many planters would deliberately make the forfeiture so as to occasion a social gathering amongst themselves. (2) The rise and development of this planter class was the central force in determining the nature of Barbadian servitude over the century.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.



During the 1640s, Barbados became the boom colony of the English Empire, overshadowing its two forerunners Virginia and St. Christopher. Other Europeans watched carefully; the Dutch saw a potential market for their commercial services, while Spain observed with a complacent confidence. In 1642, the Spanish Ambassador noted that all the English plantations would soon fall to the ground because of the 'beastly idleness' of the English nation. (1) But unlike the Virginians, who were small planters that squandered the proceeds of their small crops on the liquor and luxuries that showed up (2), the Barbadians, like the classical capitalist entrepreneurs, reinvested their profits in labour, machinery and new lands, and shifted when necessary to alternative commodities in order to make greater profits. It was this sensitivity to international market forces and the committed drive towards profit maximisation which separated Barbadian planters from previous colonial settlers.

From the beginning of settlement, the planters went about the task of producing tobacco, the most profitable American agricultural staple on the European market. They wished to compete with, and if possible replace, Spanish tobacco on the European market. In 1623, Virginian tobacco reaching England was worth 1½ shillings per pound, and in 1625 three shillings per pound. This lucrative boom continued in the tobacco market down to 1628 when the Barbadians made their entry into the market. (3) These prices were high enough to incite

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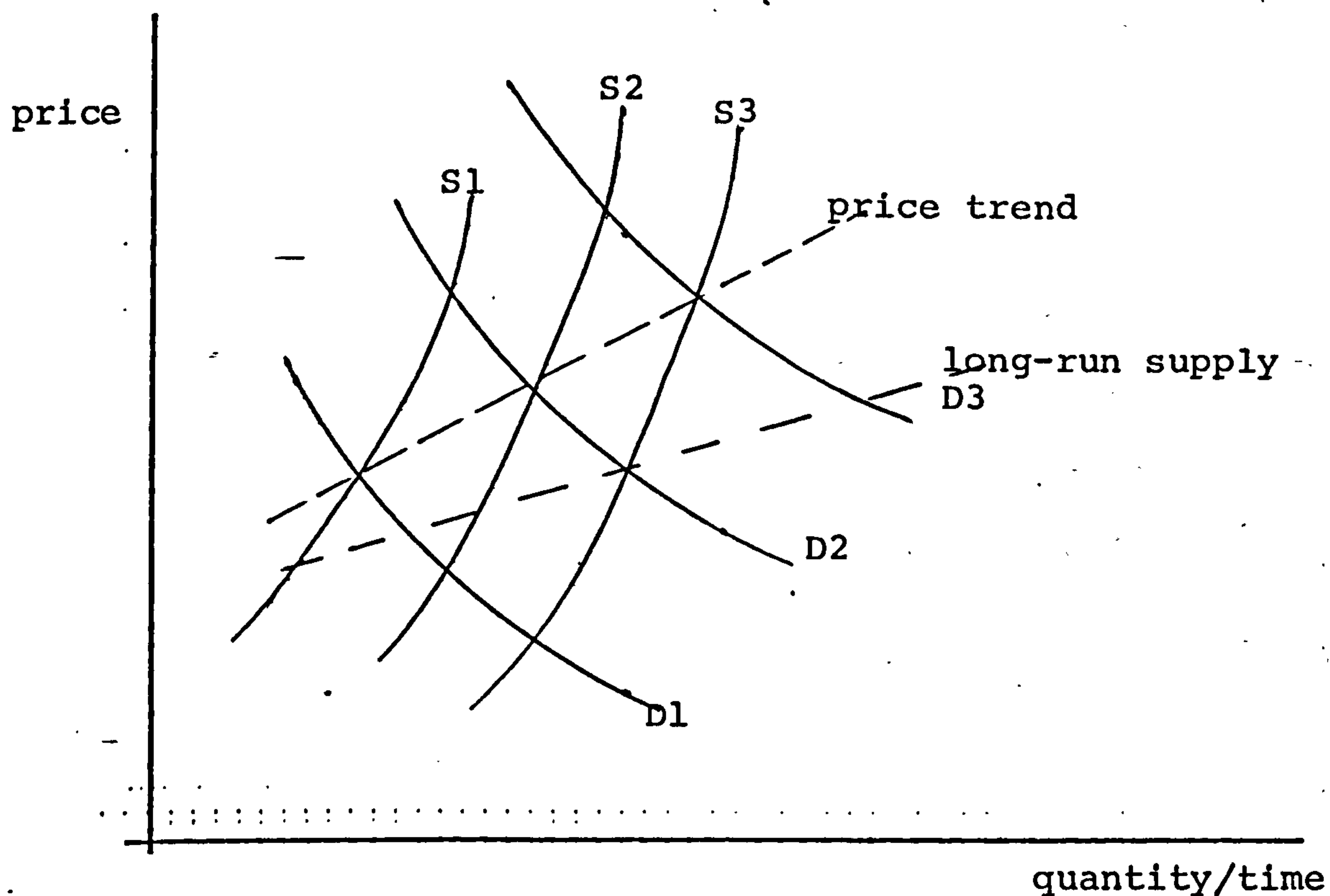
1. John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carlton, 9 July 1642, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p.13.

2. Morgan, E., 'The First American Boom' pp. 169-78.

3. Ibid., p. 177.

' tobacco fever ' in the Virginians and to encourage the Barbadians. Within a year of settlement, the Barbadians (along with the planters of St. Christopher) were exporting 100,000 pounds of tobacco to London where it was selling at a price of nine pence per pound. (1) At this stage, Barbados was described as being '...wholly built on smoke...tobacco being the only mean it hath produced....' (2) This was the beginning of a long history of monoculture and a worrying dependence upon unstable world commodity markets. (3)

Fig. 4 -Effect of Increasing demand on Tobacco Prices in Europe, 1610-30



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1. Robert Alsopp to Proprietor, 12 Dec. 1628, C.S.P.C., 1628-9, p. 411.
  2. King to Governor and Council of Virginia, Nov. 1627, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p. 86.
  3. See appendix 35.



In the second half of 1631, the London market became glutted as Barbadians expanded their tobacco production, and prices fell sharply. The Virginians implemented a policy which limited output and fixed prices, while the English Government responded to the colonial request with mercantile enthusiasm<sup>and</sup> imposed a ban upon domestic production in an effort to keep up prices.(1) It was during this crisis that the English Government, for the first time, imposed restrictions on the Barbadian planters and set in motion a long process of metropolitan control which resulted in the Navigation Laws. In 1631, the English Government ordered the restriction of tobacco production in the Lesser Antilles. The Order stated that the '...great abuse of tobacco...is so notorious that the King has directed the planting of it to be limited in St. Christopher and Barbados ...until such time as more staple commodities may be raised there....'(2) The Barbadians ignored this order, and by the end of the decade their volume of tobacco exports were still rising while those of Virginia and St. Christopher were falling. They felt that the Virginians, whose lobby in Whitehall was influential, were imposing a discriminatory policy on West Indian interests by securing a lower import duty on their exports.

London Tobacco Imports 1628-39 (lbs.) (3) T.6

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Barbados</u> | <u>St.Christopher</u> | <u>Virginia</u> | <u>Spanish</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1628        | ( 100,000 )     |                       | -               | -              |
| 1637        | 124,593         | 263,599               | 1,067,262       | 60,597         |
| 1638        | 204,956         | 470,732               | 2,361,999       | 79,912         |
| 1639        | 208,100         | 107,312               | 1,091,773       | 111,268        |

1. Memorial from the Council of Virginia, April 1631, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p.113.
2. Privy Council to the Earl of Carlisle, Jan. 1631, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p.124.
3. Add.Mss., 35865, f.247, B.L.



T.7- Custom Duties Imposed on London Tobacco Imports, 1630-45 (1)

|                 | <u>Custom per lb.</u> | <u>Impost per lb.</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Barbados        | 3d                    | 9d                    |
| St. Christopher | 3d                    | 9d                    |
| Virginia        | 3d                    | 6d                    |

While the struggle between the Barbadians and the Virginians was going on, the former were aware that the economic future of the colony could depend upon tobacco. It was popular knowledge that Barbadian tobacco was '... the worst that grows in the world...' (2), or close to being so. The first shipment which Henry Winthrop sent to London in 1628 was described as '...very ill-conditioned, foul, full of stalks and evil coloured....' (3) The Barbadians, who were great tobacco smokers, even refused to smoke their own tobacco and imported the Virginian and Spanish brands. (4) Like good capitalists they responded to market forces and shifted productive resources from tobacco into cotton production. Cotton was much demanded in England and fetched high prices on the London market.

The transition into cotton production maintained a moderate level of capital formation in the colony. When Sir Henry Colt visited the island in 1632 he noted that the '...trade in cotton fills them all with hope....' (5) By 1635, the more organised planters were monopolising the shipping and marketing of the commodity at the expense of the smaller planters. In May 1636, Peter Hay

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1. A.P.C.C., vol.1, 1613-80, p.174.

2. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.113.

3. Davis, N.D., Cavaliers and Roundheads of Barbados, p.35.

4. Ibid., p.79.

5. Harlow, V.T., ed., Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana, 1623-67 (Lon., 1924), p.69.

the proprietary agent for Barbados, was instructed not to allow the leading planters to monopolise cotton production, but to '... encourage every planter to plant cotton, for Barbados cotton of all is esteemed best... and it is a staple commodity that will ever be worth money....' (1) In 1638, one planter reported that the level of profit in Barbados occasioned by cotton production was so impressive that to re-invest the capital it was proposed to set '... up a cotton manufacture...' (2) in the colony -a proposal which would have been dismissed as mercantilist policy allowed nothing to be manufactured in the colonies. This boom in cotton prices attracted the other English planters in the Eastern Caribbean into cotton production, and by 1639 the London market was glutted, and prices fell rapidly. The collapse was sudden and unexpected, and many marginal planters were ruined. The Dutch merchants, who shipped most of the Barbadian produce, lowered their freight charges to assist the planters, but prices continued to fall. The prices of cotton on the Dutch market show this trend as follows;

T.8 - Dutch Cotton Prices, 1635-43. (3) (Guilders per Dutch lb.)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Price</u> |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1635        | 0.57         |
| 1637        | 0.47         |
| 1638        | 0.38         |
| 1641        | 0.36         |
| 1643        | 0.30         |

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1. Bennett, J.H., 'Peter Hay; Proprietary Agent in Barbados, 1636-41.' Jamaican Historical Review, Vol.5 (1965), p.16.
  2. The Company of Providence Island to Capt. Woodcock, 7 June 1639, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p.297.
  3. Posthumous, N., Inquiry into the History of Prices in Holland (Leiden, 1946), Vol.1, p.119.



In 1640, Peter Hay informed the Proprietor, '...this yeare hath been so baise a cotton yeare that the inhabitants hath not maide so much on cotton as will buye necessaries....' (1) The price of high quality Smyrna cotton fell by 50% between 1635 and 1641. This was to the advantage of the European consumer who found the prices of cotton textiles constantly becoming cheaper; to the West Indian planter it meant the search, once again, for another staple in order to maintain capital formation in the colony. It was at this stage that the innovating planters began to experiment with indigo on a large scale as an alternative commodity.

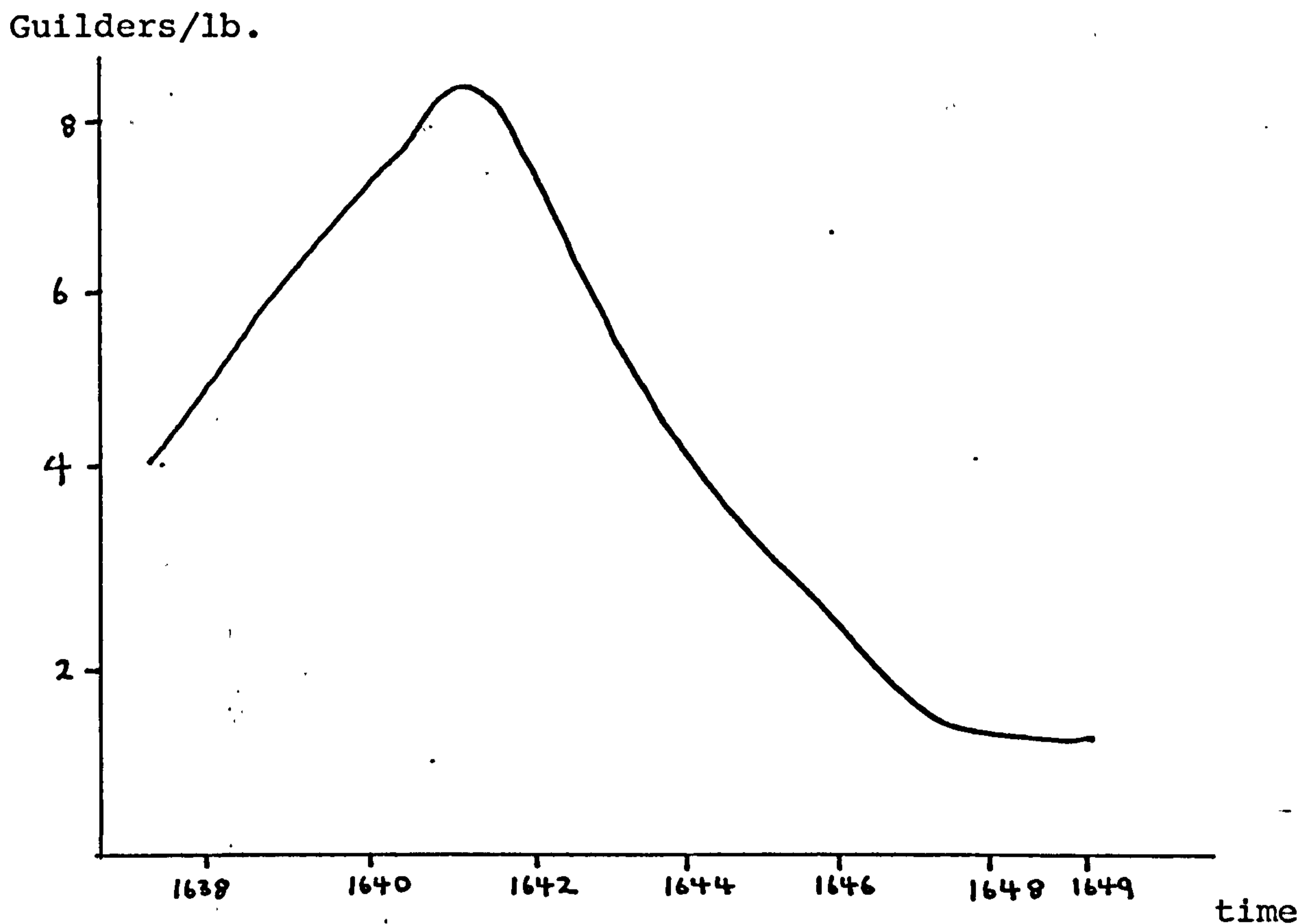
Indigo was used to make certain dyes that were needed by the large and rapidly expanding textile industry. The capital needed to set up an indigo plantation was greater <sup>that needed for</sup> than/either cotton or tobacco. But during the early 1640s, there was a widespread shift into indigo production; large and small planters invested scarce capital in the industry. Ligon noted that when he arrived in the island in 1647, he found it '...well ordered and sold in London at very good rates....' (2) Between 1640 and 1644, Barbadian indigo sold at very profitable rates both in London and in the English mainland colonies —especially New England. The London rates fluctuated between £40 and £44 per chest, but the industrialists in New England, who were developing a large textile industry, paid better rates. In 1641, for example, Capt. Jackson arrived at Boston with a large cargo of Barbadian indigo which he sold quickly, and made a handsome return of £1,400. (3) Most of his indigo came from the plantation of George Reade who produced 120lbs. annually. (4)

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1. Bennett, H., 'The English Caribbees in the Period of Civil War 1642-46', W.M.Q., 3rd. ser., vol. 24 (1967), p. 360.
  2. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p. 24.
  3. Thomas, D., An Historical Account of the Rise and Growth of the West Indies Collonies (London, 1690), p. 13. Also, Harlow, V., ed., The Voyages of Capt. Jackson, 1642-45 (Lon., 1923), p. 6.
  4. Inventory of Reade's Plantation 1641, RB. 3/1, f. 303. Bar. Arc.



The amount of indigo which was produced annually was sufficiently large to allow its use as currency on the market. The Dutch merchants frequently sold their slaves on the island for specific quantities of indigo.(1) By 1642, there was overproduction and the price of the commodity fell sharply. By 1643, the price of indigo in Europe had fallen to levels which the planters found to be unprofitable. Peter Hay informed the Proprietor in 1643, '...unless

Fig.5 The Trend of Indigo Prices in Barbados, 1638-49 (2)



some New Invention be found out to make a commodity...'(3), the colonists will be reduced to subsistence, and the mercantile interests will be ruined. Sugar was the commodity which saved the colonists and the merchants.

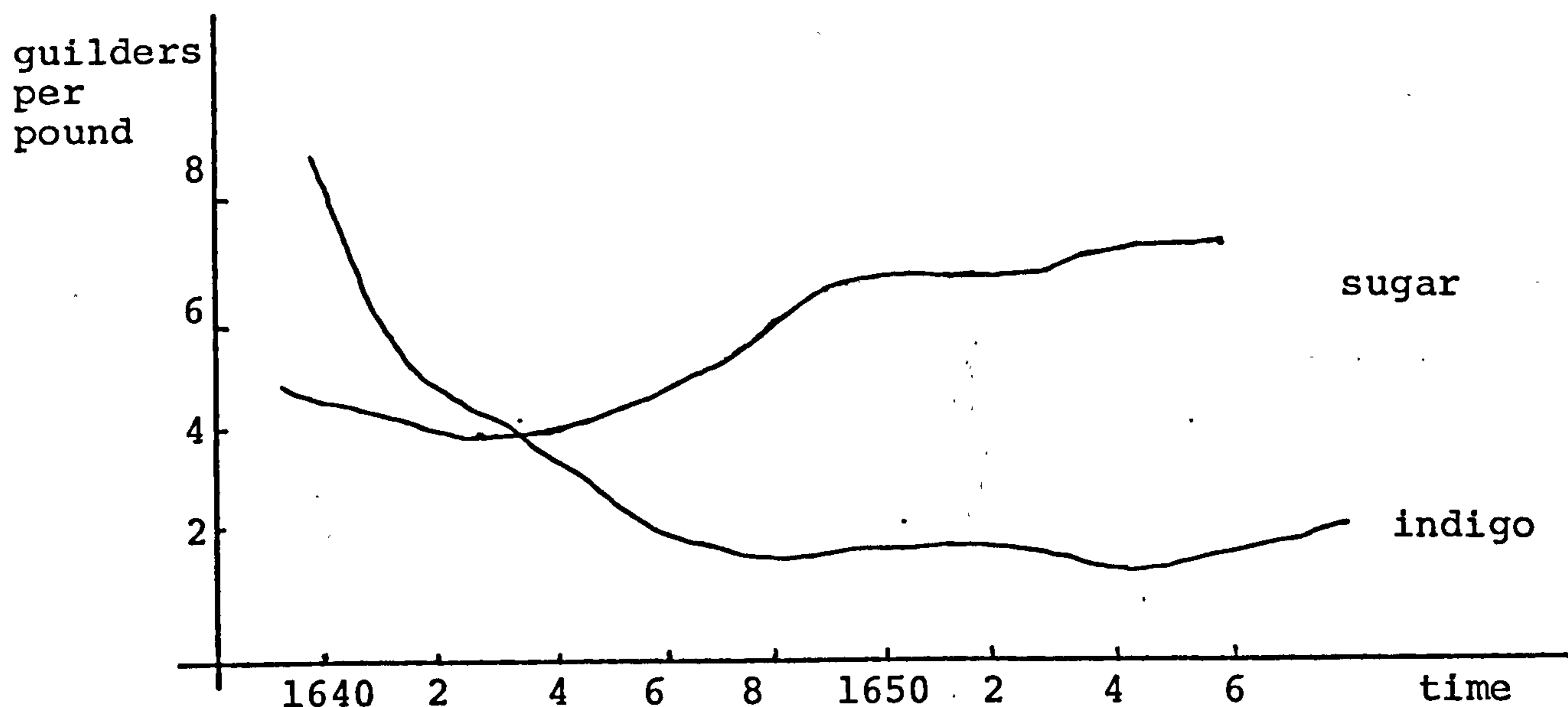
1. Deeds of Barbados, 1641, RB.3/1, f.437. Bar.Arc.

2. Posthumous, N., Inquiry into the History of Prices, vol.1, p.416.

3. Bennett, J.H., 'Peter Hay', pp.416.

Sugar cane was introduced into Barbados in the early 1630s, but was not used for the manufacture of sugar. It was widely used for feeding cattle and for making manure and fuel.(1) Considering that sugar was a highly profitable commodity in Europe, where the demand seemed insatiable, it might appear to be a paradox that it was not produced during the 1630s instead of tobacco and cotton. But it was almost certainly the relatively high prices of cotton in the mid-1630s, and indigo in the late 1630s, which made these commodities temporarily more attractive than sugar, and the shift of resources into their production rational decisions. About 1642-3, sugar gained a price advantage over indigo on the European market. It was at this stage that planters, responding to market forces, began to make the critical transition to sugar production. By 1645, when the price of indigo had collapsed, sugar was fetching a

Fig. 6- Dutch Sugar and Indigo Prices, 1640-1655(2)



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1. Handler, J., and F. Lange, Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical investigation (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 15-17.
  2. Posthumous, N., Inquiry into the History of Prices, pp. 119-25, 133-37, 414-17.

higher price than any other American staple on the European market, and once again the Barbadians were the pioneers .(1)

The firm commitment to sugar production was made possible by a series of developments on the local and international levels. On the local level, the period of indigo production saw the development of certain critical features which were to greatly enhance the transition to sugar. Indigo production demanded more labour than either cotton or tobacco, which meant that the estates of the large planters were well stocked with servant labour by the mid 1640s. Long, the West Indian planter-historian, noted that an efficient indigo plantation needed an average land/labour ratio of about one man per acre.(2) The labour force of the colony expanded by about 30% during the critical indigo producing years of 1638 to 1645. For example, Col. Modyford, who planted indigo on his estate between 1643 and 1645, built up a labour force of twenty eight servants which laid the basis for his entry into sugar production in 1646. Furthermore, indigo production, like sugar manufacture, involved the articulation of scientific processes, complicated technology and expensive machinery.(3) The effective management of these agro-industrial processes instilled the necessary confidence in the planter class for <sup>future</sup> sugar production, whilst it also proved that the indentured servants were adequate for the tasks.

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1. Egerton Mss. 2395, f. 630.

2. Long, E., History of Jamaica (Lon., 1774), vol. 1, p. 407.

3. Alden, D., 'The Growth and Decline of Indigo Production in Colonial Brazil; A Study in Comparative Economic History', J.E.H., vol. 25 (1965), pp. 35-60.



The early 1640s also saw the final solution of the problem of land tenure, which had caused much confusion in earlier years. Under the successive administrations of Henry Hawley (during the 1630s) many planters lost their land and other property for, among other things, apparently siding with the Courteen interests, non-payment of taxes and being '...ignorant of the times and laws.' (1) Hawley commonly appropriated the land of his political opponents in the name of the Proprietor, and tried to impress upon the colonists that they held land only at the Proprietor's pleasure. As a result, a bitter dispute arose in the colony over the issue of land tenure.

In 1641, Philip Bell became the Governor and was determined to eliminate administrative malpractices and to assist the planters, even at proprietary expense. He opened the issue of land tenure for discussion in the Assembly in 1642, and the following year passed an Act entitled, 'An Act for the settling of estates and titles of the inhabitants of this island....' (2) The law satisfied the demands of the planters for ownership in simple fee and hereditary tenure, and secured the basis of capitalist production in the colony.

International political forces also had great effects upon Barbadian socio-economic development during the early 1640s. It has been argued that the Civil War which escalated in Brazil during the early 1640s, between the Portuguese settlers and their Dutch overlords, gave the Barbadians the long awaited opportunity to break into the sugar market with a commanding position. The Civil War did in fact cause a supply crisis on the European sugar market. since Brazil supplied at least 80% of the sugar which reached Europe

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1. Anon., Memoirs of the First Settlement, pp.32-4.

2. Edwards, B., The History, Civil and Commercial, vol.1, p.335.

who had captured the sugar producing areas of Brazil (Pernambuco and Bahia) from the Portuguese during the 1620s, were forced out in the 1640s and made a critical emigration to Barbados, bringing with them their capital, technology and skills.(1) This thesis

T.9- Changes in the Supply of Pernambuco Sugar to Europe, 1641-51(2)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Tons</u> |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1641        | 7,246.8     |
| 1642        | 4,839.8     |
| 1643        | 4,570.7     |
| 1644        | 4,082.4     |
| 1645        | 3,363.2     |
| 1646        | 1,223.9     |
| 1647        | 953.9       |
| 1648        | 953.9       |
| 1649        | 454.5       |
| 1650        | 256.2       |
| 1651        | 57.4        |

should be looked at closely.

The Portuguese rebellions in Pernambuco , which led to the expulsion of the Dutch, did not take place until 1645, by which time the Barbadians had already moved into sugar production and were becoming increasingly competent in handling the agro-industrial processes involved.(3) By, 1644, the roller mill was in

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1. Boxer, C.R., Salvador de Sa and the Struggle for Brazil and Angola, 1602-1686 (Bristol, 1952), pp.195-204.
  2. Batie, R.C., 'A Comparative Economic History of the Spanish, French and English on the Caribbean Islands during the Seventeenth Century', (Washington Univ. Ph.D., 1972), pp.88-9.
  3. Sheridan, R., Sugar and Slavery; An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775 (Barbados, 1974), p.129.
- Furtado, C., The Development of Brazil (N.Y., 1963), p.168.

general use in Barbados, and Drax, Holdip, Skeete and Hilliard had already made fortunes in sugar production. (1) The timing of this can be verified by Ligon who arrived on the island in 1647 and stated that sugar manufacture was well established '...above five or six years....' (2) A House of Lords petition for 1646 also stated that sugar manufacture was already well established, that and many colonists had made fortunes. (3) The rise of the industry, however, coincides with the collapse of indigo prices and the further rise of sugar prices on the European market. The Dutch played an important role in supplying scarce capital and credit to the colonists, and providing machinery and shipping facilities on moderate terms. Furthermore, Nicholas Foster (a contemporary writer) argued that the Barbadians had developed their own sugar industry and technology before the Brazilian crisis, and had struggled for a few years in their perfection. (4)

The Dutch were mostly Jewish exiles from Europe, described by Dalby Thomas in 1690 as '...eternal prolers...in search of moderate gain by trade.' (5) They saw the potential of Barbados as

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1. Sloane Mss. 3662, f. 59. Also, Foster, N., A Brief Relation of the Horrid Rebellion acted in the Island of Barbados (Lon., 1650), p. 2.
  2. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p. 86.
  3. Donnan, E., ed., Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America (Washington, 1930), vol. 1, pp. 196-7.
  4. Foster, N., A Brief Relation, pp. 2-3.
  5. Thomas, D., An Historical Account, pp. 36-7. Also, Merrill, G., 'The Role of the Sephardic Jews in the British Caribbean Area in the Seventeenth Century', C.S., vol. 4 (1964-5), pp. 32-49.



a market for slaves and sugar making machinery. By financing the sugar planters on the island there would be a derivative demand for slaves which the English could not meet as they had no base on the West African coast. The Dutch had no commitment to indentured servitude as a dominant system of labour organisation in the New World plantation economies. They were engaged in the servant trade from Ireland from the 1630s, but only on a small scale. Their leading position in the slave trade meant that they desired to replace indentured servants with slaves everywhere they could. (1) Being Jewish, many Dutch merchants and planters were not allowed, by law and custom, to employ British servants. This was the result of the exportation of European anti-semitism to Barbados. They, therefore, conceived of indentured servitude as contradictory to their economic interest.

Even more critical to Barbadian development than the injection of Jewish-Dutch capital was the English Civil War. By 1645, a large number of Cavaliers and Roundheads had already reached Barbados; at least 4,000 arrived during the 1640s and brought with them their capital, servants and economic connections. They were mainly from the English gentry, but also among them were many aristocratic soldiers, fleeing to save their lives. Whereas the Dutch financed the top echelon of the planter class, these new arrivals made available large sums of capital to the middling planters,

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1. Voyage of the Abraham from Kinsale to Barbados, 1636, High Court of Admiralty Papers, bundle 30/636, P.R.O. Also, An Account of the English plantations, 1650s, Egerton Mss. 2995, f.629.

thus giving the sugar industry a more solid capital base.

In the first half of the century, the European sugar market was rapidly expanding, and the planters felt that they had found, at last, a truly profitable staple — one which was free from extreme price fluctuations. The economic prosperity brought by this commodity was immediate. The first observer to record this economic success was a Harvard trained Puritan, George Downing, in late 1645. He observed that if '...you go to Barbados, you shall see a flourishing Island...' (1) fully recovered from the crises in cotton and indigo production. By the early 1650s, Barbados was described as the richest spot in the New World, (2) while others pointed out that the island's value, in terms of trade and capital formation, was greater than all the English colonies put together. (3)

Ligon captured, quite remarkably, this important economic explosion by making analyses of plantations and planter class expectations. He related the case of Col. Thomas Modyford, son of the Mayor of Exeter, who arrived on the island in 1645. Modyford bought a plantation of 500 acres<sup>and</sup> / provided it with a labour force of twenty eight servants from England and a larger amount of slaves. He took '... a Resolution to himself not to set face in England, till he had made his voyage and employment

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1. George Downing to John Winthrop, 26 Aug. 1645, in Donnan, E., ed., Documents, vol. 1, p. 125.
  2. Oldmixon, J., History of the British Empire, vol. 2, p. 186
  3. See appendices 17, 18, 30 and 32.

there worth him a hundred thousand pounds sterling; and all by this sugar plant.' (1) Modyford's optimism was, indeed, justified; by 1647 he had made a fortune and was one of the wealthiest planters on the island. In 1651, he became a councillor, and was made Governor in 1660. In the late 1660s, he decided to expand his interests into the new English colony of Jamaica. He became the Governor of that island in 1664 and, at his death in 1679, owned one of the largest plantations in the West Indies (with over 600 slaves and servants). (2)

James Drax arrived on the island during the tobacco boom of the late 1620s with a capital stock of £300. He commented to Ligon that he too '...would not look towards England with a purpose to remain there the rest of his life, till he were able to purchase an estate of ten thousand pounds...which he hoped in a few years to accomplish....' (3) By 1654, Drax was the richest planter in Barbados (if not the West Indies) with an estate of 700 acres and 200 slaves. (4) Both Drax and Modyford represented the optimism and success of the large planters of Barbados, who saw the opportunity to rapidly accumulate capital at an unparalleled rate in the West Indies, and exploited it fully.

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.96.

2. Edward Atcherley to William Helyar, 2 March 1676, Helyar Mss., Somerset Records Office, Taunton.

3. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, pp.96-7.

4. Handler, J., ed., 'Father Antoine Biet's Visit to Barbados in 1654', J.B.M.H.S., vol.32 (1965-6), p.69.



In the second half of the century, when it was fashionable to grant knighthoods to colonial planters, these men with eleven other <sup>were</sup> Barbadians/knighted, a symbol of their colonial success and the achievements of mercantile capitalism. (1)

While planters like Modyford and Drax were raising capital locally from merchants and Dutch financiers, lesser planters had to rely on the English capital market. William Powrey, for example, had to convince his uncle in England that £1,000 spent on a Barbadian sugar plantation would make an annual return of £2,000 between 1648 and 1650. Powrey's calculation can be compared with those of Richard Ligon, his contemporary. The latter estimated that a plantation of 500 acres, during this period, could be equipped with servants, slaves, and machinery at a cost of £14,000. It would produce an annual profit of over £7,000, so that the original capital outlay would be covered by two years' profits. (2) Ligon based his estimates on the wholesale price of muscovado sugar on the London market of three pence per pound.

T.10 Retail Prices of Sugar in London, 1641-56 (3)

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 1641    | 14d/lb |
| 1645-50 | 12d/lb |
| 1651-2  | 18d/lb |
| 1656    | 10d/lb |

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1. Shilstone, E.M., 'The Thirteen Baronets', J.B.M.H.S., (1934-35), pp. 89-92.
  2. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, pp. 108, 112.
  3. *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 112.

Between 1628 and 1640, land values were relatively low and a small capital stock could get a planter a substantial acreage. In the 1630s, £200 could purchase an 100 acre plantation equipped with<sup>a</sup> labour force of indentured servants. After 1643, when sugar was proven to be lucrative, the price of land doubled annually until the mid 1650s when it was stabilised. By 1670, most of the land was under sugar cultivation . Governor Atkins noted, '... as for the lands in Barbados I am confident there is not one foot that is not employed down to the very seaside.' (1) The wealth of the planter class was visible everywhere, in Barbados, London and on the mainland. One observer made a comparison between Barbados in 1643 and 1666. He noted that in ... 1643 (after it had been planted 17 years) ... its value was then not one seventeenth so considerable as in 1666 ... The negroes not being in 1643 above 6,400 were in 1666 above 50,000; the building in 1643 were mean, with thing only for necessity, but in 1666, plate, jewels, and household stuff were estimated at £500,000 , their buildings very fair and beautiful, and their houses like castles ... (2)

Such developments were said to have made the popular colony of New England look like '... a very poore country ...' indeed.(3) Thus Barbados made the critical transition from a crude struggling frontier community to a wealthy and complex economy within half a century.

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1. Gov. Atkins to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 26 June 1676, C O.1/37, no.51, P.R.O.
  2. Some Observations on the Island of Barbados, 1667, C.S.P.C. 1661-68, p.529.
  3. Egerton Mss. 2543, f.123.

SECTION TWOCOMMODITY PRODUCTION AND WHITE INDENTUREDLABOURPart AIndentured Labour and the Pre-Sugar Era, 1627-43

The entire system of commodity production was built upon the labour of thousands of indentured servants who were supplied from England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Unlike the Spanish settlements in the Greater Antilles, Barbados and the Leewards were not densely populated with Indians who could be reduced to chattel slavery. For the English colonist this posed a problem of immediate importance. The Spanish and English colonists on the mainland had already established Indian slavery. The Spanish used the institution of the 'Encomienda' to extract forced labour from the Indians, an institution which laid the foundation of the Spanish Empire. (1) They built in their Caribbean colonies a system of commodity production based upon the labour of the enslaved Arawaks. On the main island colony of Hispaniola, where the sugar industry was first established, the Indian population was reduced from half a million in 1490 to 32,000 in 1514. (2)

The English in Barbados had no ready local labour supply. The island had no settled Indian communities, though it was part of the wider environmental and political network of the Caribs who inhabited the Lesser Antilles. (3) The Caribs (like the European invaders) were a militant and aggressive people who had established their hegemony in the Eastern Caribbean over the Arawaks. Their

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1. Parry, J.H., The Spanish Seaborne Empire (Lon., 1977), p.5.

2. Ratekin, M., 'The Early Sugar Industry in Hispaniola', H.A.H.R., vol.34 (1954), p.5.

3. Barton, G.T., The Prehistory of Barbados (Barbados, 1953), chap.3.



cultural matrix made any form of labour subjection by the Europeans very difficult. Du Tertre, the French missionary who was familiar with the Caribs, noted that they possessed an innate contempt for manual labour which drove them to launch a full scale guerilla war against the Europeans.(1) They won some battles and killed a large number of whites, but eventually over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they were eliminated by Anglo-French and Dutch military pressures.

To clear the very forested land (2) and initiate production, the English in Barbados had, therefore, to look for outside labour sources. Like the French and early Spanish, they looked to their homeland for this labour supply. The slave trade from Africa was not fully established in the early seventeenth century, and was a virtual monopoly of the Iberians and the Dutch.

The price of slave labour from Africa was prohibitively expensive, which made the dependence on British labour more complete. It was common practice in seventeenth century Britain for farmers to hire labour by the year for agricultural and artisan work. The most logical step was, therefore, to demand labour from England under temporary indenture, not for a year, but for anything between five and ten years. The planters would pay the passage over, feed, clothe and shelter the servant in return for their labour. At the end of the indenture the servant would be given a 'freedom due' of £10 or a piece of land. It sounded legitimate and acceptable within the labour tradition of English society, much more so than Black slavery. As Jordan

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1. Jesse, Rev. C., 'Du Tertre and Labat on Seventeenth Century Slave Life in the French Antilles', C.Q., vol.7, no.3 (1961), p.137.

2. Watts, D., Man's Influence on the Vegetation of Barbados, 1627-1800 (Hull, 1976), Chap.3.

noted, 'At the start of English settlements in America, no one had in mind to establish the institution of Negro slavery.' (1) The initial intention was to use indentured servants as the labour base, and if Indians could be found and reduced to servitude, so much the better.

The situation was the same in Barbados as it was in Virginia, which prompted Morgan to argue that the level of a planter's profits was totally dependent on his supply of servant labour. He further noted that

A man could not make a fortune by himself. But if he could stay alive and somehow get control of a few servants and keep them alive, he could make more in a year than he was likely to make in England. And if he could get a large number of servants, he might indeed make a fortune. (2)

In 1638, Peter Hay noted that '... a plantation in this place (Barbados) is worth nothing unless there be a good store of hand upon it....' (3) These hands were to be shipped out from Britain, and white workers under indenture were to become '...the mainstay of the colony....' (4) During this pre-sugar era, the social structure which corresponded to the land ownership pattern can be expressed diagrammatically as follows:

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1. Jordan, W., 'Unthinking Decision; Enslavement of Negroes in America to 1700' in Breen, T.H., ed., Shaping Southern Society; The Colonial Experience (N.Y., 1976), p.100.
  2. Morgan, E.S., 'The First American Boom', pp.178-9.
  3. Cited in Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.52.
  4. Southey, T., The Chronological History of the British West Indies (London, 1827), vol.1. p.85.





The first Blacks were a small party captured from a Spanish vessel by Powell's men on their way to settle in Barbados in 1627. Henry Winthrop reported that in 1628, the island had a mere '50 slaves of Indynenes and Blacks ...' (1) out of a population of about one thousand eight hundred. In 1636, Gov. Hawley legislated that in future all Blacks and Indians, plus their offspring, were to be accepted as slaves unless some contract existed to the contrary. (2) But until the mid 1640s, both Blacks and Indians were rare in Barbados as planters built their productive systems upon indentured labour. In 1645, George Downing wrote to John Winthrop, Governor of Massachusetts,

A man that will settle there (Barbados) must looke to procure servants, which if you could gett out of England for 6, or 8 or 9 yeares time only paying their passages, or at the most but some smale above it, it would do very well, for so ... (you) shall be able to doe something upon a plantation.... (3)

Biographical data can be used to illustrate the critical importance of indentured labour to the accumulation process during this period. The careers of Henry Winthrop (the young son of the famous John Winthrop of Groton in Suffolk and Puritan Governor of Massachusetts) and Thomas Verney illustrate the important forces operating within early plantation economy. Winthrop arrived in Barbados during the tobacco boom of 1628,

1. Henry Winthrop to John Winthrop, Jan. 1628, in Forbes, A.B., et.al., ed., Winthrop Papers, vol. 1., pp. 357.
2. Anon., Memoirs of the First Settlement, p. 19.
3. Donnan, E.D., ed., Documents, vol. 1. pp. 125-6.

while Verney arrived during the indigo boom of 1639.

Henry Winthrop was one of the many colonists who emigrated to Barbados under the Courteen syndicate. Like many others, he agreed to work an estate of the Syndicate for three years for an annual wage of £100. In conformity with the Syndicate's rules, he equipped a plantation for the production of tobacco. He wrote to his uncle, Thomas Fones, in October 1628 stating that he '... doe intend God willing, to stayer here on this island caled Barbathos, in the West Indyes, and here I and my servantes to joine in plantinge of tobaccoe.' (1) He soon realised that in order to continue in tobacco production his plantation needed '... every yere sune twenty three servants...' (2) He was satisfied that the importation of a servant from England at a cost of £5-6 for the passage and £10 annually for food, clothes and shelter was, indeed, money well spent. After his first crop reached London, he wrote to his father demanding more indentured servants.

Winthrop, typical of Barbadian colonists, was rushing to make a quick fortune. His father, with the philosophical complacency and sense of inner goodness of the early Puritans, was not impressed with this capitalist spirit, and replied to his son, '...he who hasteth to be rich shall surely come to poverty.' (3) But Henry was a good colonist, a shrewd entrepreneur and a survivor. When Carlisle took control of the island in 1628-9, he abandoned his commitment to Courteen and aligned himself with Carlisle's interests. He obtained credit and expanded his plantation which was well stocked with servants

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1. Letters of Henry Winthrop, in Davis, N.D., Cavaliers and Roundheads of Barbados, pp.32-3.

2. Ibid. pp.33-4

3. Ibid. p.34.



imported from Bristol. He became a leading tobacco planter and one of the twelve magistrates established by Carlisle.

The experience of Thomas Verney as a planter constitutes evidence that without good fortune and credit connections, the instability of commodity markets made profit accumulation a hazardous objective. Thomas, the son of Sir Edmund Verney, was an embarrassment to his very respectable family. He was adventurous in a reckless way, and conformed to the stereotypical characteristics of a disinherited younger son. In 1638, after his European adventures, he turned up in Barbados, recommended by the Earl of Warwick who had considerable property in the colony. On his arrival he wrote to his mother (his father having dismissed him as a useless spendthrift) 'I am resolved (by the grace of God) to lead a new life...' (1) here in Barbados.

Within three weeks of arrival, Verney had obtained a large plantation of 100 acres which he bought 'at reasonable terms', and was instantly elevated into the property owning elite. (2) At this juncture, he sent an invoice to his father which listed the commodities needed in order to make use of his plantation. The invoice was headed with a request for '...twenty able men servants whereof two to be carpenters, two of them to be joiners and two masons, all of them to have their tooles belonging to their severall occupations....' (3) The others were to be

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1. The letters of Thomas Verney are edited in Verney, F.P., ed., Memoirs of the Verney Family during the Civil War (Lon., 1892), 2 vols. Also filed in Davis Mss boxes 1 and 6, R.C.S.
  2. Verney, F.P., ed., Memoirs of the Verney Family, vol. 1, p. 148.
  3. Thomas Verney to Sir Edmund Verney, 1639, Davis Mss. Box 1, no. 27, letter 6.



unskilled labourers strong enough for working in the fields. Such a labour force was certain to produce very high maintenance costs in clothing, and Thomas, therefore, asked for two extra servants; '...a weaver than can weave diapers and the other a taylor.' (1)

Thomas was unable to deal effectively with the adverse market forces and allocated his capital, which soon ran short, with a marked irrationality. In 1640, he asked his father for a loan of £ 200 which would assist him to raise his '...fortune in a few years.' (2) On receiving this request his father, who had already expressed little faith in his son's capacity, began to make enquiries in London about plantation management in the West Indies. He then compared the information with the pattern and nature of his son's demands, and decided that Thomas had no sound knowledge of plantation operations. Furthermore, his crop of cotton turned out to be of little value, and a loss was made on his tobacco. (3)

But Sir Verney's insights were matched by his son's trickery. On the receipt of his father's refusal to provide credit, Thomas obtained a testimonial from Capt. Futter, a large planter of 1000 acres and a councillor, which he sent to his father. The testimonial stated that Thomas was an 'extraordinary husbandman' and careful, but no credit was forthcoming from his father.

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1. Thomas Verney to Sir Edmund Verney, 1639, Davis Mss. Box 1, no. 33.

2. Ibid.

3. See appendix 35.

Thomas also ran into trouble with his labour force of servants: some had fallen sick from overwork, and some he had to auction on the open market because he could not afford to employ or maintain them as the returns from his crops were so poor .(1) Thomas, however, was persistent. In June 1640, he wrote to his father asking if he could, with the help of the warden of the Bridewell prison, obtain 100 servants for his estate. Thomas was either trying his hand at servant trading, or was repaying his debts on the island with servants, as was customary. His father refused him both labour and capital. In September, Thomas wrote to his brother, '... the next yeare I shall not have soe much credit, unless my father is pleased to send me over a good supply of servants that I may pay that which I am indebted in the country which if I do not pay I must lye and starve in prison....' (2) In December, Thomas was imprisoned for non-payment of debt by Governor Huncks. He was bailed out by his friend George Gregone, and was forced to leave the island - the ultimate penalty for a disgraced man. On arriving at Downes he had not even a shilling, and was forced to indebt himself to the Postmaster at Canterbury for £7 to pay for his journey home.(3) Such were the experiences of two young planters coming to terms with the dynamics of plantation development in Barbados during the pre-sugar era, They illustrate that a planter, in order to be successful, needed/have many of the visions of the capitalist.

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1. Verney, F.P., ed., Memoirs of the Verney Family, vol.1, p.154.

2. Thomas Verney to James Verney, 12 Sept. 1640, Davis Mss., Box 1, no.27, letter 5.

3. Ibid., letter 11.

To the merchants, Barbados represented just so many consumers, and during this period white indentured labour was one of the largest consumption items. The mercantile interests had been prominent in the Councils of State from the 1620s, and well established merchants, such as Thomas Povey, Martin Noell, Andrew Riccard and Maurice Thompson, all had Barbadian investments and were, therefore, prepared to assist the colonists there with a large supply of indentured servants. (1)

The analysis of the 836 servants going to Barbados in eight voyages in 1634 shows that the planters were getting the kind of labour they wanted.

Servants Shipped to Barbados in 1634 (2)

| <u>voyage details</u>     | <u>sex</u>  |               | <u>Total</u> | <u>10-19</u> | <u>age</u>  |             |            |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
|                           | <u>male</u> | <u>female</u> |              |              | <u>20-4</u> | <u>25-9</u> | <u>30-</u> |
| Jan. Capt. J. Ramsey      | 99          | 2             | 101          | 20           | 24          | 18          | 9          |
| Feb. <u>The Hopewell</u>  | 146         | 1             | 147          | 35           | 83          | 16          | 13         |
| April, <u>Bonaventure</u> | 3           | 4             | 7            | -            | 7           | -           | -          |
| ?           "             | 86          | 5             | 91           | 25           | 31          | 21          | 14         |
| April, <u>The Falcon</u>  | 70          | 10            | 80           | 35           | 28          | 10          | 7          |
| May, <u>Elexander</u>     | 143         | 19            | 162          | 64           | 55          | 22          | 21         |
| Nov., <u>Expedition</u>   | 202         | 2             | 204          | 56           | 83          | 30          | 35         |
| Dec., <u>Falcon</u>       | 41          | 3             | 44           | 11           | 23          | 5           | 5          |
| <b>Totals</b>             | <b>709</b>  | <b>46</b>     | <b>836</b>   | <b>246</b>   | <b>364</b>  | <b>122</b>  | <b>104</b> |

1. Thorton, A.P., West India Policy under the Restoration (Oxford, 1956), p.16. Also, Ashley, M., Financial and Commercial Policy under Cromwell's Protectorate (Oxford, 1934), pp. 10-82.
2. Hotten, J.C., ed., The Original list of Persons...who went from Great Britain to the American Plantations, 1600, 1700 (London, 1874).



The data indicate that 87.5% of the servants were of the prime age group for colonial labour, between the ages of ten and twenty. The servants were also predominately male.

The importance of indentured servants to the pre-sugar planters can be illustrated by a sample which shows the labour structures of fifteen plantations between 1639 and 1643. The sample is taken at random from the few remaining inventories of this period, and covers a good cross section of the arable regions of the colony.

T.12 Labour Structure of 15 Pre-Sugar Plantations in Barbados.(1)

| <u>Year</u>   | <u>Owner</u>         | <u>Acres</u> | <u>servants</u> | <u>Slaves</u> |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1639          | Thomas Hethersall    | 100          | 7               | -             |
| 1640          | Samuel Andrews       | 200          | 10              | -             |
| 1640          | Henry Hawley         | 300          | 28              | -             |
| 1640          | Lancelot Pace        | 360          | 17              | -             |
| 1640          | William Woodhouse    | 150          | 26              | -             |
| 1640          | Capt. Skeete         | -            | 26              | -             |
| 1641          | Col. Drax            | 225          | 4               | 22            |
| 1641          | Lancelot Pace        | 426          | 20              | -             |
| 1642          | Gerald Hawtaine      | 124          | 4               | 2             |
| 1642          | Thomas Rous          | 60           | 8               | -             |
| 1643          | Elexander Lindsay    | 60           | 2               | 4             |
| 1643          | Christopher Moulropp | 250          | 6               | 12            |
| 1643          | James Holdip         | 200          | 29              | -             |
| 1643          | Capt. Perkins        | 200          | 5               | 6             |
| 1643          | John Friesenborch    | 26           | 2               | 5             |
| <b>Totals</b> |                      | <b>2,681</b> | <b>194</b>      | <b>51</b>     |

1. Deeds and Inventories of Barbados, RB. 3/1, ff. 15, 55-7, 77, 229, 237, 290, 316, 418, 729, 730, 946.  
RB. 3/2, ff., f309.

Also, Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.68.

Drax was not typical of planters in this period. He was a pioneer of the 'sugar and slavery' process in the West Indies, and had close relationships with <sup>the</sup> Dutch merchant capitalists in the New World. By 1645, the Barbadians had learnt the art of exploiting the large gangs of indentured servants, and had established that capital accumulation and white servitude were compatible at the frontier. It was this experience which gave Barbadians the confidence and skills to launch into 'sugar and slavery' in the second half of the century.

The spread of sugar production throughout the island demanded not only large sums of capital and technology, but also a considerable flow of labour with varying degrees of skill, from common field labourers to highly specialised artisans. By seventeenth century standards, the plantation was a sophisticated production unit, demanding a labour force more complex than an English estate. The grinding, boiling, curing, refining and distilling processes of sugar manufacture demanded industrial skills which had to be learnt and reproduced. Machinery was imported which had to be assembled, maintained, and at times modified. This meant that a labour force with literacy and a familiarity with advanced industrial technology was necessary. In the early phase of sugar production, planters claimed that these qualities were rare in most Africans, and when they were present, thought it politically necessary to suppress or eradicate them. As a result, they became heavily dependent on the labour force of white indentured servants to make the critical transition to sugar production.

In this period, servants brought skills to the colony which were adapted to meet the planter's demands. Their emergence from a rapidly developing technological tradition made them suitable. The planters' importation of servants was conceived of not only in terms of labour inputs, but also as an injection of technology. A sample of 1,808 servants who registered for servitude in Barbados at Bristol can be used as an indication of the qualitative nature of the labour force being attracted by Barbadian sugar planters.



T.13 Servants supplied to Barbados and Virginia from Bristol, 1654-60.

| Date   | Barbados (1) |             |             | Virginia   |             |             |
|--------|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
|        | no.          | no. skilled | % skilled   | no.        | no. skilled | % skilled   |
| 1654   | 16           | 14          | 87.5        | 35         | 5           | 14.2        |
| 1655   | 115          | 53          | 46.0        | 78         | 24          | 30.7        |
| 1656   | 158          | 68          | 43.0        | 102        | 49          | 48.0        |
| 1657   | 371          | 225         | 60.6        | 80         | 44          | 55.0        |
| 1658   | 415          | 149         | 35.9        | 151        | 56          | 37.0        |
| 1659   | 494          | 268         | 54.2        | 156        | 90          | 57.6        |
| 1660   | 239          | 142         | 59.4        | 149        | 87          | 58.3        |
| Totals | <u>1808</u>  | <u>919</u>  | <u>50.8</u> | <u>751</u> | <u>355</u>  | <u>47.2</u> |

The majority of planters found indentured servants adequate for sugar production. The result was a very large increase in the demand for servants during the sugar boom of the late 1640s and early 1650s. The Civil War in England was critical in releasing large numbers of labourers, and between 1645 and 1650 at least 8,000 men joined the labour force of Barbados. By 1652, some 13,000 servants were employed in sugar production. (2) Governor Atkins noted that, during the period of early sugar production, these indentured servants '...did most of the work on the plantations.' (3) The '...poor tradesmen and artificers...' (4) from the British Isles were critical to the development of the sugar industry and capital accumulation in the colony.

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1. Tolzey Book of Indentures, 1654-86, B.A.O. (04220-1), Bristol Records office.
  2. Egerton Mss. 2395, also, An invoice of commodities to be sent to Barbados, 23 July 1656, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p.446.
  3. Gov. Atkins to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 26 Oct. 1680, C.S.P.C., 1677-80, no.1558.
  4. Egerton Mss. 2395, f. 632.

During this period, indentured servants<sup>were</sup>/experiencing the most degraded form of servitude, working as field-hands in gangs on the sugar plantations. (1) Sugar production in both the Old and New Worlds has been associated with slave labour, and servants found their working relationships in Barbados more oppressive than anything they had experienced in Britain. They worked in gangs with their African counterparts under severe overseers. The evidence of servants working with slaves in the sugar fields is interesting because it became common in the eighteenth century to designate field work as 'nigger work.' Ligon noted how they worked as field-hands on the sugar estates between 1647 and 1650. He concluded that they got a harder share of the work than the slaves who were worked lightly during their first two years of 'seasoning'.

The hours of field work were indeed long. Barbadian planters operated on the 'sun-up till sun-down' rule, using all daylight hours to advance the plantation. The work was hard, the diet poor, and the overseers brutal in their discipline. The planters, unlike Hegel's conception of masters, sought not recognition from their servants, but hard work and peaceable behaviour. Ligon worked on Col. Modyford's plantation which contained twenty eight servants and was able, therefore, to provide a first hand account of the working lives of the servants. He noted that when the servant

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1. Pitman, F.W., The Development of the British West Indies, 1700-1760 (London, 1967), pp. 45-7.

ships arrived the planters hurried aboard to inspect the cargo. After the allotted time, which was given to allow the rural planters to travel into town, the sale began. It was a time of great activity at Carlisle Bay as the auctions dominated the town's business. After making his purchases, the planter would send his new servants to the plantation with an overseer. On their arrival at the plantation the servants had to build their huts in which they were to live over the period of their indentures.

The next day work began with the ringing of a bell at six a.m. According to Ligon, '...if they resist, their times are doubled...' and '...if they complain they are beaten by the overseers....' (1) The relationship between white overseers and Black slaves has been looked at by several writers who developed racial theories from what was basically a power relationship. But there was another relationship in slave society, between white servants and white overseers, which was also tyrannical, ruthless and aggressive. Here, one has to look not at racial confrontation but at class conflict in the process of capitalist production. In terms of field labour, things had hardly changed for the servants by the mid-1650s. The Black population had now risen to 20,000 but no clear division of labour along racial lines had yet developed, and servants were still

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.44.



working in field gangs.

In 1655, one observer noted that in spite of the large number of African slaves on the island, the

custom of all merchants trading thither is to bring as many men and women as they can. No sooner doth a ship come to an anchor than the Islanders go aboard, enquiring what servants they can buy...these servants planteth, weedeth and manureth their ground all by hand in which lieth their estates. (1)

The agricultural practice of manuring became very important as soil fertility and yield per acre began to fall after the 1650s. Generally, planters kept a gang of female servants'...that weed and do common work...' (2) about the plantations. After the 1670s, however, female servants were not used in the fields, but were kept primarily for domestic and sexual functions.

Field servants were divided into three basic groups. Firstly, there was a group of 'subordinate overseers' who formed part of each gang and were responsible for making sure that each daily task was completed. Secondly, there were the gangs of 'common servants' who did most of the field work with the slaves. Thirdly, there were the gangs of 'common women' who performed work about the plantations. (3)

1. Francis Barrington to Sir John Barrington, 5 June 1655,

Historical Manuscripts Commission, report 7,572 a.

2. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p. 112.

3. Ibid.

Planters saw their servants and slaves not in terms of their class origins, whether European gentry or African chieftaincy, but in terms of their productive utility. (1) Heinrich Von Uchteritz, a German mercenary captured at the Battle of Worcester in 1651, was sent by Cromwell as a servant to Barbados the following year. On attaining freedom, he wrote that he was given a few days to acclimatize (a privilege denied servants a decade earlier) and was then set to work on the estate feeding pigs, cleaning, and doing arduous tasks in the sugar fields, which he considered beneath him - a man of 'breeding and good family'. (2) Three years later, the Salisbury rebels who were 'sold' in Barbados were incorporated into the ranks of the 'common labourers'. They were kept '...grinding at the mills, attending at the furnaces, and digging in the scorching land...' (3) The planters held the view that their indentured servants were a form of property, which had to be fully exploited, and <sup>thus</sup> their employment in the 'scorching fields' with the slaves posed no contradictions.

The data for Mount Clapham plantation (of 400 acres in 1654 and which was located in the parish of St. Michael) show that it operated with a gang of fifteen servants and ten slaves. (4) Similarly,

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1. Batie, R.C., 'Why Sugar? Economic Cycles and Changing of Staples in the English and French Antilles, 1624-54', J.C.H., vols. 8-9 (1976); p.22.
  2. Gunkel, A., and Handler, J.S., 'A German Indentured Servant in Barbados, 1652: The Account of Heinrich Von Uchteritz', J.B.M.H.S., vol.33, no.3 (May, 1970), p.93.
  3. Rivers, M., and Foyle, O., England's Slavery or Barbados Merchandize ... (London, 1659).
  4. Inventory of Mount Clapham Plantation, June 1654, R.B.3/3, f.112. Bar.Arc.



Robert Hooper's estate of 200 acres in the same year operated with a labourforce of fifty four Africans and thirty five servants; twenty five of the servants worked in the fields, whilst another five did common work in the mill and boiling house. An observer, in 1667, noted that he saw '... 30, sometimes 40, Christians, English, Scots and Irish (servants) at work in the scorching sun without shoes or stocking....' (1) The common use of servants as field hands was in part a response of planters not to over work and lose their expensive slave labour in the seasoning period. The market value of slaves doubled once they became seasoned, and it was only rational that diligent planters protected this costly investment. This meant that unseasoned slaves were protected from off-plantation work such as public occupation, cleaning and maintaining roads, sewage work, and the building <sup>of</sup> bridges. Servants were, therefore, called upon to perform these kinds of tasks.

The number of slaves in the colony had exceeded the number of servants by 1656 when an Act was passed ordering that, 'For every five acres each man possess he shall find one able servant for the day, with sufficient tools for the performance of ye said worke according as ye surveyor in his general precinct all ordered....' (2) Such work often involved the use of ill-made explosives, exposure to malaria and the subjection to brutal parish overseers. Servants were unable to refuse such work, and early in their lives on the plantations learnt to play the 'sambo' roles: some were docile and showed childlike responses to planter sponsored stimuli, blended with a calculated determination to take advantage of

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1. Some Observations on the Island of Barbados, 1667, C O.1/21, no. 170, P.R.O.

2. Acts of Barbados, Davis Mss., Box 7, no. 13.

3. See Blassingame, J., The Slave Community; Plantation Life in the Ante-bellum South (N.Y., 1972), Chap. 5.



the master at times of crises. These characteristics, argues Genovese, are common to all slave and oppressed classes, irrespective of their race. (1)

In 1645, George Downing explained in a letter to John Winthrop the very important relationship between indentured servitude, Black slavery, and plantation profitability in Barbados. According to Downing, a man in Barbados was severely limited on his estate until he was able to obtain a large stock of servants. Servant labour was to be used for the arduous preliminary stages of development, and then the master could '...procure negroes out of the increase...' (2) of the plantation. The idea of the early sugar planters, therefore, was to exploit as severely as possible their indentured servants and use the capital accumulated for the purchase of negroes. The effect of this management policy was that both the servant and slave population increased considerably. This can be illustrated by the use of a sample which shows the labour composition of thirteen plantations between 1644 and 1657.

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1. Genovese, E., The World the Slaveholders Made (N.Y., 1969), p.5.
  2. George Downing to Winthrop, 26 Aug. 1645, in Forbes, A.B., et.al., eds., Winthrop Papers, vol.5, p.43.

T.14-Labour Composition of 13 Barbadian Estates, 1644-57(1)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Planter</u>    | <u>Size(acres)</u> | <u>Servants</u> | <u>Slaves</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1644        | Peter Hay         | 60                 | 6               | 21            |
| 1646        | Anthony Cooper    | 205                | 21              | 9             |
| 1646        | ?                 | 500                | 40              | 50            |
| 1647        | William Hilliard  | 500                | 28              | 96            |
| 1648        | Henry Walrond     | 250                | 10              | 29            |
| 1649        | William Powry     | 416                | 7               | 23            |
| 1654        | (Mount Clapham)   | 400                | 15              | 10            |
| 1656        | George Martine    | 209                | 6               | 60            |
| 1656        | William Watson    | ?                  | 5               | 2             |
| 1656        | Christopher Carew | -                  | 16              | 5             |
| 1657        | Anthony Woodward  | -                  | 20              | 39            |
| 1657        | Thomas Maycock    | -                  | 6               | 3             |
| 1657        | Anthony Read      | 75                 | 21              | 49            |

The sugar industry brought two continents into the economic rationalisation of the planter. Africa and Europe were now to be evaluated<sup>u</sup> for their relative contribution to the planters' objective of rapid capital accumulation. It was later in the eighteenth century that the phobia against field work was developed in the West Indies. Branded as 'nigger work', the servant's experience in the sugar fields had to be ignored and forgotten. In the early nineteenth century Dickson wrote, 'I may add, that scandal and pride apart, it is hardly to be expected that whitemen will submit to the severe and endless drudgery of the field, on sugar plantations.' (2) But they did for thirty years in Barbados. It was this very extreme degradation and exploitation of indentured servants in the sugar fields which was the training ground for African slave labour. (3)

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1. Inventories of Barbados, RB.3/1, f.418, RB.3/3, ff.13, 48, 112, 130, 117, 134-5. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.68. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.22.

2. Dickson, W., The Mitigation of Slavery (Lon., 1814), p.26 also p.429.

3. Williams, E., From Columbus to Castro; The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969 (Lon., 1970), p.103.

SECTION THREETHE SERVANT TRADEPart A Mercantilists and the Demand for Servant Labour

Early mercantilists were firmly committed to the use of indentured labour as the basis of English colonial development in the New World. They produced volumes of controversial and propagandist works to enhance the supply and demand for indentured labour, and argued steadily about the importance of a servant trade to the economic development of <sup>both</sup> the colonies and England. In the pre-Restoration period, labour ideologies were shaped and mobilised to legitimise the trade in British labour to the plantations. There were two central themes in the mercantilist's argument. Firstly, how to develop a labour market in the colonies from the lower orders of British society, and secondly, how to bring the colonies under a labour dependence on the 'mother country'. These themes were important to the mercantile conception of England and her plantations as 'one great body' and a self-supporting empire. (1)

The labour ideologies which the mercantilists developed must be understood in relation to the expressive nationalism which was at the core of their political and economic writings. Where nationalism is dominant in the thoughts and policies of any society, argued Furniss, the individual worker finds that

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1. Cary, J., Essays towards the Regulation of Trade (Lon., 1719), p. 48.

Lipson, E., The Economic History of England (Lon., 1943), vol. 3, p. 154.



his personal inclinations and utility are forced to give way before the supreme consideration of the national purpose.(1) Such was the position of the English labourer in the first half of the seventeenth century, when the supreme national purpose was the erection and profitable exploitation of a colonial empire, thus, the immediate relationship between the English labourer and the West Indian plantations.

The 'duty to work' and the 'right to work' ideologies were formulated and popularised by the mercantilist doctrinaires. Each labourer had a duty to work as part of his moral obligation and responsibility to society. If he could not find work the community had a right to find work for him, but work he must. These labour ideologies together with the findings of demographers and statisticians (that in the pre-Restoration period the country was greatly overpopulated) provided the theoretical basis for the economic legitimisation of the servant trade.

In the first decades of the century, popular economic theory suggested that if the population of a country relative to the stock of capital was too great, the economic ruin of the country was inevitable. The advocates of the overpopulation thesis saw the West Indian colonies as rescuing the economy, by functioning as a demographic valve. The plantations, therefore, were to provide that great benefit of taking unto its labour market those who lived '...idly at home and are burthenous, chargeable and unprofitable to the realm....' (2)

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1. Furniss, E., The Position of the Laborer in a system of Nationalism (N.Y., 1957), pp. 15-40.

2. Lipson, E., The Economic History of England, vol. 3, p. 164

Governor Dale of Virginia, as early as 1610, argued that the Spanish had greatly populated their American colonies by the exportation of rogues, vagrants, convicts and the unemployed poor. He further suggested that the King, equipped with this precedent, should charter the trade by giving the merchants the institutional machinery to export large numbers of servants to the colonies.(1) There was a unity of opinion amongst the colonists and the pre-Restoration mercantalists that indentured servitude was an ideal system for plantation development. The servants would also provide a consumer market for cheap, low quality English manufactures, work for the shippers and mariners, taxes and duties for the Monarch, and thereby add immeasurably to the welfare of the Empire.(2)

The planters suggested that the indentured servants could make the necessary contribution to the socio-economic development of the colonies in four important ways. Firstly, they could build and reproduce a colonial labouring class ; secondly, provide a loyal core of men for defense; thirdly, provide a cargo to attract the merchants , and finally, guarantee a flow of useful technological skills from Europe. Some of these objectives were more important than others at different stages in colonial development. But the important point was that, the planters were well placed to obtain a large supply of indentured servants, as they had the full mercantile support and interest behind them.

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1. Governor Dale to Secretary Salisbury, 17 Aug. 1610, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p. 12.

2. Ibid.

As early as the 1640s, the English Government was responding to Barbadian demands for indentured labour. A House of Lords debate of 1647 noted that in Barbados there '...is a great want of servants, as well for the raising of commodities apt to be produced there, as for defense....' (1) The spasmodic economic booms of the first two decades of settlement created a large demand for white labour. When <sup>the</sup> planters made the transition to sugar in the mid-1640s, the demand for servant labour was described as being 'insatiable'. (2) In Barbados, indentured servants were '...hailed with delight by planters and farmers who wanted cheap labour...' (3) to exploit in their 'mad rush' to make fortunes.

In 1651, the Charter of Barbados stated that the principal source '...of wealth of the inhabitants of the island consisteth chiefly in the labour of their servants.' (4) This is illustrative of the crucial role played by servants in the transition to sugar.

1. Stock, L., ed., Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliament respecting North America, 1542-1739 (Washington, 1924), vol. 1, pp. 185-6
2. Eggleston, E., 'Social Conditions in the Colonies', The Century Monthly Magazine (Oct., 1884), pp. 853-4.
3. Smith, A.E., Colonists in Bondage, p. 4.
4. The Charter of Barbados, 1651, Davis Mss., Box 11, p. 12.



The sugar revolution created in Barbados a '...vociferous demand for white servants.' (1) Petitions from the Assemblies to Whitehall demanding that merchants be given wider powers to organise the servant trade were incessant. The English Govern<sup>n</sup>ment responded with the Navigation Acts of 1650, 1651, 1660 and 1661, which effectively diminished the volume of the trade by making Scottish shipping to the colonies illegal. The Barbadians were angered by these laws, in spite of the formation of slave trading companies in 1663 and 1672. A petition of the Barbadians in September 1667 asked '...for free trade with and a supply of servants from Scotland, and permission for the present transport of 1,000 or 2,000 English servants....' (2) Another in 1670 noted that the past economic growth of the colony could not be maintained without '... a continual supply of servants from England....' (3)

During the 1670s, the petitions from the Barbadians increased significantly; all demanded a large supply of servants from Scotland and England to supplement the African slave labour force. They proposed a trade from Scotland, where servants were more readily available, in order to stock the plantations with artisans and overseers and to restore the military balance of the colony. (4) In 1670, the planters even petitioned for a servant supply from the islands of '... Jersey and Guernsey...' (5) to meet their demands.

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1. Smith, A.E., Colonists in Bondage, p. 31

2. Representative of Barbados to the King, 5 Sept. 1667, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p. 495.

3. Memorial of Merchants trading to the plantations to the Lords' Committee of Trade and Plantations, Jan. 1670, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, p. 58

4. Minutes of Council and Assembly, 19 Feb. 1671, CO.31/2, f.107.

5. A.P.C.C., vol. 1, pp.497-80. Also see, Letter from the Gentlemen Planters of London to King, 20 April 1670, CO.31/2, f. 27.

In 1670, Lord Willoughby analysed the effects of the Navigation Acts on the Barbadian labour supply, and concluded that the damage was great, since the servants, especially the Scottish, had been '...the chief instruments in bringing Barbados to its perfection.' (1) The planters made it clear that this was no empty exclamation in order to circumvent the Navigation Laws, and argued that from their experience they found the Scottish servants to be the best. In December 1683, Gov. Dutton noted that

...the island of Barbados wanted a yearly supply of white servants not only for the plantations employment, but... for keeping up the militia of the country...I humbly offer to your Lords... that they may have such a proportion yearly of servants from Scotland as may supply the necessities of the island, they finding by long experience that they are much the better servants, than any that are sent thither from any other place. (2)

There was a general hostility to the Irish servants, who were stereotyped as lazy, drunken, noisy and opposed to the English and Protestant interest. As early as 1644, the Barbados Assembly tried to prevent the increase of Irish in the colony by an Act which prevented the sale of all Irish servants. (3) By 1660, about 40% of the servant population was Irish, which signalled the failure of the law. Even during the persistent petitioning for servants in the second half of the century, Gov. Willoughby was able to instruct the Privy Council to '...prevent any excess of Irish in future...'(4)

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1. See Nicholas Blake to King, 20 Oct. 1670, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, p.116.
  2. Gov. Dutton to Lords of Trade, 19 Dec. 1683, CO.29/3, f.214.
  3. Schomburgh, R., The History of Barbados, p.84.
  4. Gov. William Willoughby to Privy Council, 16 Dec. 1667, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.526.



By the 1680s, the slaves were also replacing the servants as artisans on and off the plantations,<sup>and</sup> thereby, eroding the effective demand for indentured labour. In 1685, Gov. Dutton informed the Lords of Trade and Plantations that the demand for indentured servants was now principally for the upkeep of the local militia, and for policing the slaves. (1) In both of these roles the planters had little confidence in the servants. They were prone, to be as rebellious as the slaves, and frequently refused to fight for the island. By the mid 1690s, '...this old system of defense by white servants had broken down...' (2) and servants were no longer demanded in a systematic manner. Slaves were now mostly policed by specialist military tenants brought out from England and trained only for this task, whilst the English naval fleet became the core of protection from other colonial powers in the region.

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1. Gov. Dutton to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 10 June 1683, CO.29/3, f.214.
  2. Fortescue, J.W., ed., Preface to C.S.P.C., 1697-8, p.viii.



The trade in indentured labour from the British Isles to the sugar colonies was part of the wider allocation of productive resources in the Atlantic economy which included capital, technology, and commercial facilities. (1) Like the trade in African labour, which brought another continent's resources into the reach of the West Indian economy, the trade in white servant labour developed within the context of European mercantile capitalist expansion and the rise of 'colonial modes of production'.

The quantitative importance of the servant trade is of immense historical significance. One authority estimated that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries more than half of all persons who came to the English colonies, south of New England, were indentured servants. (2) Another noted that nearly half of the total immigration to the West Indian colonies was by indenture. (3) During the 1660s, the critical reversal took place; the servant trade became the minority trade and the slave trade became dominant.

The creation of a trade in labour from Britain was seen as an unprecedented step in British history. It could not have taken place with such magnitude without the critical role of the State, which created under mercantile pressure the necessary legal and administrative superstructure for its effective entrenchment in the first half of the century.

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1. Thomas, B., Migration and Economic Growth; A study of Great Britain and the Atlantic Economy (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 1-2.
  2. Smith, A. E., Colonists in Bondage, pp. 3-4.
  3. Goodrich, C., 'Indenture', Encyclopaedia of Social Science (N.Y., 1930-5), p. 646.

In the pre-sugar era, voluntary servants found themselves in Barbados mainly through personal arrangements with individual planters and merchants. But the level of demand generated by the sugar revolution could not be met without widespread organisation, propaganda campaigns, and State assistance. In 1646, the English Government issued a general memorandum to encourage the trade. The document, dated 23 June 1646, provided:

Be it further ordained by the said Lords and Commons, that it shall be lawful for any person or persons, subject of this kingdome to... transport from hence into the said several plantations such persons being fit to serve, or advance the trade there as shall be willing to do servitude, as to be employed in the said foreign plantations.(1)

This document gave legal legitimisation to the trade in indentured labour, and became the security of merchants and agents who began immediately to establish systems for the supply of this cheap labour.

There were few serious obstacles to overcome in procuring a supply of servants. Many English workers were already accustomed to long distance migration in search of employment. The contemporary outcry against the apparent increase in vagrancy was the social product of a dislocated market seeking equilibrium. The decision of workers to take one further step in the migration process to the colonies was not, therefore, as difficult as hitherto assumed.(2)

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1. Ordinance of the Privy Council, 23 June 1646, Davis Mss. Box 7, no. 2.

2. Stone, L., The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641 (Oxford, 1965), chap. 2. Also, Laslett, P., The World we have Lost (Lon., 1965).

The 1646 Ordinance stated that the name of the servant sent to the colony was to be entered in a journal. This was an early precaution to ensure the legality of the trade and to guard against the practice of kidnapping. When the servant offered his services he was to be issued a copy of the contract of indenture, which he was to carry as proof of his status in the colony, after he had registered it at the secretary's office. In Barbados, the incoming of servants resembled the slave trade to such an extent that the secretaries ignored this stipulation, and registers were not kept.

A copy of the indenture form showing age, destination, terms of agreement, signature or mark, occupation, and place of birth was to be filed at the port of departure. Only Bristol kept a systematic record of the servant trade. The names of the departing servants were recorded for the period 1654 to 1686 with reasonable care, partly to undermine the popular view that the city contained the largest kidnapping organisation in the country. These emigration entries are now filed in a ledger entitled the Tolzey Book. The London and Middlesex officials kept less systematic records during the 1680s, and Liverpool recorded the servants' particulars for the period 1697 to 1707. These data are all historians have so far to enable them to make judgements about the supply of voluntary servants to the colonies in the seventeenth century, and can be tabulated as follows:

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T.15 Servants leaving England for the Plantations, 1654-1707 (1)

| data set             | <u>Men</u>    |             | number       | <u>Women</u> |               | total |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------|
|                      | number        | percent     |              | percent      |               |       |
| Bristol, 1654-86     | 8,240         | 79.2        | 2,154        | 20.8         | 10,394        |       |
| London, 1683-86      | 610           | 69.0        | 274          | 31.0         | 884           |       |
| Middlesex, 1683-4    | 654           | 80.6        | 157          | 19.4         | 811           |       |
| Liverpool, 1697-1707 | 1,039         | 72.0        | 404          | 28.0         | 1,443         |       |
| <u>totals</u>        | <u>10,543</u> | <u>77.9</u> | <u>2,989</u> | <u>22.1</u>  | <u>13,532</u> |       |

1. Bristol data: Tolzey Book, B.A.O. , 04220.

London data : Boxes of indentures to the colonies. City of London Corporation Records office. Tabulated in Ghirelli, M., A List of Emigrants from England to America, 1682-1692 (Baltimore, 1968).

Middlesex data: tabulated in Nicholson, G.D., Some early Emigrants to America (Baltimore, 1905) . Also Waring, J., ' Some early Emigrants to America, 1683-4: A Supplementary List', Genealogists' Magazine, vol. 18, no. 5 (March, 1976), pp. 239-46.

Liverpool data: tabulated in French, E., List of Emigrants to America from Liverpool, 1697-1707 (Baltimore, 1969).

During the Protectorate, (as part of Cromwell's ' Westerne Design ' to drive the Spanish from the Caribbean and to consolidate the achievements of the English at the expense of the Dutch commercialists ) the trade in servant labour was greatly encouraged. Merchants were given rights to establish publicity programmes and agencies in most major English ports. The servant class in Barbados was unable to reproduce itself naturally, and needed an annual input of at least 6000 servants to prevent a decrease.

Between 1654 and 1686, according to the Bristol data, a total of 10,394 servants left that port for the plantations, at an average rate of 324.8 per year. From 1679, the data are rather incomplete and poorly entered. The information, however, is useful in that it gives a reasonable idea of the volume of traffic handled by one port, and the kind of people who were finding servitude in the colonies attractive. The aggregate distribution of the servants departing from Bristol amongst the various colonies can be tabulated as follows:

Percentage Distribution of Servants departing from Bristol, 1654-86 (1)

T.16

|             |       |      |
|-------------|-------|------|
| Virginia    | ..... | 46.8 |
| Barbados    | ..... | 25.7 |
| Nevis       | ..... | 11.9 |
| Jamaica     | ..... | 4.5  |
| New England | ..... | 1.5  |
| Maryland    | ..... | 1.3  |
| Others      | ..... | 1.6  |
| Not Given   | ..... | 6.3  |

The Bristol data must be carefully analysed. The fact that Barbados got only 25.7% of the total trade over the period, and Virginia 46.8%, must be superimposed on the economic development of the two colonies. In the first ten years of the record when Barbados was using servants as field-hands in sugar production, the colony was absorbing more servants from Bristol than any other colony. It was only after the mid-1660s that Virginia overtook Barbados as the leading market in servant labour. Bristol handled the largest trade in servant labour. The trade from Liverpool, London, Dover, Plymouth and Cork were smaller and less consistent.

T.17- West Indian Destinations of Servants Leaving London, 1683-6(1)

| <u>Colony</u> | <u>1683</u> |              | <u>1684</u> |              | <u>1685</u> |              | <u>1686</u> |              | <u>totals</u> |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
|               | <u>men</u>  | <u>women</u> | <u>men</u>  | <u>women</u> | <u>men</u>  | <u>women</u> | <u>men</u>  | <u>women</u> |               |
| Barbados      | 4           | 1            | 14          | 1            | 48          | 9            | 16          | 6            | 99            |
| Antigua       | -           | -            | 1           | -            | 3           | 3            | 2           | 1            | 10            |
| Nevis         | 1           | -            | 2           | -            | 5           | 7            | -           | -            | 14            |
| Jamaica       | 4           | 1            | 74          | 16           | 98          | 46           | 27          | 10           | 276           |
| Others        | 5           | 3            | 1           | -            | 2           | 8            | 6           | 4            | 29            |

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1. From the Lord Mayor's records book, vols. 12-15,  
City of London Corporation Records Office. Also Ghirelli, M.,  
A List of Emigrants.



Destinations of men servants supplied from Liverpool to  
the colonies, 1697-1702(1)

T.18

| <u>Date</u>   | <u>Barbados</u> | <u>Leewards</u> | <u>New England</u> | <u>Virginia/<br/>Maryland</u> | <u>not given</u> |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1697          | -               | -               | -                  | 13                            | -                |
| 1698          | 19              | 1               | -                  | 218                           | 164              |
| 1699          | -               | 3               | 34                 | 146                           | 64               |
| 1700          | -               | 9               | -                  | 45                            | 43               |
| 1701          | -               | 2               | -                  | 47                            | 37               |
| 1702          | 1               | 1               | -                  | 6                             | 32               |
| <b>totals</b> | <b>20</b>       | <b>16</b>       | <b>34</b>          | <b>475</b>                    | <b>340</b>       |

During the sugar revolution, Barbados was seen by the English labourers as a place where, with good luck and enterprise, a man could raise a fortune. They were also aware that in Barbados there was the most brutal servitude in English America. This dual conception of the colony had the effect of attracting the young, the skilled and the strong, the kind of lively spirits the planters were willing to accept. The Bristol and London data allow the historian to make certain qualitative judgements about the people who composed the servant class in Barbados. This is important for the proper understanding of servitude, for it was common for contemporaries, especially those of the pro-planter persuasion, to suggest that the servants were merely the social

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1. French, E., List of Emigrants to America from Liverpool.

'scum' of the society. This kind of argument was very common in the second half of the century, when the colonies were accused of draining away the artisans and other important skilled workers from England, and of endangering the economic growth of the country. For example, Josiah Child stated in 1688, that '...Barbados was first peopled by a sort of loose vagrant people, vicious and destitute of means to live at home, being unfit for labour, or such as could find none at home to employ themselves....' (1) Such statements tell more about the condition of the English labour market than about the servants themselves.

The occupational and class origins of the servants who registered at Bristol for servitude in the colonies can be shown as follows:

T.19 Occupational and Class analysis of servants registered to go to Plantations from Bristol, 1654-86. (2)

|                             |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Yeomen                      | 39 % |
| Artisans                    | 23 % |
| Husbandmen                  | 16 % |
| Labourers                   | 13 % |
| Gentlemen/<br>Professionals | 2 %  |
| not given                   | 7 %  |

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1. Cited in Williams, E., From Columbus to Castro, p. 99.

2. Tolzey book, op. cit.

The data substantiate the point that the Barbadians were getting the kind of labour<sup>they</sup> demanded. The island was attracting the skilled workers who felt confident that they could survive at the frontier, and accumulate wealth in spite of the instability and uncertainty. The scattered data for London also illustrate a predominance of farmers and artisans, and a minority of labourers without skills. In these data, the farmers and skilled workers outnumber the unskilled labourers four to one. (1) A sample of ninety indentures from a collection of 141, shows that the servants going to Barbados from London possessed skills that represented a wide cross section of the City's industrial population.

T.20 Sample of 90 servants going to Barbados from London, 1684-92 (2)

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>No.</u> | <u>Occupation</u> | <u>No.</u> |
|-------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| weaver            | 9          | glassbottle maker | 1          |
| labourer          | 15         | clerk             | 1          |
| scrivener         | 1          | gardener          | 2          |
| mason             | 1          | silkman           | 1          |
| printer           | 1          | baker             | 1          |
| soldier           | 2          | woolmaker         | 2          |
| linen draper      | 1          | printer boy       | 1          |
| clothier          | 4          | carpenter         | 2          |
| bodicemaker       | 1          | blacksmith        | 4          |
| silver-smith      | 1          | vintner           | 1          |
| shoemaker         | 5          | farmer            | 1          |
| wigmaker          | 1          | pipemaker         | 1          |
| tailor            | 3          | husbandman        | 4          |
| mariner           | 4          | starchmaker       | 1          |
| buttonmaker       | 1          | gunner            | 2          |
| pipemaker         | 1          | sawyer            | 1          |
| bricklayer        | 3          | cooper            | 2          |
| wheelwright       | 1          | porter            | 1          |
| butcher           | 2          | basket maker      | 1          |
| solicitor         | 1          | glazier           | 1          |
| tallow chandler   | 1          | yeoman            | 2          |
| cordwainer        | 1          |                   |            |

1. Boxes of indentures, City Of London Records Office.

2. Ibid.



The majority of the servants were very young. The old could not survive seven years of servitude on Barbadian plantations. The age structure of the servants leaving from London and Middlesex between 1683 and 1686 can be shown as follows:

T.21 Age Structure of Servants leaving London for the Colonies, 1683-6(1)

| <u>Age</u>    | <u>men</u> | <u>women</u> |
|---------------|------------|--------------|
| 10-15         | 36         | 9            |
| 16-20         | 53         | 46           |
| 21-42         | 93         | 39           |
| 25-30         | 48         | 14           |
| 31-35         | 7          | -            |
| 36-40         | 4          | 1            |
| 41 and over   | 1          | -            |
| <u>totals</u> | <u>610</u> | <u>274</u>   |

T.22 Age structure of Servants leaving Middlesex for Colonies 1683-4. (2)

| <u>Age</u>    | <u>men</u> | <u>women</u> |
|---------------|------------|--------------|
| 10-15         | 20         | 5            |
| 16-20         | 109        | 39           |
| 21-24         | 340        | 88           |
| 25-30         | 128        | 20           |
| 31-35         | 29         | 1            |
| 36-40         | 5          | -            |
| 40 and over   | 1          | -            |
| not given     | 14         | 12           |
| <u>totals</u> | <u>646</u> | <u>165</u>   |

1. Ghirelli, M., A list of Emigrants from England to America.
2. Nicholson, C.D., Some Early Emigrants. Also, Waring, J., 'Some Early Emigrants to America' .

The Bristol and London data give very little information on female servants, apart from the common references to their marital status. Women made up less than 25% of the servants going to Barbados, in spite of the great demand for them there as domestics, wives, seamstresses and whores. Seventeenth century farmers and artisans considered it their duty to provide their daughters with marriages rather than indentures or apprenticeships. There is, however, evidence that women did travel long distances to Bristol to indenture themselves for Barbados.

The vast majority of the female servants, like the common labourers, were illiterate, which could account for their small numbers in the servant trade. At least 98% of the indenture contracts signed at Bristol by women and labourers were marked, rather than signed. Recent work on literacy in pre-industrialised England shows that illiteracy was far less common amongst artisans than labourers. One sample for the 1630s shows (tabulated below) illiteracy amongst the labourers. Without this basic skill, labourers

T.23 Illiteracy of Willmakers in the Diocese of Norwich, 1630s(1)

| <u>group</u>         | <u>no. of samples</u> | <u>% illiteracy</u> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Gentry               | 34                    | 3                   |
| Traders and Artisans | 129                   | 60                  |
| Labourers            | 10                    | 100                 |

found themselves severely disadvantaged on the colonial market. It is, therefore, not surprising that the sugar planters were demanding and getting workers with useful agro-industrial skills. In this respect, the servant trade was highly responsive to the qualitative labour demands of the planters.

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<sup>1</sup>. Cressey, D., 'Literacy in Seventeenth Century England; more evidence', Journal of Inter-disciplinary History, vol.8, no.1 (Summer, 1977), p. 150.

Both the English State and the planters were aware that the supply of voluntary indentured servants was too irregular, and insufficient to meet the demand. From the 1620s, the plantation lobby began to assert strong ideological and political pressures on the British labour markets. The unemployed poor (vagrants, beggars—the result of a feudal social formation undergoing a dynamic process of structural transformation as a result of capitalist market forces) were to be relocated by the State for servitude in the sugar fields. The Elizabethan State had already defined what the lumpen-proletariat consisted of, the statute of 39th Eliz. defined them as tinkers, jugglers, peddlars, wanderers, common labourers, loiterers, beggars and other loose and idle persons who could not give good account of themselves. This category, into which many workers of Stuart society could be placed, was to become the victim of a ruthless and unprecedented design by the State and the mercantile interests. The laws of England were to be the key instrument in the trade of the lumpen-proletariat to the colonies.

In February 1652, it was enacted that it  
 ...may be lawfull for...two or more justices of the peace within any county, citty or towne corporate of any belonging to this commonwealth to from tyme to tyme by warrant... cause to be apprenhended seize on and detained all and every person or persons that shall be found begging and vagrant ...in any towne, parish or place to be conveyed into the port of London, or unto any other port...from where every such person or persons may be shipped... into



any forraign collonie or plantation....(1)

Barbados was seen by the merchants as the most lucrative market for this kind of labour. During the 1650s, Barbados received over 3,000 servants shipped out by the law from the various ports. In the early 1660s, when there was a recession in this supply, the Barbadians became disturbed and petitioned the King that magistrates must do their duty and send out to the plantations all '...idle persons that can give no account of themselves....'(2)

The failure of Cromwell's 'Western Design', described by the Venetian Secretary in London as <sup>the</sup> '...unfortunate enterprise of the Indies...' (3), dealt a severe blow to the Barbadian sugar planters, who had supplied the naval fleet with some 2,000 of their servants; the '...majority perishing under the stress of war and famine in the island of Jamaica....'(4) This meant that Cromwell was indebted to the Barbadians, the colonists who made the greatest single contribution to his failed New World ambitions.

Secretary Giavarina noted that Cromwell, in an effort to repay the Barbadians, sent '...several troops...' into London searching '...for women of loose life to put 1,200 of them on board three ships to take to the island....'(5) In March 1656, Cromwell gave specific orders for pressing '...2,000 young women in England...' (6) to be sent to Barbados. Within a few days of the order 400 were recruited and put on board ten ships for the colony. (7) There is

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1. Egerton Mss. 2395, ff. 228-9.

2. Proposal to the King from the plantations, 1664, C.S.P.C., 1661-8, p.221, no.772.

3. Francisco Giavarina, 3 March 1656, C.S.P.V., 1655-6, p. 184

4. Ibid.

5. Francisco Giavarina, Dec. 1656, C.S.P.V., 1655-6, p.309

6. Francisco Giavarina, 4 March, C.S.P.V., 1655-6, pp.209-10, 309.

no evidence, though it was widely beleived, that Barbadians used these women for 'servant breeding'. (1) But the 3,000 or so received during the Interregnum did help to maintain/<sup>both</sup>a healthy sex balance in the white community and the popular image of Barbados as having more whores per square mile than any other colony.

Henry Whistler, who arrived on the Island during the mid-1650s, witnessed this process. He wrote

... this island is the dunghill whereon England doth cast forth its rubbish. Rogues and whores and such people are those which are generally brought here...a rogue in England will hardly make a cheater here. A bawd brought over puts on a demure comportment, a whore if handsome makes a wife to some rich planter.... (2)

These practices continued into the post-Restoration period. Magistrates were keen to exercise their legal powers in order to rid the country of the unemployed poor, who were seen as potential criminals and of no value to society. An example of this can be shown by the case of the four Devon men shipped out to Barbados in 1682. The magistrates of the county indicted Richard Stanley, Peter Stanley, Thomas Stanley and Mathew Eyre at the General Sessions'...for wandring in the said county as rogues, dangerous to the inferior sorts of people....' (3), according to the 39 Eliz. The magistrates contracted with the Bristol merchant, Walter Kelland,

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1. Cited in Birch, T., The Court and Times of James I (Lon., 1849), p. 108.
  2. Journal of Henry Whistler, 1655, in Firth, C.H., The Narrative of General Venables ... Expedition to the West Indies and the Conquest of Jamaica, 1654-55 (Lon., 1900), pp. 145-7.
  3. Minutes of the General Sessions, 23 June 1683, A.P.C.C. vol. 2, p. 36.



to transport them to Barbados, and to provide security that they would not return to England.(1) Their servitude in the colony was seen by the magistrates as ' ... a charity to the people and a service to the State....'(2)

The largest supply of juveniles to the sugar plantations came from London. An Act was passed in 1664 which encouraged the magistrates to round up certain kinds of juveniles and supply them to the West India merchants. It stipulated that the magistrates were to receive 50% of the capital which was paid by the merchants for this labour, and the other half was to go to the Crown.(3) But a 1651 law of Barbados provided that no merchant was to supply servants to the island who were under the age of fourteen without the written permission of their guardians or some authoritative person in the community. This law was ignored by the planters who accepted whatever servants the merchants supplied.(4) The consignments of juveniles, once authorised by the magistrates, were in compliance with the law. For example, in 1681, a London magistrate indentured to William Gentleman, a Barbadian merchant, a twelve year old boy. The lad was described as a '...pilfering boy that lie day and night in marketts and streets of this city; and have no friends or relations to take care or provide for him...'(5) Similarly , in the same year

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1. Minutes of the General Sessions, 23 June 1683, A.P.C.C., vol.2, f.36.
  2. Minutes of the Privy Council, 19 Jan.1683, Davis Mss, box 1, no.37, f.6.
  3. This law brought the judiciary into the market as a beneficiary.
  4. Charter of Barbados, 1651/2, Davis Mss. box 11.
  5. Barbados boxes of Indentures, 1682-92, City of London Corporation Records Office.



Francis Cherry, a boy of eleven years who '...has neither father nor mother living...', and George Fawre of the same age, '...being very poore and not able to maintain himself...' (1) were shipped to Barbados by magistrates as indentured servants. These kinds of boys were traditionally taken care of by the poor law institutions.

Like the African juveniles sold in Barbados, the white servant youths were utilised. They were integrated into the occupational structure of the plantations as 'pickaninnie gangs' who performed light tasks such as watching cattle, picking weed and carrying water. The usefulness of these gangs was so much appreciated that the Assembly was forced to lower the incoming age of servants to ten, to allow in a few hundred more annually. (2)

Barbados also received a considerable number of Scottish proletarians, despite the termination of a direct trade in voluntary servants from Scotland by the Navigation Laws. A decision was made during the Protectorate to circumvent the Navigation Law of 1651 by supplying Scots under special legal conditions. -This was the beginning of the Scottish labour recruitment programme of 1655. The agreement provided that a tax of six pence was to be imposed on every £100 of rent collected in Scotland, which was to be used for the payment of persons who organised and executed a trade to Barbados in vagrants and rogues. (3) The agents were to encourage the taking of more women than men, especially those that were single and could find husbands there for the reproduction of the white population. (4)

1. Ibid.

2. Proposals to the King and Council from Barbados, 1664, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.221, no.772.

3. Smith, A.E., Colonists in Bondage, p.144.

4. Davis Mss. box 1, no.37, f.1.

The Scots, though angered by the Navigation Laws, saw this as an excellent excuse to get rid of their 'social undesirables'. Between 1662 and 1665, the magistrates of Edinburgh consented to the shipment to Barbados of large numbers of whores, rogues and drunks and others who made civic life unpleasant for their class.

(1) The merchant who obtained a monopoly of this trade was George Hutcheson, a West India merchant. On December 7, 1665, for example, the magistrates of Edinburgh were instructed by the Privy Council to supply unto the said George Hutcheson the '... several prisoners within the Tolbuith of Edinburgh who of their owne accord are desyrous to be sent to Barbados...' and '... all prisoners for crymes who of their owne frie will are content to goe to Barbadoes...' and to encourage the sending of all lewd and dangerous persons who frequent the streets with no purpose or intent. (2)

Between the Restoration and the Glorious Revolution, at least 1,000 such people were shipped from Scotland to Barbados. But Barbadians considered this insufficient, and petitioned for a total free trade with Scotland for all types of Scottish labour. In this period, when Scottish towns were purging themselves of their unemployed, (who were then converging on the sugar estates of Barbados, much to the delight of the planters) the smallest offence was seen by <sup>the</sup> magistrates as sufficient to warrant ten years of servitude in Barbados. For example, in 1655, four young men were transported to Barbados from Edinburgh for interrupting one

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1. Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, 3rd series, vol.1, p.181. vol.2, p.101.

2. Ibid. vol.2, p.111.

Mr. James Scott, Minister of Ancram, whilst he was preaching to his congregation. (1)

During the century, Barbados, therefore, received a substantial amount of lumpen-proletarian labour which was transported under direct State authority, mostly under the condition that they were not to return. This was a condition on which merchants invariably had to place a financial guarantee. Both the West African societies and the English State adapted their legal systems to the needs of the plantation market, and engaged in the sale of their subjects, on whom a larger exchange value was placed than a domestic utility value.

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1. Davis Mss., box 5, no. 3.



It is now commonly accepted that the African slave trade could not have operated for over three centuries without the active participation of some African States and leaders, whose integration into the world market proved profitable. The human merchandise was largely obtained from political conflicts between neighbouring States and tribes. Few, however, are familiar with the ways in which white indentured labourers were taken from the British Isles to the West Indian plantations in the seventeenth century. The English State ruthlessly rounded up victims of political conflict in battle, at places like Dunbar, Worcester, Salisbury and during territorial expansionism in Ireland and elsewhere, for sale to West India merchants. In this respect, the English Governments and the African tribal leaders were motivated in common. This parallel was clear to some English Parliamentarians.

During a debate in 1659, over the 'enslavement' of the Salisbury rebels in Barbados, the question was often posed whether or not the Civil War was producing a flow of 'slaves' to the sugar colonies, and contradicting the very ideals of liberty and freedom which were supposedly being fought for. (1) During the debate, Sir John Lenthall pointed out, '...I hope it is not the effect of our war to make merchandise of men.' (2)

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1. For this fascinating debate see, Burton, T., Parliamentary Dairy, vol.4, pp. 253-274. Also Stock, L., ed., Proceedings and Debates, vol.1, pp. 253-259.

2. Stock, L., ed., Proceedings and Debates, vol.1, p. 256

Sir Arthur Haslerigge argued, '...if we have fought our sons into slavery were are all men most miserable.' (1) But these were indeed the consequences.

On 6 May 1893, an article appeared in a popular British Guiana newspaper, The Argosy, by a Col. A.B. Ellis entitled 'White Slaves and Bondservants in the Plantations'. The first sentence struck directly at this point, with the following statement:

Few but readers of old colonial State papers and records are aware that between the years 1649-1690 a lively trade was carried on between England and the plantations, as the colonies were then called, in political prisoners...where they were sold by auction to the colonists for various terms of years, sometimes for life as slaves. (2)

This trade was directed mainly at Barbados, and according to Thomas Carlyle, it was so large in volume and popular in social thought during the Protectorate, that an active verb was made of it; to be 'Barbadosed' largely replaced the word 'transported' in general use. (3)

Between 1649 and 1655, according to a planter's estimates, the Barbadians alone received and employed 12,000 prisoners of war, a number which almost equalled the supply of African slaves in the same period. (4) These estimates were supported by a merchant in 1668, who noted that '... the major part of English, Scots and Irish servants at Barbados were men who had been engaged in actual service against the Protector and transported for High Treason.' (5)

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1. Ibid.

2. The Argosy, 6 May 1893

3. Cited in Harlow, V.T., A History of Barbados, p. 295

4. Bridenbaugh, C., No Peace beyond the Line (N.Y., 1972), p. 196.

5. Add. Mss. 12410, Povey's Diary.

In 1655, after the failure of the ' Western Design ', Cromwell (in order to compensate the Barbadians for their assistance) decided to empty the prisons of captives and to send them to the sugar plantations of Barbados. The first order of that year stated that '...all English, Scots and Irish...prisoners in Dorchester gaol are to be forthwith sent to Barbados....' (1) Orders were also given for the shipment to Barbados and Jamaica of 1,200 men taken at Knockfergus and Port Patrick in Scotland. (2) These prisoners were handed over to Martin Noell, a prominent West India merchant with property in Barbados and a specialist servant trader. One typical order to a gaoler contained the following; to '...deliver unto Mr. Martin Noell to be transported to our island of Barbados in America, the bodies of Somerset Fox, Francis Fox(etc)..for High Treason.' (3)

Noell, who sent these men to Barbados at a cost of £5.10s. per head sold them on the market for between £10 and £30, according to their skills and health. Cromwell's commitment to the Barbadians affected the ways in which wars were fought, in terms of the treatment and disposal of the prisoners. It was well known that he personally saw to it that there was no

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1. Orders of the Council of State, 19 Oct. 1655, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p. 419.
  2. Orders of the Council of State, 22 May 1656, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p. 441.
  3. Orders of the Council of State, 16 Sept. 1655, Davis Mss, box 1, no. 16.



unnecessary killing which would deprive the sugar planters of labour. (1) After the Battle of Drogheda in September 1649, he wrote to John Bradshaw, President of Council, '...the enemy were about 3,000...and they made a stout resistance...' but those that escaped with their lives'...are in safe custody for Barbados....' (2) Carlyle fully understood the contradictions and ambiguities of Cromwell's policy, and wrote with the irony which typified his later writing ; ' A terrible Protector this...he dislikes shedding blood, but is very apt to Barbadoes any unruly man; he has sent us by the hundreds to Barbados....' (3)

The Restoration State emerged with a fierce political attack upon non-conformist political and religious groups. State powers were used extensively to suppress such groups, which culminated in the wholesale shipment of people to Barbados as indentured servants. The numbers were smaller than the Cromwellian political prisoners, but the Council for Foreign Plantations felt that the Barbadian Assembly needed some form of explanation. Whitehall informed the Barbadian Assembly, in 1663, that

Concerning the Quakers...malignant and assiduous promoters of doctrines directly tending to subvert both our Church and State , after all other means for a long tyme used in vaine, we were at last constreyned

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1. Ruchames, L., ' The Sources of Racial thought in Colonial America', Journal of Negro History-vol.52 (1967), p.260
  2. Carlyle, T., Cromwell's Life and Letters (Lon., 1865), vol.1, p.541.
  3. Cited in Harlow, V.T., A History of Barbados, pp.295-6

for our own safetie to pass a sentence of banishment  
against them... to your island.(1)

The Quakers were usually convicted and imprisoned in Bridewell or Newgate until the West India merchants took them away for sale. But they were considered a 'troublesome cargo' by the merchants, and difficult servants by the planters. Merchants regarded them as 'spiritual fiends', and, in an age of extreme superstition, blamed every unfortunate happening at sea on the evil powers of their 'cargo'. The planters saw them as having a limited value, since they would not take up arms to fight against either the slaves or external aggressors.

Large numbers of Presbyterians and Covenanters were banished to Barbados as servants in the 1670s. One Covanter, John Menzies, who was banished to Barbados from Scotland in 1676, was fortunate to survive, and wrote about his experiences.(2) As a school teacher in Scotland, well versed in the classical tradition, he was able to impress his master, who later reduced his servitude and employed him as a free worker on a yearly wage of £25. He noted how how fortunate he was as the sugar planters/<sup>usually</sup> considered it their duty to work to death/<sup>the</sup> political and religious prisoners.

Probably the largest single group of servants sent to Barbados in the late seventeenth century was the Monmouth rebels of 1685. Barbadians were, indeed, glad to have them, and they were quickly put to work in the mills, boiler houses, and sugar cane fields about the island. From the outset, James II made his

1. Order of the Council for Foreign Plantations to the Governor and Council of Barbados, 1663, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, pp.8-9.

2. For Menzies letters see, Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, third series, vol.4, pp. 648-51, 671-75.

intentions clear to Governor Stede of Barbados. He informed the Governor,

As it has pleased God to deliver into your hands such of our rebellious subjects as have taken up arms against us, for which traitorous practices some of them suffered death according to law, so we have bin graciously pleased to extend our mercy to many others by ordering their transportation ...where they are to be kept as servants to the inhabitants of the same...to signify our pleasure unto you our Governor and Council of Barbados that you take all necessary care that all such convicted persons...to be kept there and continue to serve their masters for the place of ten years at least, and that they be not permitted in any manner whatsoever to redeem themselves by money or otherwise until that term be fully expired.(1)

The letter listed 397 persons to be sent in the first consignment. On the receipt of this 'cargo' Governor Stede informed Whitehall, '...we have already passed the Act required respecting the transported rebels, which I hope will meet with your approval. The first ship load has arrived, and I have sent an account of the people to whom they have been assigned.' (2) Within three months another 240 rebels arrived in four different vessels and were quickly disposed of amongst the 'labour hungry' sugar planters.(3)

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1. King to Gov. Stede, 19 Nov. 1685, Davis Mss. Box 1, no. 40.

2. Gov. Stede to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 8 Jan. 1686, C.S.P.C., 1685-88, p.139

3. Gov. Stede to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 3 Feb. 1686, C.S.P.C., 1685-88, p.148.



In 1686, the notorious country Judge, Sir Jeffreys, sentenced 841 rebels to Barbados for their support of Monmouth. Certain Court favourites of the King<sup>were</sup> allotted these rebels in batches of 100 with the intention that they 'may profit from their sale' to the West India merchants at a price of £15 per head. Judge Jeffreys, apparently angered by this favouritism, wrote to the King, ' I beseech your Majesty that I may inform you that each prisoner will be worth £10 if not £15 a peice, and Sir, if your Majesty orders these, as you have already design, persons that have not suffered in the service will run away with the booty.'(1) It was computed by Macaulay, that the Queen's profits from this trade'...after making allowance for those who died during the passage . . cannot be estimated at less than 1,000 guineas.'(2)

Lord Sunderland instructed Judge Jeffreys to distribute the rebels to the persons listed below. Some of these rebels were freed

T.24-Grantees of the Monmouth Rebels Sold in Barbados,1686(3)

| <u>Grantee</u>           | <u>number</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Sir Philip Howard        | 200           |
| Sir William Booth        | 100           |
| Mr M. Kendal             | 100           |
| Mr N. Nipho              | 100           |
| Sir William Stapleton    | 100           |
| Sir Christopher Musgrave | 100           |
| person un-named          | <u>100</u>    |
|                          | <u>800</u>    |

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1. 'White Slaves in the Plantations', Davis Mss. box 1, no.39

2. Ellis, A.B., ' White Slaves',

3. Schomburgh, R.H., The History of Barbados, p.299.

in 1691, as part of the policy of pardoning political prisoners, by William of Orange- but many did not survive .(1) So while '...the bloody contention for the peoples liberty was in its height among the English people...' (2), thousands of them were being sent to the Barbadian sugar estates to increase the economic power and liberty of the planter class.

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1. Gov. Kendal to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 29 June 1689 C.S.P.C., 1689-92, p. 289.

2. Egerton Mss. 2395, f. 49.

(a) Convict labour

One important area in which early colonial development determined changes in the English superstructure was in dealing with criminal offenders. The theory and practice of Elizabethan criminal law, an instrument of brutal and oppressive class domination, corresponded to the general placement of non-economic values upon convicted criminals in society. This was part of pre-industrialised society's conception of the individual in terms other than as a unit of labour power with a specific utility. The result was the almost total elimination of petty offenders by the indiscriminate use of the gallows. To the capitalist planters this system of punishment was both backward and wasteful. The colonial lobby subsequently began to assert pressure upon the English legal system, by demonstrating that in the plantations lay more rational forms of disposing of certain types of offenders. (1)

Governor Dale of Virginia was the first colonist to formulate arguments for the general use of convict labour in colonial development. In 1611, he wrote to Secretary Salisbury and

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1. The Spanish were the first to employ convict labour in the plantations, See Williams, E., ed., Documents of West Indian History, 1492-1655 (Port of Spain, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 35-6. The West African Chiefs also sold their criminal offenders to West India Merchants, see Ransford, O., The Slave Trade: The Story of Transatlantic Slavery (Lon., 1971), pp. 48-9.



stated that

on account of the difficulty of procuring men in so short a time... all offenders out of the common gaols should be sent for three years to the colony ... as indentured servants. (1)

Dale argued that the benefits of using convicts for plantation labour were tripartite. The convicts benefited in that their lives were being bartered for a period of servitude, after which, in some cases, they could return to England as free persons. Their servitude would assist the development of the colony, which in turn would contribute to the development of the commercial and industrial growth of the 'Mother Country'.

These arguments had an almost immediate effect upon legal procedure in England. On 24 January 1614, King James decided that since there were no laws on the English statute books under which convicts could be transported as a sentence of the Court, Judges were to be encouraged to recommend colonial servitude to convicted petty offenders. The Courts would in this way avoid the '...slaughter of small thieves...' (2) and such like persons. Within two days of this commission the first convicts were reprieved and shipped, and this signalled the beginning of an active trade in convict labour for the next two and a half centuries. (3)

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1. Governor Dale to Secretary Salisbury, 17 Aug. 1611, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p.12.
  2. Smith, A.E., 'The Transportation of Convicts in the Seventeenth Century', A.H.R., vol. 39 (Jan., 1933), pp.232-3
  3. A.P.C.C., 1615-16, pp.23-5, 248.

By 1640, the theory and punishment of petty offenders had changed significantly. It was now argued that

...the best mode of punishing offenders was that which removed them from the scene of the offense and temptation, cut them off by a great gulf of space from all their former connections, and gave them the opportunity of redeeming the past by becoming useful members of society. (1)

The convicts, now given the power to petition the King for colonial servitude in exchange for their lives, were to find that life in the plantations was far from being an exciting barter; for many it was merely a sentence of deferred death.

Merivale argued that the extraordinary amount of capital generated and accumulated in Barbados was largely occasioned by this '...regular and increasing supply of convict labourers ...assigned to settlers as slaves....' (2) Furthermore, he argued, their relatively high profitability was the result of their working in gangs and producing much more than they were ever allowed to consume. (3)

The first cargo of convicts arrived in Barbados in 1642. Thomas Devenish, gaoler of Winchester prison, obtained permission to sell a large number of willing inmates to William Fortescue, a wealthy Barbadian merchant. (4) This consignment landed at Carlisle

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1. Merivale, H., Lectures on Colonisation and Colonies  
(Lon., 1861), p. 363.

2. Ibid., p. 351

3. Ibid.

4. 'Convicts to Barbados in the Seventeenth Century', Davis Mss.  
Box 6, no. 20.

Bay and were quickly sold to eager planters. Richard Ligon noted that on the ship he took to Barbados in 1647, there was a large consignment of convicts, taken mainly from Bridewell prison. He also noted that it was then customary for merchants to stock the 'hole' with convicts on the outgoing voyage, since they were so easily sold to the planters.

During the 1640s, Fortescue was the leading merchant in the convict trade, and was used by Cromwell to ship a large number to Barbados. The Middlesex session rolls contain long lists of persons who pleaded for transportation to Barbados, and who were shipped by Fortescue. During the second half of the century, at least 4,431 persons were shipped out to Barbados and Virginia. (1) Schomburgh argued that the supply of convict labour was so large by the time of the census of 1679-80, that Barbados had acquired the status of a 'convict establishment'. (2) He also suggested that this reputation '...drew the attention of all who were engaged in the traffic of human species to the island as a proper place for disposing of their merchandise....' (3)

Unlike the mainland colonists, the West Indians were not unduly concerned with the social origins and history of their servants. The West Indies were seen as 'colonies of exploitation' and not 'colonies of settlement'. It is often stated how Benjamin

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1. Smith, A.E., 'The Transportation of Convicts', p. 238.

2. Schomburgh, R.H., The History of Barbados, p. 144.

3. Ibid.



Franklin, angered by the English Government's policy of dumping convicts in America, stated that the Americans in turn should send over their '...rattle snakes to Britain to unlearn their venomous habits....' (1) The Barbadians, however, held views like those of Christopher Jeaffreson, planter of St. Christopher. These West Indians were willing to accept any sort of men. In May 1681, Jeaffreson wrote to his cousin in London,

...if Newgate and Bridewell should spew out their spawn into these islands, it would meete with no less encouragement, for no gaolebird can be so incorrigible, but there is hope for his conformity here, as well as of his preferment.... (2)

The Barbadians felt confident that they could control and exploit convict labour effectively. The island, therefore, gained its reputation as a place that would readily accept all '...persons of bad character....' (3) They did, however, begin to refuse female convicts in the last quarter of the century, as social customs dictated that <sup>white</sup> women could not be employed in the fields, and they were not trusted as domestics. (4) Over the century, Barbados absorbed about 4,000 convicts taken from the various prisons in England. They made a significant contribution to the numbers and reproduction of the servant class. Like their African counterparts, they were the victims of domestic legal systems being restructured and reinterpreted to meet the labour demands of the international market. (5)

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1. Cited in Ransford, O., The Slave Trade, p. 122, footnote.

2. Jeaffreson to William Poyntz, May 1681, St. Christopher, Young Squire, vol. 1, p. 225

3. Journal of the Council of Trade and Plantations, 28 Dec. 1698, C.S.P.C., 1696-7, no. 535.

4. Ibid.

5. Rice, C.D., The Rise and Fall of Black Slavery (Lon., 1975) pp. 144-5.

(b) Kidnapped Labour.

The enslavement of Africans in the New World by physical rather than moral or social compulsion under the Spanish in the sixteenth century, brought into existence the practice of kidnapping, which was performed by specialised agents who were known as 'man-hunters'. (1) On the West African coast over the next two centuries, it became normal to fill empty spaces in slave ships by the use of organised 'man hunting' expeditions. So it was with the supply of indentured servants to the sugar colonies in the seventeenth century. The major ports which dealt with the West India trade - London, Bristol, Plymouth, Southampton and Dover - all experienced the effects of highly organised networks which regularly kidnapped subjects for the colonies. These agents were known as Spirits. They were an integral part of the international trade in forced labour to the New World. (2) --- There is not enough quantifiable data to determine what proportion of the servant trade was handled by the Spirits, as it is not possible to estimate accurately the 'man-hunters' contribution to the slave trade, but it was a significant amount.

The organisation and methods of the Spirits were not as simple and primitive as Smith would like us to believe; plying victims with drink and hustling them on board ship to be sobered in the mid-Atlantic. (3) The Spirits were more effectively organised.

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1. Edwards, P., ed., Equiano's Travels, pp. 15-25.

2. C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p. xxviii.

3. Smith, A.E., Colonists in Bondage, p. 68.



They had established depots in the dock lands of most ports where ships departed for the West Indies. In London, near the Tower in the St. Catherine area, there existed many depots which were frequented by the shippers who were able to procure servants at a cost of £3 to £5 per head. In 1643, the London port authorities became alarmed by the lucrative business of the Spirits and launched an investigation into their activities. The findings of the investigation resulted in several arrests. Two years later William Grant, Thomas Faulkner, Margaret Robinson and Susan Jones were brought before the magistrates to answer charges of being 'sperritts'. A Parliamentary Ordinance of that year stated that there was hardly a ship leaving London for the West Indies which did not carry the cargoes of the Spirits. The Ordinance provided that every ship leaving the port was to be searched for such cargoes by the officials.

In 1657, the Conquer, about to depart from London for Barbados, was stopped and searched by the port officials. They found a consignment of nineteen persons procured from the Spirits' organisation.<sup>(1)</sup> But very little was done to suppress the business, and the Spirits became more daring, operating on a larger scale and with less restraint. This resulted in an outburst of petitions to Parliament for protection against the Spirits.

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1. Stock, L., ed., Proceedings and Debates, vol. 1, pp. 185-6.



In 1663, Parliament established a Committee of investigation with the object of finding out the volume and effects of kidnapping in the country. The report, written by Sir J. Finch, noted that <sup>the</sup> spirits were well connected with the West Indian merchants and that most ships to Barbados and Jamaica carried their cargoes. These findings did not lead to legislation, but were merely used to remind the port authorities of their duty to search all ships to the West Indies. (1)

Occasionally, however, a Spirit was caught and convicted before the courts. One such trader, William Haverland, was convicted before Judge Morton in January 1670. Haverland turned King's evidence and gave considerable factual information on the London Spirit's organisations. He told the Court of one leading spirit, John Stewart of St. Catherine, who was active in the trade for over twelve years and annually supplied the West Indian planters with over 500 heads. Stewart hired agents and paid them at a rate of twenty-five shillings for every head they procured, which he in turn sold to the merchants at a rate of forty shillings per head. He also told the Court of another veteran of the business, a shoemaker from the East Smithfield area, who supplied over 840 heads annually. There were also others like Robert Bailey who operated on a smaller scale from depots in St. Giles, and lived entirely on the proceeds of the trade. (2)

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1. Report of Sir Finch on Kidnapping, 12 July 1664, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p. 220.

2. These data are deposited in , Misc. Collection 389/2, P.R.O.

In spite of Parliament's growing knowledge about the Spirits very little was done. That most of these cargoes were sold in Barbados, the favourite colony, probably explains why the subject was ignored by the Government. More probable was the fact that local government officials/<sup>had</sup> convinced the Government that the business could not be suppressed by legislation, because they themselves had interests in the trade. For example, in 1685, a circuit judge having accumulated evidence that the Mayor of Bristol was making substantial profits by supplying the leading Spirit organisation of the town with ignorant persons, rogues, drunks and loose women for sale in 'The Barbadoes', summoned the Mayor into the docks to defend himself. (1) One pamphleteer estimated that the spirits carried out in the second half of the century an astonishing 10,000 persons annually. (2) This figure is no doubt a gross exaggeration, but it was the kind of figure that was popularly believed, and which gave added strength to the anti-spiriting campaign towards the end of the century.

The spirits' sensitivity to Government discussions and police plans clearly indicates that they had infiltrated the State Bureaucracy at various levels. Before plans were implemented the spirits would go underground, and they developed a remarkable record of pre-empting the Government. These situations made it temporarily difficult for merchants to obtain cargoes in the last quarter of the century. For example, after a raid

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1. North, R., Lives of the North (Lon., 1826), vol. 2, p.24.

2. Godwyn, M., The Negro and Indian's Advocate (Lon., 1680), p.171.

upon the London depots in 1682, Jeaffreson arrived in the City with the hope of obtaining a large number of servants for his plantation. On his arrival he wrote to his friend in St. Christopher,

...being newly come to towne, I have heard of no servants and you must know the kidnappers and their employers have been brought into such trouble that servants are now harder to come by than ever. (1)

But once again, it was not long before the business began to flourish. During the shipment of the Monmouth rebels to Barbados in 1685 the spirits saw an excellent opportunity to step up their activities. Hundreds of persons, allegedly connected with Monmouth, found themselves labouring on Barbadian sugar plantations—supplied by the spirits. Governor Stede of Barbados, after he realised in 1685 that this volume exceeded 400 between June and November, complained to Whitehall that the spirits were taking innocent people and sending them as rebels by forging indenture contracts. (2) He found one Daniel Manning and twenty three other innocent men in one consignment. (3) When he enquired what to do about such innocent men, the Lords of Trade and Plantations replied that they were to serve as servants for ten years like the others, because 'In being kept to a strict performance of their duty <sup>they</sup> will in all probability live more peacefully than they did before.' (4)

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1. Cited in Higham, C.S., The Development of the Leeward Islands under the Restoration, 1660-68 (Cambridge, 1921), p.169.

2. Gov. Stede to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 10 Oct. 1686 CO.29/3, f.368.

3. Ibid.

4. Lords of Trade and Plantations to Gov. Stede, 15 July 1687, Co.29/3, f.375.



During the 1690s, Dalby Thomas became worried about the effects of the spirits' organisations upon the 'honest' profession of the English merchants. This is interesting, because Thomas was a firm and popular supporter of the African Slave Trade in which the English merchants themselves were kidnappers. Both groups were of course part of the mercantile system - traders in human beings.

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1. Thomas, D., An Historical Account, chap. 3.

SECTION FOURMERCHANTS AND THEIR CARGOPart AThe Cargo

The similarities between the trades in African slave labour and white indentured labour led one writer to assert that in the seventeenth century '...the slave trade worked in both directions, with white merchandize as well as black....'(1) This relationship was also apparent to Williams who wrote,

The transportation of white servants established a precedent for the transportation of Negro slaves.

The practice developed and tolerated in the kidnapping of whites laid the foundation for the kidnapping of Negroes.

Bristol, Honfleur and other ports turned without difficulty from the servant trade to the slave trade. Barbados, a word of terror to the white servant, became to the Negro, as a slave trader wrote in 1693 'a more dreadful apprehension... than we have of Hell'.(2)

The merchants involved in the servant trade to Barbados regarded and treated the servants not as individual passengers, but as a cargo freight. The official papers of shipment record so many 'freight' and 'half-freight' in the case of juveniles under the age of sixteen years. One merchant wrote of the servant

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1. Ruchames, L., 'Sources of Racial thought in Colonial America', p. 260.

2. Williams, E., From Columbus to Castro, pp. 103-4.

trade to Barbados,

The ship owners who transport these persons made a gainful business of it...many considered the charge of the passage and disbursement as a debt which entitled them to claim a sort of property in the bodies of their passengers and to dispose of amongst the planters...(1)

These merchants, some of whom were involved in the Slave trade, found it easy to relate to the poor English and Irish labourers in this manner. In 1655, Rowland Thomas, a political prisoner who was sold in Barbados by Martin Noell at Cromwell's orders, noted that he and many others were entered at the Secretary's office on arrival as the 'goods' of Mr. Noell, without name or individuality.(2) The following year, two of the Salisbury rebels who were sold in Barbados by one Mr. Cole, captain of the John, noted that they had not

...seen the faces of these their pretended owners, merchants that deal in slaves and the souls of men, nor even heard of their names before Mr. Cole made affidavit in the office at Barbados ...(3)

that we were his goods. This they found more in line with the African slave trade, and it provoked their indignation.

Payments for servants sold in Barbados were usually made either by Bills of Exchange to be drawn on the London market, or in commodities acceptable to both parties. In Barbados it was illegal to refuse sugar, cotton or tobacco of good quality as payment in transactions. When Thomas Anthony, a servant trader

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1. Extract from Povey's Handbook, Add.Mss. 12410. B.L.

2. Stock, L., ed., Proceedings and Debates, p. 250.

3. Ibid., p.249.



who operated from Kinsale in Ireland, sold his cargo of fifty six servants in Barbados in 1637, he accepted payment '... in good tobacco....' (1) He gave three months credit to his customers, as was customary in the slave trade conducted at Barbados.

This credit was important to the planters, who had most of their capital tied up in crops, labour and machinery. A brief description of one transaction in indentured labour illustrates the marketing process. Martin Noell was given an order from the Council of State in 1655 to ship a certain number of political prisoners to Barbados. These he took from Oxford to Plymouth where he commissioned a captain for the shipment. The cargo of 140 men was put below deck, where it was kept for fourteen days until the ship had taken on sufficient goods for Barbados. The passage took five weeks and four days, for which the ship Captain was paid £4. 10s. per head; the payment was made by bills of exchange. (2)

The trade itself was organised differently from the early slave trade. No royal monopolies were granted to chartered companies, though Cromwell and later monarchs had their favourite merchants to ship out their servants. It was a free trade open to all who had sufficient capital and connections to charter a sea going vessel and collect a cargo. There was a proliferation of agents in every major port who were willing, on a reasonable fee, to raise a cargo for a captain or merchant; and of course there were the Spirits.

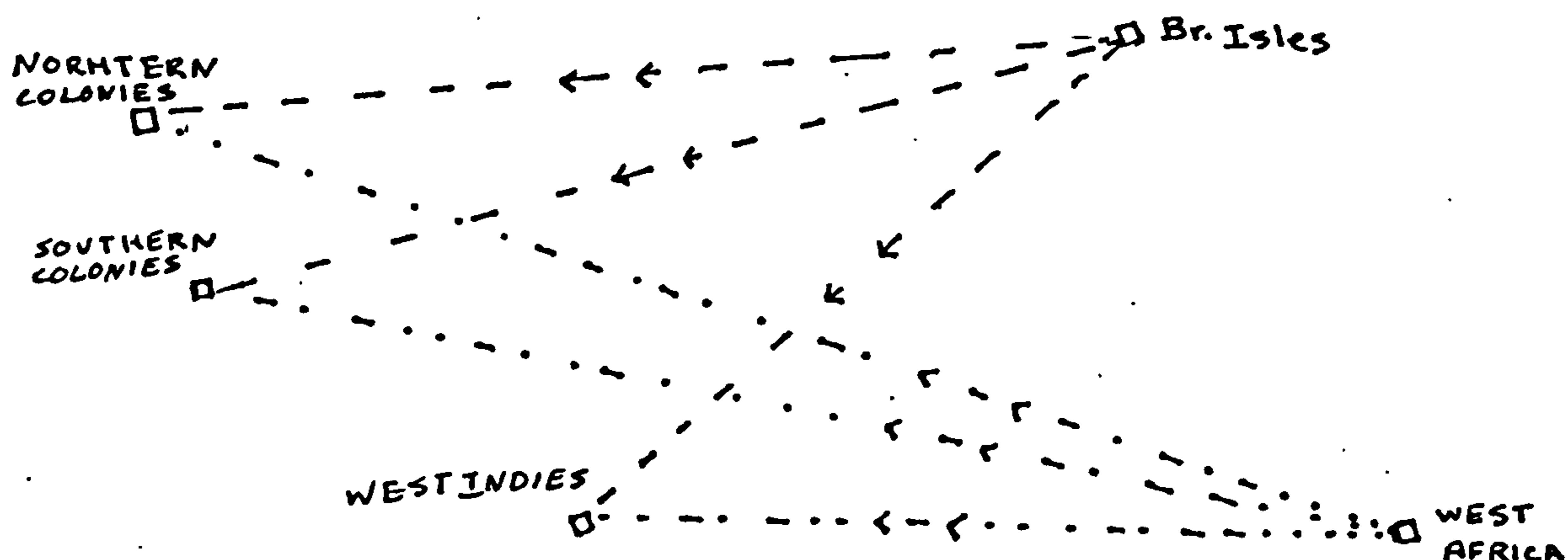
1. See part B of this section.

2. Burton, T., Parliamentary Diary, vol.4, p. 256

One very active agent who operated from the port of Kinsale in Ireland was Thomas Gookin. He had a prosperous business in providing Irish labourers to West India merchants during the late 1660s and 1670s. One shipowner in 1669, instructed his captain to sail to Kinsale and on his arrival to '...apply to Mr. Southwell and Thomas Gookin for servants.' (1)

Richard Pares's pioneer work on the colonial trade ignores the significance of the trade in servants to the colonies. He shows how trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries broke away from the earlier bilateral standard between England and particular colonies, and formed a more complex multi-lateral and inter-colonial system to the growing exclusion of England. (2) But the colonies were still dependent on Britain for labour, and the servant trade remained a vital link in the colonial trade pattern. Ships were often chartered specifically for the shipping of servants, and the servant trade was an important and integral part of the North Atlantic trade system, and part of the wider Atlantic triangular trade in labour and commodities.

Fig.8 Pattern of Labour Supply to the Atlantic Economy in the Seventeenth Century.

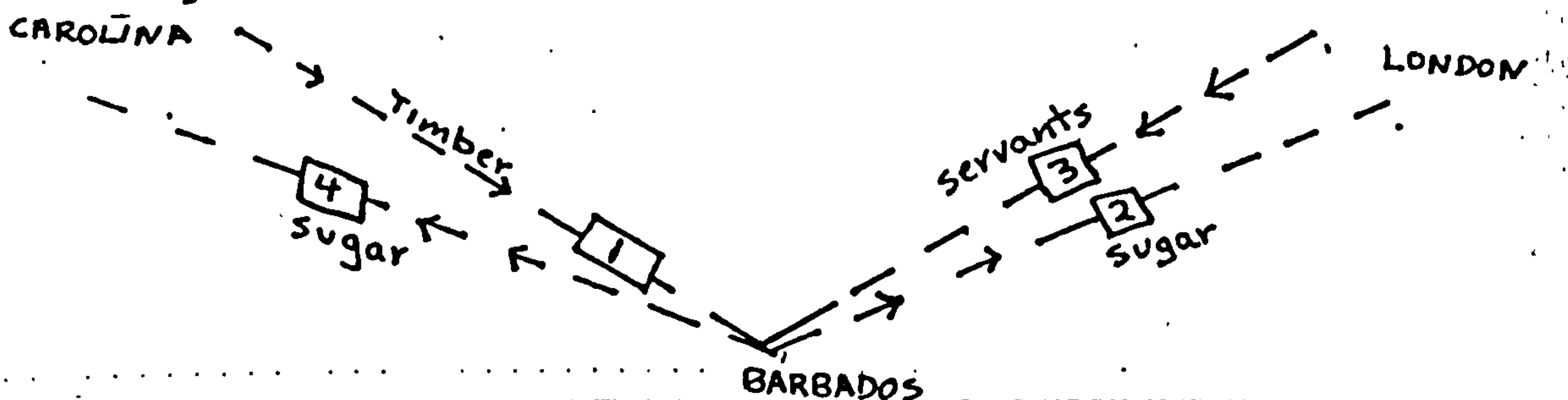


1. Instructions from the Lord Proprietor of Carolina to Joseph West, July 1669, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, pp.33-4.
2. Pares, R., Creoles and Yankees: The Trade between N. America and West Indies before the American Revolution (Lon., 1965).

The complexity of the servant trade in the North Atlantic trading system can be illustrated by example. In 1669, the Lord Proprietor of Carolina instructed his ship captain to take the ship and '...sail with all possible speed ...for Kinsale in Ireland, where you are to endeavour to get 20 or 25 servant...' (1) He was also instructed to apply to Southwell and Gookin for his servants. Having obtained this cargo of servants, he was to fill up the ship with Irish provisions and set sail for Barbados, where the provisions only were to be sold. (2) The colonists in Carolina in the late 1660s were paying higher prices for servants than the Barbadians, and merchants tended, therefore, to bypass the Barbados market. (3)

The voyage of Capt. Henry Brayne in November 1670 is also very illuminating. (4) Capt. Brayne was ordered to sail from Carolina with timber to Barbados where he was to sell it for the highest possible price, then sail to London with a cargo of Barbadian sugar bought with the proceeds from the timber sales. In the Thames he was to sell the sugar and load the ship with '...two or three hundred servants...' and then set sail back to Barbados where he was to sell the servants. (5)

Fig. 9 Henry Brayne's Trading Pattern, 1670s.



1. Lord Proprietor of Carolina to West, July 1669, C.S.P.C., 1666-74,
2. Ibid. pp. 33-4
3. Ibid.
4. Lord Proprietor to Brayne, 20 Nov. 1670, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, p. 136
5. Ibid.



The servant trade , therefore, made an important contribution to the rise of the Atlantic economy as the most lucrative trade region in the seventeenth century world economy. The supply of African labour merely expanded the importance of servile labour as a commodity in the Atlantic economy, and led to the more efficient organisation of the labour trade. This was achieved by the formation of specially chartered joint-stock companies, and the rise of powerful colonial lobbies in the metropole.

The mechanisms of recruitment in the trade were not complicated, and involved only simple legal processes and little or no bureaucratic complications. Merchants, captains, and their agents were able to recruit ship loads of servants at the various ports of England, Ireland and Scotland with little inconvenience. Over the seventeenth century, the recruitment processes did not undergo any significant changes, and can best be illustrated by example. One representative case of 1636-37 outlines the relationships between the various parties in the trade; merchants and their captains, captains and their agents, and their collective relationship with the law. It is also informative of the potential servant's views of the various colonies, while capturing the atmosphere of a town involved in the trade. The case concerns a voyage to Kinsale in Ireland, for the purpose of collecting a large cargo of servants which was sold in Barbados. (1)

Captain Thomas Anthony was instructed by his employer, Mathew Cradock, merchant and ship owner, to sail to Kinsale and obtain 100 or more servants, who he was to place under indenture and keep in that port until the Abraham arrived to take them to be sold in Virginia. Anthony arrived in Kinsale on 28 April 1636 to carry out his instructions. On collecting information on the condition of the pool of available labour for recruitment he found that it was greatly depleted by Dutch merchants who, apart from being the main suppliers of African

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1. These data are filed in High Court of Admiralty (H.C.A.)  
Misc. Bundle 30/636, P.R.O.

slaves to the English colonies, had also infiltrated the servant trade. Anthony informed his employer that on his arrival

...a flymishe shippe of 140 tons or thereabout of Amsterdam hath gonne from heare... with 120 or 140 ...likewise another shippe of these tons will be ready to carry about 100, and will be ready within three weeke or a month....(1)

Anthony was aware that a shipper needed to have his ship ready to obtain a cargo, because the costs of storing it until the ship arrived were too high. There was also the worrying risk that after feeding and clothing the servants for the passage they would escape or plea that they were kidnapped. On 30 April, Anthony informed his employer .

... until the ship be arrived thear will be no providinge of servants , the Resson being so that as soon as wee have agreed with sutch as will goe, they will be forth on our charge, and douttfull that after sume tyme of sutch expense they will Runne away....(2)

On 27 August, the Abraham arrived and it was time to procure a cargo of servants. The measures taken by Anthony were explained in a letter to his employer. He noted that when the ship arrived he

... caused the drume to be beatten, and gave warninge to all those that disposed to goe as servants for Virginia should repare to Kinsale whear I laey and upon conditions according to the cuntry I would intartayne all sutch....(3)

Anthony then discovered that potential servants in the town had

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1. Thomas Anthony to Mathew Craddock, 29 April 1636, H.C.A. B.30/636 misc.

2. Anthony to Craddock, 30 April, 1636.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.



very detailed information on the socio-economic conditions in various colonies. He noted that the majority wanted to go to St. Christopher. It was popular knowledge that the transition from tobacco to cotton production in the mid- 1630s brought moderate economic success to the colony, and servants on the expiration of their contracts (unlike in Barbados) were given small tracts of land. As a result, Anthony felt that he would not be able<sup>to</sup> obtain a cargo in Kinsale, and he hired several agents to go inland to recruit as many servants as possible. One of these agents was Thomas Belchard of Bandon, who was paid with a '...pinte of wine and some shugar....' (1)

There was probably some kidnapping done by Anthony's agents, but he was careful not to reveal any self-incriminating evidence in his correspondence, though he was imprisoned by the Mayor of Kinsale for a few days until he had released two kidnapped servants kept below deck. Between August and October, he had obtained a cargo of sixty one servants, forty one men and twenty women, all between the ages of seventeen and thirty five. He wrote to his employer after the recruitment,

... we dowe entartayne all comers both men  
and women... And hethear unto we entartayned...61  
persons, very lustye and stronge bodies which  
will I hopp be meyns to sett of to  
the best advantidge.... (2)

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2

1. Anthony to Craddock, /Oct. 1636, Kinsale.

2. Ibid.

These servants had to be clothed and fed for the passage. Anthony obtained a tailor from Kinsale, one Neal Hughs, to whom he gave course wool and linen cloth to make garments. The cost of the garments was seven or eight shillings each. The Abraham, 'a weake and leaky shipe', left Kinsale on 22 November and sailed to Cowes where Anthony obtained the services of a '...mydwiffe to vizat the women servants doutinge ther behavior.' (1) It was common in both the servant and slave trades for captains to have their cargo thoroughly inspected before sailing. The midwife found that Anthony had chosen a bad lot, because three were pregnant and one had '...the Frenche dizeas....' (2) The former were given a shilling each to get off the ship and the latter was merely 'left to herself'.

Anthony's last letter indicated that, contrary to his instruction, he had arrived at Barbados <sup>25</sup> on/January 1637. Eight of his servants died in the passage, and it took him only two days to sell the remaining fifty three. He stated that he sold '...ten to the Governor of the place for four hondred and fitye lbs. apece and all the rest for five hondred to pay the 20th and last of April in good tobacco....' (3) Anthony sailed back to London with a cargo of sugar probably to return with another cargo of servants.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Anthony to Craddock, 28 Jan. 1637, Barbados.

The collection of a cargo of servants from the English gaols was a more complicated task than any other aspect of the servant trade. Not only was the political bureaucracy centrally involved, but also the judiciary. The recruitment process was documented in detail by Christopher Jeaffreson, merchant-planter of St. Christopher. The process would have been the same for any colony—thus its relevance to the Barbadian labour supply system. (1)

In December 1681, Jeaffreson applied to the Secretary of Foreign Plantations, Mr. Blathwait, for a cargo of 300 convicts for the sugar plantations of St. Christopher. He had already searched the various gaols and found the men unfit for labour in the tropics. He got no reply from Mr. Blathwait. The following year, he wrote to a planter in St. Christopher that '...the keepers of the prisons appose us, and must be bribed.' (2) After bribing both Mr. Blathwait and Mr. Richardson, Principal of Newgate gaol, Jeaffreson wrote with apparent cynicism,

There is something droll as well as startling in this cool and wary proposal to bribe an important officer of the State with moderate bribes, following one another at intervals...it is no longer surprising that Mr. Blathwait has an income of £200 a year. (3)

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1. The letters of Jeaffreson are edited in , Jeaffreson, J., ed., A Young Squire of the Seventeenth Century: Papers of Christopher Jeaffreson, 1676-86 (Lon., 1878), 2 vols. (Hereafter, Young Squire)
  2. Jeaffreson to Willett, 12 Dec. 1682, Lon., Young Squire, vol. 2, p. 13-4.
  3. Ibid.



In spite of the bribes, Jeaffreson was ordered to pay 1,800 pounds of sugar on the servants he took as security that they would not escape and return to England within eight years. He regretted that the charge of conveying them to the ship and all the prison fees were charged to his account, but it amounted to only forty five shillings<sup>per</sup> head, which he considered to be reasonable. The convicts were placed in ankle, neck and wrist shackles/<sup>which were</sup> designed for the use of the African slave traders. He did not object to the costs involved in buying the irons because it was his intention to sell them to the slave traders on arrival in the West Indies.(1)

Jeaffreson obtained twenty nine convicts, in which he was very disappointed. He realised that the gaolers had placed the West Indian merchants in a very disadvantageous position, in terms of the selection of the cargo. It was a long established custom of the gaolers in dealing with these merchants to mix the '...good with the bad...' (2) in selling the convicts. The gaolers mixed the sick, healthy, old, young, male and female into one unit, and the merchant was told to take it or leave it. Jeaffreson wrote:

- ... we have beene forced to take two or three infirm men but they have trades. The bursen man is a shoe maker, the lame man is a glover, but...the other lusty fellowes, especially such as have good trades, will ammend for the Refuse.' (3)

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1. Jeaffreson to Gov. of St. Christopher, 18 April 1685, Lon., Young Squire, vol. 2, p.193
  2. Warrant to the Sheriffs of London concerning the disposal of malefactors, 4 Aug. 1684, C.S.P.C., 1681-5, p.673.
  3. Jeaffreson to Col. Hill, 8 Sept. 1685, Lon., Young Squire, vol.2, p.125.

The word 'Refuse' was a slave trader's concept, generally used to refer to sick, lame or old slaves. The 'refuse' were usually sold at a nominal price or given to large purchasers as bonuses. The adoption of this kind of terminology in the servant trade reflects the unity which traders saw between the slave and servant trades. The occupational structure of Jeaffreson's convicts was as follows:

T.25  
Occupational Structure of a Cargo of Convicts, 1685

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>No.</u> |
|-------------------|------------|
| shoemaker         | 2          |
| seaman            | 1          |
| sawyer            | 1          |
| clerk             | 1          |
| grocer            | 1          |
| butcher           | 1          |
| weaver            | 1          |
| vintner           | 2          |
| glassmaker        | 2          |
| glover            | 1          |
| husbandman        | 1          |
| carpenter         | 1          |
| hatter            | 1          |
| tailor            | 1          |
| labourer          | <u>12</u>  |
|                   | <u>29</u>  |

Jeaffreson was particularly worried, like slave traders, about the high percentage of females in the cargo - in this instance it was 17.2% of the cargo. Gaolers tended to reduce the proportion of females in the cargo according to the size of the bribe. Jeaffreson noted:

...the women are forced upon us, and as it happens the proportion this time is greater, considering the number of men, than in the last. I pray God may all come well for the island, for they are a chargeable as well as troublesome sort of merchandise. The risque we run in ... mortality and other accidents is more than in all the rest. (1)

He expected to obtain at least 2,000 lbs. of sugar (approximately £25) for each of the skilled men and for the rest 1,800 lbs. of sugar each. These rates were low and Jeaffreson noted they were not worth the while, the hazards, and the trouble. (2) But with the lengths of servitude no less than eight years, these rates were profitable to the planters if not the merchants.

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1. Jeaffreson to the Gov. of St. Christopher, 18 April 1685, London, Young Squire, vol. 2, p. 193.
  2. Jeaffreson to Capt. Willett, 2 Dec. 1685, London, Young Squire, vol. 2., pp. 13-14.



The transoceanic shipment of millions of people from the Old to the New World for forced labour on the plantations has been described by historians as the 'middle passage'. The inhumanity of the Atlantic crossing, the mortality and sheer vulgarity of the experience for African people has earned the condemnation of even the most unsympathetic historians of New World slavery. In the last ten years, a large stream of literature has been produced on this subject, using a wide range of data and methods. What has been neglected, however, by modern historians is the passage of thousands of white indentured servants to the sugar plantations during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These servants also experienced the 'middle passage', and though the numbers were considerably less and the conditions less barbaric, the 'middle passage' for indentured servants was indeed deplorable, and must be analysed in relation to the wider Atlantic movement of forced labour. Unfortunately the abundance of data which exist on the slave trade does not exist for the servant trade, and the piecing together of fragmented <sup>data</sup> is necessary to gain an understanding of the 'middle passage' for European labourers.(1)

When the ship was loaded with servants there were few formalities which the captain had to pass through before starting out on the middle passage. The Captain merely showed his lists of

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1. Klein, H., The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic slave Trade (New Jersey, 1978), pp. 1-20.

servants to the port officials and was off. London, however, had become so notorious for the kidnappers that the ships leaving for the West Indies had to be searched by the officials before sailing. The central problem facing the captain was <sup>in</sup> getting the largest possible number of servants to the market as quickly as possible. He wanted to avoid the waste of feeding the servants during the passage only to have them die before sale. He would, therefore, carry sufficient food and water on board for the passage, and hope that disease would not decimate the cargo.

The captains divided the cargo into two main categories; the full freight, and the half freight. The former were those over the age of sixteen, and the latter under that age. The size of the ships chartered for the trade tended to be between 100 to 450 tons. The Dutch who operated from Ireland used ships of 140 to 200 tons. (1) The passage to Barbados generally took between four and fourteen weeks, depending on the winds and other conditions. A passage of under eight weeks was considered good, while a passage of over ten weeks was considered unsatisfactory. (2) Like the African slave traders, the servant traders to Barbados tended to sail - to the island of Madeira, or the other Atlantic islands under Iberian control in the seventeenth century. At these islands they collected water and wine before sailing on to the West Indies. Ligon noted that his ship, which sailed to Barbados in 1647, customarily stopped at St. Jago for these reasons, and Jeaffreson usually stopped at the Verde islands, on his voyage to St. Christopher.

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1. Thomas Anthony to Mathew Craddock, 2 Oct., 1636.  
H.C.A., bundle 30/636 misc. P.R.O.

2. Gov. Atkins to Sec. Williamson, Oct. 1675, C.S.P.C., 1675-6,  
p. 294.

The passage of servants was frequently affected by disease, starvation, discomfort and high mortality. Insufficient and poor quality food was the norm of the passage. Merchants tried to keep their food charges to a minimum in the hope of finding that fine balance between low cost and low mortality. The standard diet was one of salted fish or beef, stale biscuits, milk, cheese and water. One captain took out the Speedwell of London to Barbados with a cargo of 229 freights but with food supplies for only '162½ freights'. (1)

A nineteenth century writer, comparing the middle passage of servants with that of slaves to the West Indies, wrote: that the servant's passage was '...fully equalled to that of the Negroes who are now carried from the Congo....' (2) Though this view represented an exaggeration of the true nature of the servant trade, it nevertheless illustrates that merchants, whether as a policy or not, tried to bring the two trades in human beings into unison. In 1893, Ellis wrote of the trade in servants:

The human cargo were stowed in the holes of small vessels. So little space was allowed that the wretches, many of whom were still tormented by unhealed wounds, could not all lie down at once without lying on each other. They were never suffered to go on deck. The hatchway was constantly watched by sentinels armed with hangers and blunder busses. In the dungeons below all was darkness, stench, lamentation, disease and death. (3)

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1. Smith, A.E., Colonists in Bondage, p. 213.

2. Ellis, A.B., 'White slaves',

3. Ibid.



The political prisoners referred to in the above quotation got a harder share of the middle passage than <sup>did</sup> the voluntary servants, but this was only a matter of small degree.

The account of the middle passage experienced by the Salisbury Rebels is found in a petition to Parliament in 1659. They were locked up below deck for two weeks at Plymouth while the ship was being filled with other cargo for Barbados. After sailing they were

...all the way locked up under decks...

amongst horses, that their souls through heat and steam under the tropic, fainted in them.

They never till they came to the island (Barbados) knew whither they were going. (1)

In the case of convicts, irons were placed on their legs and necks to ensure that they did not escape or jump over board.

Storage below deck was dreadful on the vessels of under 100 tons. They were tossed about on the high sea by strong winds, which were usual 300 miles southwest of the Azores. John Harrower, who was a passenger on board a servant ship, stated that he had a pleasant voyage, but for the servants below decks things were quite different. He noted

... there was the oddest shene betwixt decks that ever I heard or seen. There was some sleeping, some spewing...some daming, some blasting...And ... to make the shene odder, some were (blasting) father, mother, sister and brother.... (2)

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1. Stock, L., ed., Proceedings and Debates, vol., p. 249

2. Smith, A.E., 'The transportation of Convicts to America', p.74.

Sea sickness was not in itself medically dangerous but it was frequently the beginning of more deadly illness as ships became infected with smallpox, yellow fever, typhus and dysentery. In July 1630, the David left Plymouth with 300 servants on board heading for Barbados, but due to disease it put in at St. Kitts where the captain reported that all were sick, many lame and many dead. Another ship arrived with a '...great loss of men through infection throughout the ship.' (1) The mortality in the middle passage frequently claimed up to 60% of servant cargoes. Every captain expected some deaths, and a loss of 20% was considered satisfactory. When Joseph West was instructed to collect a cargo of servants from Kinsale in 1669, he was told to expect some deaths. (2) Thomas Warner arrived in Barbados in 1636 and reported that '... in his ship there was great sickness and mortality, not 20 out of 200 escaped....' (3)

Shippers jammed the servants together below decks in such large numbers that the spread of viruses was easy and rapid. Thomas Rous, arriving at Barbados in 1638, complained bitterly that his ship had been so tightly packed below deck with 350 servants that it was impossible to avoid infection. Crowded below deck during the cold, then hot crossing, two hundred people became sick at a time. Rous wrote during the passage, '...we have thrown over board two and three in a day for many dayes together.' (4) When the ship reached Barbados it had only eighty servants (22.8% of the shipment).

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1. The shipment of servants from England, Davis Mss. Box 2.
  2. Lord Proprietor to Joseph West, July 1669, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, p.33-4.
  3. Thomas Warner to Sec. Windebanke ,  
C.S.P.C., 1574-1660, p. 240.
  4. Cited in Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.57.

The Bill of mortality of the Betty of London which, under Capt. James, transported 100 political prisoners in 1685, gives an indication of mortality in the middle passage. Leaving Weymouth in early December, the bill records the following persons thrown overboard, either very sick or dead. (1)

|             |                            |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 16 December | Thomas Venner              |
| 17 "        | William Guppy              |
| 18 "        | John Willis                |
| 19 "        | Edward Venn and Philip Cox |
| 20 "        | Robert Vawter              |
| 25 "        | William Greenway           |
| I January   | Peter Bird.                |

Unfortunately the bill is incomplete, but on arrival only forty nine prisoners were alive. The practice of throwing the sick overboard to save the rest of the cargo was accepted as normal by the shippers. Ellis concluded his 1893 article by stating, ' It appears from the best information which is at the present accessible, that more than one fifth of those who were shipped were flung to the sharks before the end of the voyage.' (2) This was the result of <sup>the</sup> captains operating under the policy of 'close packing' in order to maximise profits. The shipment of European labour to the plantations must, therefore, be seen as part of the overall movement of forced labour in the Atlantic economy, operated by merchants and captains whose interest in profits transcended their respect for human life.

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1. Hotten, J.C., ed., The Original List, p. 320.

2. Ellis, A.B., ' White slaves'.



The market in white indentured labour in Barbados differed from that on the mainland colonies. In Virginia, Maryland and Carolina the market was centred around the 'headright' system, whereby, individuals were granted land for each servant they imported into the colony. By this method no cash passed hands, no auctions took place, and the servant had no monetary value as a commodity on the open market. The introduction of servants was, therefore, not for cash but in order to obtain land. Occasionally in Virginia, where free blacks were not allowed to own servants, they could import servants from England and acquire land by 'headright'. (1)

In the West Indies, especially in Barbados, the trader made his profit by selling his servants to the highest bidder on the market like any other commodity. (2) If the servant supplied was already under contract to a specific planter, then the merchant merely charged for the passage and the customary 2½% commission on value. (3)

As early as the 1630s, the Barbadian political leadership was determined to develop an active market in servant labour. The Assembly ordered that all merchants or sellers of servant labour had to wait for twelve hours after arrival before commencing sale, so as to give the rural planters a chance to get into the town to take part. By the mid- 1640s, Barbados had

1. Russell, J.H., The Free Negro in Virginia, 1619-1865 (N.Y., 1969) chap. 4
2. See Eggleston, E., ' Social conditions in the Colonies.'
3. Frere, G., A Short History of Barbados (Lon., 1767), pp. 107-8.

acquired the reputation of being the largest servant market in the English Empire. This popularity was so widespread that one agent even brought a cargo of Frenchmen to be sold there. The cargo consisted of '200 freight ', and was sold in 1640 for 900 pounds of cotton per head. (1) Three years later, during the war in Brazil between the Dutch and Portuguese, the Dutch Governor sent a cargo of 50 Portuguese to be '...sold as slaves....' (2)

The price of servants in Barbados was a reflection of several minor costs and a profit margin. The actual expenditure involved in bringing the servants to the market was not great, but minor charges such as surgeon's fees, foodbills, irons for convicts, and blankets in/winter, tended to push up the cost. At no stage in the century did the actual cost of shipping servants to Barbados amount to more than £6 per servant. (3) A Parliamentary debate in 1659 on the trade revealed that the normal cost of getting a servant to market was £4.10s. (4) A Committee of the Council for Foreign Plantation in 1664 and reported that £6 was the norm (5), as late as 1696 the cost was still about £6 per freight. (6)

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1. Southey, T., Chronological History of the Br. West Indies (Lon., 1827), vol. 1, p. 85

2. Schomburgh, R., The History of Barbados, p. 144.

3. Jeaffreson to William Poyntz, 11 May 1677, Young Squire, vol. 1, p. 207.

4. Stock, L., ed., Proceedings and Debates, vol. 1, p. 252.

5. Report of the Committee of the Council of Foreign Plantations, 1664, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p. 229.

6. It remained at this level into the 1730s.

The largest item in the costs was the feeding of the servants in the passage. The cost of clothing was also high, especially during the winter months when blankets were necessary. In 1659, a merchant incurred the following cost in getting 100 servants to the Barbados market: (1)

|                        |                  |       |
|------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Victuals, provisions   | £3 per freight   | =£300 |
| Clothes, blankets      | 25s. per freight | =£125 |
| total cost per freight | £4.5s            | £425  |

Extra expenses were incurred as some captains kept their servants below deck for a long period <sup>before</sup> sailing. In one case, a captain took the servants on board on 4 February but did not sail until 12 May, and the servants were fed throughout this period. The surgeon's fee was normally 2s.6d. per freight. Occasionally, captains would purchase '... new wigs, thus giving an air of gentility to his rogues...' (2), but the planters inspected the servants very carefully, looking for defects in body, speech and comportment.

The price of servants on the Barbados market varied with age, sex, nationality <sup>and</sup> /skills, but in most cases the merchants were able to sell their freight at a price 50% above the cost of shipment. (3) Age and skills were not very important as most servants were between the ages of 16 and 30, and their skills were not generally directly applicable to the sugar plantation; retraining was usually necessary. The

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1. Egerton Mss. 2395, f. 164.

2. Eggleston, E., 'Social Conditions in the Colonies', p. 855.

3. Jeaffreson to Col. Hill, 12 Feb. 1683, Young Squire, vol. 2, p. 102.



racial element was, however, important, as planters tended to value labour according to its perceived degree of docility, tractability and general ability to adjust to plantation type employment. The slaves and servants were categorised according to certain stereotypes and valued accordingly. The view of Jeaffreson was typical of that held in Barbados. He noted that as for servant labour'...the Scotsmen and Welshmen we esteeme the best ...and the Irish the worst, many of them being good for nothing but mischief.' (1) In 1683, these views were supported by Gov. Dutton who informed Whitehall about the planters' labour preferences. (2) Likewise, they upgraded the Coromantee slaves for their so-called docility, and down-graded the Ashanti and Mandingo for their apparent aggression. (3)

Over the century, however, the market prices of servants fluctuated in spite of the steady costs of shipment. From average

T.26-Market Prices of Servants sold in Barbados and Virginia  
1636-37 (4)

| <u>Price *(lbs.of cotton)</u>                            | <u>Male</u> | <u>Female</u> | <u>male</u>                                   | <u>female</u> |
|--|-------------|---------------|---|---------------|
| Cargo of the <u>Tristan &amp; Jean</u><br>Virginia, 1636 |             |               | Cargo of the <u>Abraham</u><br>Barbados, 1637 |               |
| 450  | 5           | 1             | 10  | -             |
| 465  | 1           | -             | -   | -             |
| 500  | 24          | 5             | 29  | 15            |
| 525  | 2           | 1             | -   | -             |
| 550  | 8           | 4             | -   | 2             |
| 560  | 1           | -             | -   | -             |
| 580  | 1           | -             | -   | -             |
| 600  | 8           | -             | -   | -             |

1. Jeaffreson to Poyntz, 11 May 1677, Young Squire, vol.1, pp.258-9.
2. Gov. Dutton to Whitehall, 17 Aug. 1683, C.S.P.C., 1681-85, p.474.
3. Edwards, B., The History, Civil and Commercial, vol.1, pp.72-3.
4. Papers of the Tristan & Jean and the Abraham, H.C.A., misc. bundle 30/635-6

\* See appendix 37 for approx. value of cotton.

prices of £6.10s. to £7 a head, in the mid-1630s, prices rose to £10 to £14 per head in the mid-1650s. (1) The inflation in servant prices was immediately felt by the planters. In 1661, the planters complained to the Assembly that the prices of servants had doubled over the previous fifteen years, and that the smaller planters were being greatly squeezed. The prices of female servants were generally £2 or £3 lower than male prices. In 1670, Col. Thomas Modyford, the first planter-Governor of Barbados, stated that the prices of servants in Jamaica were generally the same as in Barbados, which showed there was price uniformity in the English West Indian servant market.

Only those few servants whose skills were directly applicable to the plantation system, such as carpenters, masons, tailors and mechanics, fetched higher prices than ordinary servants. These skilled servants were rare in the West Indies and their prices were 50-100 per cent above the prices of unskilled servants.

Oldmixon noted that in Barbados such servants were sold <sup>for</sup> £25 and sometimes £30. (2) In the case of female servants, exceptionally high prices were recorded for those that were 'handsome', and could be employed as domestics. (3)

As the prices of servants doubled during the sugar revolution, Barbadians tried to regain the extra capital outlay by placing their servants under more intensive labour supervision and allocating smaller diets. Every possible device was used to '... prolong their bondage....' (4) By the 1670s, the Council and Assembly decided on a legislative path to assist the planters. In 1678,

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1. Edwards, B., The History, Civil and Commercial, vol. 1, pp. 72-3.

2. Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America, vol. 2, pp. 128, 167.

3. Ibid.

4. Lebat, J. B., ed., Memoirs of Pere Lebat, 1693-1705 (Lon., 1970), p. 125.



the first of a series of Acts was passed, entitled ' An Act to Encourage the Bringing in of Christain Servants.' (1) In 1682, another Act was passed which finally led to the abandonment of the free labour market and the beginning of price fixing. The Act provided that any merchant who brought ' good servants ' to the colony and was unable to dispose of them within ten days, the Treasurer would purchase them at a rate of £12.10s per head. The Treasurer was to sell these servants to the planters at a rate of £13 per head. The difference of ten shilling was to cover the cost of administering the law, plus a fee for allowing the planter to make his payment in instal ments. (2)

In 1688, the level of prices fixed by the Assembly was changed. The Treasurer, while paying the same for the servants, was now to sell them at a subsidised price of £10 for a male, and £10.10s for a female to the planters. This policy pleased the planters, but the merchants were unhappy with these prices. In 1694, the merchants informed the Assembly that European rivalry in the Caribbean has made their trade much more risky, and that a price increase was necessary. In 1696, the merchants were sucessful in their claims. In that year, the Assembly legislated that any merchant who brought good servants to the colony were to be paid a price of £18 per head by the Treasurer. (3) The law pleased the servant traders and merchants

1. Journal of the Assembly of Barbados, 20 Feb. 1678, C.S.P.C., 1677-80, p.218.
2. Acts of Council and Assembly, CO.30/5, ff.44-5.
3. The Agent for Barbados to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 25 Oct.1696, C.S.P.C., 1696-7, p.672.



but the Treasurer would not accept any ' refuse ' at these prices-  
 prices which equalled those of slaves supplied by the Royal Africa  
 Company. In 1698, after a thorough inspection of a cargo of  
 thirty six servants, the Treasurer rejected a large number.(1)  
 In 1702, nine servants were rejected by the Treasurer and returned  
 to the trader, George McKensie, to be sold as ' refuse '. They  
 died within two weeks of their rejection.(2)

The merchants, however, found the market very lucrative,  
 and tried very hard to supply a large number of servants. In 1700,  
 one servant trader, Nicholas Baker, supplied fifty five servants  
 to the Treasurer and collected £990. In the same year, William  
 Roberts and Company supplied 125 servants and collected £2,250.(3)  
 In 1708, Oldmixon referred to this trade as '...that wicked traffic  
 ...'(4), but the merchants felt that they were merely taking  
 advantage of a lucrative commodity market.

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1. Minutes of Council, 7 Sept.1698,C.S.P.C., 1697-8,p.417.
  2. Minutes of Council, 5 May 1702,C.S.P.C., 1702, p.295.
  3. Minutes of Council, 15 Feb. 1700,C.S.P.C., 1700,p.68.
  4. Oldmixon,J.,The British Empire in America,vol.2,p.162.

The Seventeenth century Englishman was familiar with the system of indentured servitude and regarded the institution as essential to the organisation of labour and the exclusive development of certain trades and crafts. It was, therefore, a popular and legitimate institution in the socio-economic organisation of pre-industrialised society. Indentured servitude, the seventeenth century development of the feudal system of apprenticeship, was in the tradition of the semi-liberation of the serf, whereby a contractual agreement was established with mutual obligations, not moral but legal, between the master and servant. Morgan wrote:

In England the hiring of workers was dignified by law and custom that gave a servant some control over his own life. He had to give his own master three months notice if he intended to leave at the end of his term... by the same token, a master could not turn away a servant before his term was up and had to give him three months advance notice....(1)

In the West Indian colonies, the system of indentured servitude was quite different in content, function, and forms of legitimization; as classical slavery was so different from New World slavery, so English servitude was different from West Indian servitude. What developed in Barbados was a unique

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1. 5 th Eliz. 1, C4., paragraph 47. Quoted in Morgan, E.S., 'The First American Boom', p.197.

system of servitude which closely resembled slavery in certain critical areas, and operated under the legal framework of the traditional indenture contract. There was nothing in seventeenth century English society from which Barbadians could draw to erect such a system, and the critical forces which produced this system of labour organisation were laid down, therefore, in the 'colonial mode of production'. (1)

Barbadians quite freely bought, sold, gambled away, mortgaged, taxed as property, and alienated in wills their indentured servants. The practices were governed not by English labour customs or traditions, but by a loosely defined concept, 'the custom of the country', which was the law and deciding force in the society. Through this concept, Barbadian sugar planters laid down their own labour customs and traditions, while explicitly rejecting the British traditions, labour customs, ideas and institutions. The 'custom of the country' would have been incongruous with the English tradition, which was one of the gradual freeing of the labouring classes and the development of greater civil rights for the individual worker. The Barbadian servant had no real rights as a person in civil society, and in this respect the system of indentured servitude, like New World slavery, was not a modification of the Old World labour system. Apologists for this close resemblance between slavery and servitude in Barbados, have argued that the central distinguishing factor which separated servitude from slavery was <sup>that</sup> with the former, it was the servant's labour power which was being contracted, <sup>and</sup> not the servant's person, as was the case with Black slavery.

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1. For a discussion of the 'slave formations' see, Anderson, P., Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism (Lon., 1974), chap. 1. Padgug, R., 'Problems in the theory of Slavery and Slave Society', Science and Society (1976), pp. 3-27. Hindess, B., and P. Hurst, Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production (Lon., 1977), ch. 3.



Firstly, it should be pointed out that it was this very issue of the 'servant's time' which separated English from Barbadian servitude. Unlike the English experience, the Barbadian master on placing a servant under indenture obtained by the 'custom of the country' total control over the servant, not only during his working hours, but also during his non-labouring hours. A servant was accountable to his master for the total time embraced under his indenture. They could not leave the master's plantation without a pass signed by the master, which in effect meant that the 'total control' element so characteristically demonstrated in Black slavery was directly applicable to indentured servants. Furthermore, sugar planters were keen to express the view that the servant was not a free person under contractual obligation, but primarily a capital investment with property characteristics; these factors were contradictory to the concept of freedom.

Secondly, though the servant's market value was usually determined by the length of un-expired servitude, the Barbadians developed a very interesting method of valuation, whereby the resale value of the servant was quite independent of 'time'. It was a method which evaluated their bodies rather than their length of servitude. Equiano, the ex-slave, wrote, 'I have often seen slaves...in different islands, put into scales and weighed and then sold, from 3 pence to 6 pence to 9 pence a pound.' (1) This practice was used also to value white servants in Barbados, and illustrates the Barbadians' conception and use of servitude.

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1. Edwards, P., ed., Equiano's Travels, His Autobiography: The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African, 1789 (Oxford, 1903), p. 71.

Richard Ligon wrote a very detailed account of a transaction in Barbados where the physical characteristics of a servant were being used as the sole factor in value determination. In this case, a female servant was being bartered for a pig, apparently a common Barbadian practice during the early period. The parties to the sale obtained the scales and weighed both the pig and the servant for their relative value. According to Ligon, '...the price was set a goat a pound for the hogs flesh and six pence for the woman's flesh....' (1) Furthermore, Ligon admitted that '...it is an ordinary thing here, to sell their servants to one another...and in exchange receive any commodities that are in the island...' (2) in this manner. This method of marketing slave labour, according to Equiano, was applied only to slaves with little value. (3) In this case Ligon described the servant in the same manner, as being '...lasie and good for nothing....' (4)

The planters acting under the ' custom of the country' continued where the merchants left off in dealing with their servants as a 'species of property'. The development of the Barbadian system of servitude was the outgrowth of a complex mixture of economic and superstructural forces operating in the construction of the early productive system.

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p. 59.

2. Ibid.

3. Edwards, P., ed., Equiano's Travels, p. 71.

4. Ligon, A True and Exact History of Barbados, p. 59.

There were two dominant responses to the economic crises of the pre-sugar era, which in many ways led to the unprofitable utilization of servant labour for many planters. A significant section of the growing planter class emigrated from the West Indies taking their assets to the mainland colonies of Virginia and New England.(1) A larger number, however, decided to stay behind, and at this juncture began to reappraise the relationship between capital accumulation and indentured labour under adverse market conditions. Out of this reappraisal came two important policies which were to determine the important characteristics of Barbadian servitude over the century. Firstly, the planters began to impose more extreme socio-political controls over the servant population. Secondly, they developed a more capitalist market-oriented use of servant labour, which resulted in the imposition of a wide range of 'property functions' upon the indentured servant.(2)

The central role of indentured labour on estates in the pre-sugar era made the development of a more market oriented use of indentured servants necessary to maintain moderate capital accumulation. On most of these estates, the capital invested in servant labour was frequently larger than the values<sup>of</sup> machinery and buildings. The most effective method by which a wide range of economic

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1. Foster, N., A Brief Relations, p. 2.

2. See appendix 7.



functions could be attached to the indentured servant was to establish in the ' custom of the country' their use as a form of alienable property. In this period, indentured servants represented the most liquid capital assets on the plantation. Planters wanted to be able to raise small sums of cash or its commodity equivalent on a short term basis. This was achieved by selling servants on the resale market. This significantly increased the cash flow level on the commodity market in the colony.

The use of servants as ' alienable property' on the commodity market helps to undermine the argument that it was only the servants' labour power which was being bought with indenture contracts. Harlow was intrigued by the wording and implications of a deed of sale by which a servant was sold in 1640. The deed reads as follows:

I, William Marshall of the Island of Barbados,  
 merchant, do by these present assign, sett and order,  
 all my right, title, and interest in one maide servant,  
 by the name of Alice Skinner, for the full term of  
 four years from ye day of her arrival in this island,  
 unto Mr. Richard Davis, or his assigns....(1)

Harlow was particularly interested in the nature of the 'rights and title' which were being sold, and noted that they related to the servant's time or services and not/her person as a form of property. (2)

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1. Deed of William Marshall, 1640, RB. 3/2, f. 47. Bar.Arc.
  2. Harlow, V.T., A History of Barbados, p.293.

The deeds of the colony contain much direct evidence to show that the sale of servants was not simply a transference of their labour services. For example, in 1640 Richard Atkinson signed a deed of sale with John Batt, a merchant, to whom he was to deliver his ' body ' under certain conditions. The deed stated that

...if the said two thousand pounds of cotton shall not be paid upon the day agreed, that then and immediately upon default of the said payment it shall be for the said John Batt, or his assigns, to take the Body of me Richard Atkinson, for the term of six years without further trouble....(1)

This kind of deal was common in Barbados, and merchants on giving credit to some planters insisted upon a clause which would give <sup>them</sup> the ownership of the persons 'body' on default.

In plantation accounts and appraisals, servants were categorised as property along with cattle, slaves and other capital assets. For example, when the Governor's accountants appraised the plantation of George Bulkley on 12 June 1640 for tax purposes, the list of '...all goods, property and chattels...upon the plantation ...'was as follows:(2)

Livestock.....valued at 42,000 lbs. of cotton.  
 domestic assets.....valued at 1,125 lbs.of cotton.  
 nine indentured servants..valued at 3,120 lbs.of cotton.

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1. Deed of John Batt, 14 Dec.1640, Davis Mss. box 2.
  2. Inventory of George Bulkley's plantation, 12 June 1640, RB.3/1,f.14. Bar.Arc.

Barbadian servants were not only appraised as components of the plantation's capital stock, but were also disposable with the plantation as it changed ownership, either by sale or by will. When Alexander Lindsay sold his plantation in the Parish of St. John to Francis Dickenson in September 1643, the 'schedule of what servants and other goods...sold with the plantacon...' (1) was as follows:

4 Negroes  
 4 Donkeys  
 2 Sows  
 3 Goats  
 2 Iron pots  
 all dunghill fowls  
 2 English servants

Similarly, when Henry Hawley sold the 'Three Houses' plantation to Francis Skeete on 19 June 1640, the 'goods and chattels' attached to the land were listed as follows: (2)

|             |           |                       |   |   |   |
|-------------|-----------|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| 40 Sows     | valued at | 12,000 lbs. of cotton |   |   |   |
| 160 pigs    | " "       | 5,150                 | " | " | " |
| 1 horse     | " "       | 3,000                 | " | " | " |
| 6 donkeys   | " "       | 3,600                 | " | " | " |
| 26 servants | " "       | 7,350                 | " | " | " |

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1. Inventory of Francis Dickenson's plantation, Sept. 1643, RB. 3/1 f. 57.

2. Inventory of Francis Skeete's plantation, 19 June 1640, RB. 3/1, f. 15.



The Government of the colony recognised the market functions of indentured servants as alienable property. Magistrates and tax officials frequently confiscated the cattle or indentured servants from property owners <sup>were in</sup> who tax arrears. James Barry, in the 1630s, gave a very clear descriptive account of how the Governor gave the Provost Marshall orders to 'seize upon his property, cattle, servants or whatever, to be sold to meet his tax debt.'(1) On the 7 April 1647, the Provost Marshall also gave a local constable orders to '... seize and attach any of ye cotton, tobacco, servants, plantacon, or other goods or estate, whs'over belonging to the children of Capt. William Rayley deseased...' to be resold to meet the debt owed to a planter, one Mr. Alexander Lindsay.(2)

Like the tax officer, individuals preferred to reclaim debt by obtaining indentured servants, because <sup>as</sup> they were a liquid form of capital, they could either be sold for cash quickly, or put to work profitably and easily. ---There was a widespread preference for indentured servants as a short term capital investment, even more so than for African slaves who were more problematic in that they had to be acculturated and trained for their productive roles.

Servants were used as an integral part of the commercial and financial structure of the colony, and were commonly forwarded as security in mortgage agreements. One such agreement has been documented. In March 1647, John Wiseman was in debt to the value of 5,000 lbs. of cotton unto William Russell. In order to satisfy

1. Harlow, V.T., ed., Colonising Expeditions, p.28.

2. Order of the Provost Marshall, 7 April 1647, R B. 3/2, f.70.

Russell, he had to mortgage his '... plantation and servants...'

(1) until the agreed repayment date, which was fixed '... at or before the last day of May... 1649....' (2) This placing of indentured servants on two to five years mortgage was common in Barbados; again, individuals preferred to use servants as a property guarantee in such agreements.

The logical market extension of such a system was the use of indentured servants as a form of currency in the colony, which was accepted by all and legitimised by <sup>the</sup> Government apparatus. Some individuals insisted that payment in transactions be made not in sterling but in servants, while others made it the basis of the legality of contracts. In 1644, Thomas Applewhaite bought a 200 acre plantation in the parish<sup>ES</sup> of St. Thomas and St. George; the contract being valid only if part of the payment was made with twenty five indentured servants. (3) So indentured servants could be sold with the land, mortgaged, used as currency in the monetary system and appropriated by the Government as property for tax redemption. All these functions were part of a system of property relations in human beings, a wider set of possessory relations developed in the colonies which corresponded to the 'plantation mode of production', and was legitimised by its legal-custom superstructure. (4)

Max Weber in his analysis of capital, used the concept of 'appropriation' as being central to the meaning of property in a given set of social relations. The total appropriation of a persons social and productive capacity by another, in any set of social relations, implied the formation of 'ownership' and

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1. Deed of William Russell, March 1647, R B. 3/2, f.53.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Deed of Applewhaite, 1644, R B. 3/L, f.536.
  4. See appendix 7.



'rights' systems in that person. Furthermore, the ultimate proof of the existence of property rights in persons lay in whether those rights and titles could be alienated. Torrence argued that 'Appropriated rights which are enjoyed by individuals through inheritance... will be called the 'property' of the individual... as they are alienable 'free' property.' (1)

In Barbados, indentured servants, like African slaves, were bequeathed and inherited in wills, and no one questioned the legality of this method of property alienation. The wills of seventeenth century Barbados suggest that this was very commonplace and unquestioned or unchallenged by law. For example, Capt. Robert Clark who bequeathed his plantation and chattels by a will dated 4 March 1655, listed as chattels '... all goods, negroes and servants.' (2) Similarly, John Daulton bequeathed unto his daughters, Joan and Emilie, by a will of 15 April 1656 his '... chatells, commodities, merchandise, servants...' (3) and estate.

Servants had the 'right' to complain to local magistrates over excessive mal-treatment, but this was undermined by the planters use of them as property. The right to petition magistrates was merely part of the law of contract open to servants to give a sense of fairness to the wording of their indentures. It was not effectively exercised, and the Council, Assembly and Judiciary (the politico-legal apparatus of planter hegemony) greatly suppressed this right to petition, so that it did not

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1. Torrance, J., Estrangement, Alienation and Exploitation (London, 1977), pp.163-4.

2. Will of Robert Clark, 4 March 1655, R.B. 6/13, f.127.

3. Will of John Daulton, 15 April 1656, R.B. 6/13, f.134.



affect the property rights in the servants. In 1640, when two servants lodged a complaint against their master, Capt. Thomas Stanhope, for mal-treatment, the local magistrate, after examination, found them to be malicious and had them publicly flogged;(1) thus destroying any legal threat to the planters' right to treat their property as they wished-within the wide limits of the 'custom of the country'. Planters expected such decisions from the judiciary, and held the view that since they paid<sup>a</sup> property tax on their servants, their disposal and use of them was no concern of the wider community.

Thus for the most part, the Barbadian plantocracy was able, in the seventeenth century, to develop a system of property relations under the much praised institution of indentured servitude. Not surprisingly, contemporaries referred to them as 'white slaves', and<sup>as</sup> Pere Lebat observed on his visit to Barbados in the late seventeenth century, '... these unfortunates ... 'were nothing but' ... white slaves.'-(2)(3)

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1. Pages from the Early History of Barbados, 1627-52. Mss.1865, C9.(68) B.L.
  2. Lebat, J., ed., Memoirs of Pere Lebat, p.125.
  3. See appendix 7.

SECTION SIX.FROM WHITE TO BLACK LABOUR.Part AThe Transition to Black Field Labour, 1650-1665  
An Economic Analysis.

The Sugar Revolution was associated with a shift in the racial composition of the labour force on the plantations. From the racially mixed labour force of the early stages of the Sugar Revolution (1643-55), Barbados emerged in the last quarter of the century with a clear division of labour based on racial criteria. By this time Black slaves had ousted white labour, indentured and free, from most occupational roles on and off the estates, leaving an elite of white overseers. The occupation of overseer was maintained as a white or 'half white' (in the case of mulattos) preserve into the nineteenth century.

Historians, in seeking to find the causes of this labour transition, have produced a body of writing that needs to be analysed carefully and critically. The early historians developed the climatic theory of labour; a theory which argued the inadequacy of white labour in tropical conditions, based upon their physical characteristics.(1) The transition from indentured servitude to African slave labour in the fields was, therefore, explained in terms of the European inability to work under tropical conditions.

Schomburgh, one of the earliest historians of Barbados, wrote in 1848,

The constitution of the European is not calculated for

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1. Thompson, E.T., 'The Climatic Theory of the Plantations', Agricultural History, Vol.15 (1941), pp.49-64.

labour under a tropical sun, and the prosperity of Barbados would never have reached the high station which it occupied... if the production of the staple commodities had depended upon the labour of Europeans...

(1)

This view in early Barbadian historiography was to become the dominant exposition on the division of labour on the plantations, and permeated the analyses of nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars. (2) For example, Ragatz argued that 'Climatic conditions made an economic system based on... European workers impossible...' (3) in the West Indies. This view was shared by Harlow, whose history of Barbados stands authoritative to this day. He argued that

...the West Indies are subject to a climate as tropical as central Africa. Here the whiteman was an alien - an unnatural importation. Soon the planters discovered that the labour of negro slaves, accustomed as they were to intense heat and sudden cold, was more efficient... consequently, the British labourer in these islands gave place to the negro. It was the triumph of geographical conditions. (4)

Seventeenth century writers, however, made no negative reference to climate in their analyses of white labour and colonial

1. Schomburgh, R.H., The History of Barbados, pp.144-5.
2. For example, Heeren, A.H., A Manual of the History of the Political System of Europe and Its Colonies, (Lon., 1848), p.336.  
Egerton, H.E., The Origins and Growth of the English Colonies and of their Systems of Government, (Oxford, 1903), p.6.  
Keller, R.J., Colonisation: A Study of the Founding of New Societies, (Boston, 1908), p.10.
3. Ragatz, R.J., The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1765-1833 (N.Y., 1963 edit.), p.3.
4. Harlow, V.T., A History of Barbados, pp.292-3.



development in the West Indies.(1) In fact, they glorified Barbadian climate and argued for the more systematic importation of servants to expand sugar production. The Barbadian planters were convinced that white labour, given the right market conditions, could be the basis of West Indian development. As late as 1670, when Black slavery was firmly established in Barbados and the Leeward Islands, Barbadians argued that the new settlement of St. Lucia should be developed with voluntary indentured servants, convicts, and vagrants who could be obtained 'at an easy rate' for the erection of a sugar plantation industry on the island.(2)

Even more problematic has been the view that frontier plantation agriculture demanded slavery.(3) This might be correct, but subscribers to this view fail to realise that the important characteristics of 'slavery' were satisfactorily met by early indentured servitude, (4) especially in Barbados. But if, as is reasonable, the planter class can be portrayed as rational profit seeking capitalists, then the choice of labour and the structure of the labour force, at all levels on the plantation, should be a reflection of the market-which showed servant labour as a satisfactory substitution for, or preferable to, slave labour before 1660.

In the early period of the Sugar Revolution (1643-1660), both slaves and servants were subjected to the same working hours and

1. More recent historians have attacked and dismissed the climatic theory. For example, Eric Williams, by suggesting that there are no physiological reasons why whites cannot labour in tropical conditions. Capitalism and Slavery, (Lon., 1975), p.20.
2. Nicholas Blake to King, 20 October 1670, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, p.115.
3. See Williams, E., Capitalism and Slavery, p.23.
4. See Section Three, Part 2.

dietary standard. There is no evidence to suggest that slaves produced a higher marginal physical product than servants in this period, and a simple analysis showing the labour/year price of the two types of labour, with an equilibrium in their marginal physical products, illustrates the clear advantage of servant labour over slave labour.

The majority of servants arriving at Barbados had no ready contracts with specific planters, but were recruited and contracted by merchants who sold them on the open market. During this period, the selling price of prime indentured field-hands fluctuated between £10 and £13.(1) It remained at this level until the late 1660s, then began to rise steadily. The large supply of servant labour (especially during the Civil War and under the Cromwellian Government) to the sugar plantations to meet the rising demand, did not lead to an immediate inflation in prices. Female servant prices, like those of female slaves, tended throughout the century to lag behind male prices by a margin of £2-£3 sterling. Planters found the prices of servant labour satisfactory, and the majority of complaints concerning the servant market dealt with the desire for a larger and more consistent supply.(2)

Meanwhile, during the period 1643-1660, the planters were paying over twice these prices for African slaves sold on the island by the Dutch merchants. The Dutch slave price data for Pernambuco, their base in N.E. Brazil, could, therefore, be used as an indication of Barbados slave prices.

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1. Acts of Council and Assembly; C O. 30/5, ff.44-5.  
Edwards, B., The History, Civil and Commercial, Vol.1., pp.72-3.
  2. Gentlemen Planters of London to King, 20 April 1670, C O. 31/2, f.27.



T.27 - Pernambuco Slave Prices in the Early Sugar Revolution, 1641-45. (1)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Numbers Sold</u> | <u>Price in Decimalised<br/>£ Sterling</u> |
|-------------|---------------------|--|
| 1641        | 1,437               | 36.72                                      |
| 1642        | 2,312               | 39.75                                      |
| 1643        | 3,948               | 20.54                                      |
| 1645        | 2,589               | 20.98                                      |
| 1646        | 2,486               | 32.44                                      |

Ligon stated that during the period 1645-51, the average prices of female slaves were £25-7 and £30 for males.(2) These data show that slave prices in the early period of sugar production were twice as high as those for indentured labour; other scattered data confirm these trends. While the Pernambuco data show an average price of £28.52, slave trading in Barbados in 1645 took place at the following rates:

T.28 - Selling Prices of John Severne's Slaves, 1645 (Aug.-Dec.) (3)

|                  | <u>No.</u> | <u>£.</u> | <u>Price/Slave</u> |
|------------------|------------|-----------|--------------------|
| To Capt. Allen   | 10         | 220       | 22.0               |
| " " Holding      | 8          | 132       | 16.5               |
| " Chris Thompson | 10         | 220       | 22.0               |

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1. Watjen, H., Das Hollandische Kolonialreich in Brazilian (Haag, 1921), p.31.
  2. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados, p.46.
  3. Deeds of Barbados, 1645, R B. 3/1, ff.437-9.



James Drax, in 1645, bought thirty four slaves for his estate at an average price of £27.35 per slave, which shows that John Severne's prices were reflective of the island's average price.(1) Six years later, an observer noted that the average price of slaves on the island was £25-7.(2) Indentured labour, therefore, had a definite price advantage over slave labour, and with equal marginal physical products (M.P.P.) the planters felt that servants held a clear productivity advantage over slaves in the early period. Not surprisingly, the desires of the planters, ten years after the establishment of sugar culture, were for a more organised and systematic supply of white labour; both the servant and slave trades were disorganised and irregular from the planter's viewpoint at this juncture.

Other factors came into the planter's evaluation of labour cost. They made calculations on the expected longevity of their investments, in order to estimate the average annual stream of return. The single most important variable was the expected 'working life' of the labour unit. Since the planter would want to maximise the return from each unit of labour over the original capital outlay, he would be seriously concerned with the issue of 'time'. This was crucial to his combinations of slave and indentured labour, since in this period (1643-1660) neither had a daily production output advantage over the other.

At this stage, it is necessary to qualify the often used generalisation that, during the Sugar Revolution, Black labour was cheaper than indentured labour. Harlow stated that '... the

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1. Deeds of Barbados, 1645, R.B. 3/1, f.436.

2. Slaves sold at £25-7 in 1651. See a brief description of Barbados 1651/2 in: Harlow, V.T., ed., Colonising Expeditions, p.45.

money which procured a white man's services for ten years could buy a Negro for life.' (1) This was clearly not the case, as the price data shown previously suggest. Harlow assumed that the longevity of slaves on the plantation was much greater than the 'contracted time' of servants during this period. This error was grossly exaggerated by Gemery and Hogendorn in their assertion that, during the early Sugar Revolution, the working life of the average slave fluctuated around 20 years.(2)

Such assertions and assumptions are not based upon any mortality data, and are highly inconsistent with the labour management policy of early sugar planters. Adequate mortality data for early plantation society are unfortunately not available. In Barbados the maxim of slave management held that the most effective economy was that which took '...out of the human chattel in the shortest space of time the utmost of exertion it is capable of putting forth...'(3) Early Barbadians, responding to the insecurity of investment caused by political turmoil, developed an economic ideology geared to rapid accumulation. This meant that slave labour was fully exhausted for the extraction of the highest level of surplus value in the shortest possible period. The effect of this upon slave mortality was catastrophic, and the important tendency was toward the equalisation of the servant's contractual time with the slave's longevity.

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1. Harlow, V.T., A History of Barbados, p.307.
  2. Gemery, H., and Hogendorn, J.S., 'The Atlantic Slave Trade; A Tentative Model', Journal of African History, Vol.15, No.2 (1974), p.225.
  3. Marx, K., Capital Vol.1 (Chicago, 1906), p.293. Also Hart, R., 'Formation of the Caribbean Working Class', The Black Liberator, Vol.2, No.2 (Oct. 1973-May 1974), p.134. And Mill, J.S., 'The Negro Question', Fraser Magazine, Vol.4, (1850), p.26



Dickson, in the early nineteenth century, conducted some remarkable investigations into early Barbadian history using the planters' testimonies. He discovered that, generally, the slave's life, as described by Harlow, was in equilibrium with the servant's 'contractual time'. This conclusion is of critical importance to an understanding of the servant-slave combination policy of the planter class, and the timing of the labour substitutions. According to Dickson, it was commonly reputed among practical planters that '... the labouring lives of bought field slaves... exceed not 7 years in gross...' (1) on the sugar estates. The Africans, he argued, are from '14-40, and even 50 years' of age, and during the

... three unproductive years of seasoning, 2 out of every 5 Africans bought die, and the 14 years they should have fulfilled are thereby taken from the (5 times 7 or) 35 years of labour supposed to be fulfilled by the whole five, leaving 21 years of labour to be performed by 3 survivors in the 4 years remaining of the 7 after seasoning; ... The period of actual... labour... very greatly reduced by sickness and desertion ... from these and similar facts,... allowed the planter to get 7 years of effective hard labour from every slave he buys ... (2)

Bennett, in his study of the Codrington plantation, confirms the high mortality experienced during seasoning, and computed that at least 33% of slaves imported died within the first three years of labour. (3) Gray, in his monumental study, noted that such high mortality levels were not peculiar to Barbados, for slaves in South

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1. Dickson, W., Mitigation of Slavery: 2 Parts (Lon., 1814), p.445.

2. Ibid. pp.456-7.

3. Bennett, J.H., Bondsmen and Bishops: Slavery and Apprenticeship on Codrington Plantation of Barbados, 1710-1833 (L.A., 1958), pp.44, 53-62.



Carolina also experienced a very short longevity. According to Gray, 'the value of an unseasoned slave's life might not be computed at more than seven years purchase.' (1) This time period equalled the five to ten year indenture contracts of voluntary servants, and fell short of the ten years servitude of political prisoners, such as the Monmouth and Salisbury rebels, (2) and the life servitude of some convict labourers.

Furthermore, Barbadian planters used a wide variety of techniques to successfully keep the <sup>ex-</sup>servants off the land market, and on the labour market as wage workers, (3) which was seen by the latter as a prolongation of their servitude. Many ex-servants became tied to their former master's plantations, as the unemployment level among their class was high. (4) As their low wage levels led to a fall in living standards, (5) many ex-servants re-indentured themselves; others swelled the ranks of the impoverished 'floating labour force' which the planters drew upon seasonally. The critical factor was that for the planters, the wage labour of ex-servants represented a further effective and profitable method of labour exploitation. From the planters perspective this continuation of labour exploitation gave servitude a critical 'longevity' advantage

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1. Gray, L.C., History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1800 Vol.1 (Washington, 1953), p.363.

2. Hall, R., ed., Manuscript Laws of Barbados, 1640-1762, C O. 31/1, f.40.

3. Beckles, H.McD., 'Land Distribution and Class Formation', pp.137-8.

4. The Wills data show how planters provided permanent employment for their favourite servants after their servitude expired on the plantation.

5. Beckles, H.McD., 'Land Distribution and Class Formation', p.140.

over slave labour in this period.

The price of servant labour, which fluctuated between £10-£13, produced a man/year ratio of £3.5 - £4.5 . Planters, by using such simple calculations, found that slave labour had no clear advantage over servant labour during the early Sugar Revolution. The economics of production during the sugar boom, did not encourage slave breeding, which would have diminished the marginal revenue advantage of servant labour over slave labour. In fact, planters were hostile to the natural reproduction of the slave labour force. They argued that the loss of the female for two or three months during pregnancy, and the cost of rearing the young, which involved the allocation of special 'nanny labour', made it uneconomical.(1) Therefore, the argument that the slave's offspring represented an extra-product, the capital value of which offset adult mortality and generally increased the capital return of the initial outlay, did not apply in Barbados during this period.

On the other hand, some planters in the early period wanted to encourage servant breeding, and were seriously assisted by the Cromwellian Government in the supply of females. The Parliamentary Council gave regular orders for the supply of 'loose wenches' to the Barbadian sugar planters, so that by their 'breeding' they may 'replenish' the white labour force.(2) But this policy was rejected for the same reasons that applied to slave breeding. The Assembly imposed heavy penalties upon male servants for 'breeding' female servants, and legislated for the great extension of female's servitude time after pregnancy.(3)

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1. See Ragatz, L.J., The Fall of the Planter Class in the Br. Caribbean, 1763-1833 (N.Y., 1928), pp.336-8.
  2. Cited in Sheridan, R., Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the Br. W. Indies, 1623-1775 (Barbados, 1975), p.238.
  3. Proceedings of the Grand Jury of Barbados, 13 Dec. 1664 C.S.P.C. 1661-68, p.259.



Harlow, in stating that slaves were cheaper than servants, located what he considered to be a critical advantage in the 'running costs' computations, by suggesting that the maintenance costs of servants were much higher than for slaves. The contemporary data do not bear out this contention. Both the servants and slaves performed the same work, ate the same diet, extracted similar housing costs, and although the servants did cost more to clothe, this did not lead to overall higher costs of servants over slaves. Ligon calculated the 'optimal' costs of 'field servants' and field slaves, while conducting his survey of Barbadian sugar estates between 1647 and 1651. He defined 'field servants' as those 'common servants' that 'weed and do common work'. His computation is as follows:

T.29 - An Ideal Account of the Yearly Clothing of Servants in the Early Sugar Revolution. (1)

| <u>MALE</u>     | <u>COST</u>     | <u>FEMALE</u>  | <u>COST</u>     |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
|                 | <u>£. s. d.</u> |                | <u>£. s. d.</u> |
| 6 Shirt         | 1. 4. 0.        | 6 Smocks       | 1. 4. 0.        |
| 6 Pairs Drawers | 12. 0.          | 3 Petticoats   | 18. 0.          |
| 12 " Shoes      | 1.16. 0.        | 3 Waistcoats   | 9. 0.           |
| 3 Monmouth Caps | 12. 0.          | 12 Pairs Shoes | 1.16. 0.        |
|                 | <u>4. 4. 0.</u> |                | <u>4. 7. 0.</u> |

In contrast, he computed that field slaves were fitted with coarse canvas drawers for the males, and ill-made petticoats for the females at a ridiculously under-estimated annual cost of six

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.115.



shillings and eight shillings for males and females respectively.(1)

Firstly, it should be pointed out that Ligon's optimal clothing allocations were very far removed from what servants were actually receiving. Like many humanitarian planters of this period, he wanted to see the servants well clad, and was ashamed of their general treatment. Few Barbadian servants, if any, wore shoes and monmouth caps, or were allocated in excess of two pairs of drawers and two shirts per annum. They generally went barefooted like the slaves, and wore cheaply made canvas garments; only their bare skins differentiated them from their African co-workers. For example, Scott, in his famous description of Barbados during the Sugar Revolution, noted how he saw field servants labouring in the hot sun without shirts, shoes or stockings.(2) Furthermore, as late as the 1670s, Sir Peter Colleton was still fighting a losing campaign to see them '...clothed with dignity...' (3), as he considered their physical appearance <sup>to be</sup> ~~no~~ better than that of the slaves.

Even the customary £10 or 400lbs. of sugar which was paid to the servants as 'freedom due', and was the largest outlay of capital on servants, did not give slave labour an aggregate cost advantage over indentured labour.(4) Planters customarily allocated the 400lbs. of sugar to their ex-servants when the price was low, or took it from stocks of ill-made sugar supplies.

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1. Ibid.
  2. John Scott, Description of Barbados, Sloane Mss. 3662.
  3. Sir Peter Colleton to Council and Assembly of Barbados, 14 Dec. 1670, C.S.P.C. 1669-74, p.141.
  4. Hall, R., Mss. Laws of Barbados, 1640-1762, C O. 31/1, f.36.

The analysis of the relative prices, costs, and productivities of servant and slave labour in the pre-Restoration period, therefore, shows that the former possessed the cost advantage, which explains why planters persisted with servant labour some two decades after sugar culture was introduced into the island.

In the post-Restoration period, however, significant changes took place in both the slave and servant markets. These changing variables were sufficient to give slave labour a positive advantage over servant labour, and by the mid-1660s the

$$\begin{array}{ccc} * \text{ M.P.P.} & & \text{M.P.P.} \\ \text{S.} & & \text{I.S.} \\ \hline \text{P.} & > & \text{P.} \\ \text{S.} & & \text{I.S.} \end{array}$$

The Restoration anti-emigration movement, coupled with severe competition upon the labour market of Europe from Virginia, New England, Carolina, and Jamaica, and the refusal of Barbadians to accept Irish servants, led to a crippling crisis in the supply of indentured labour to the colony.(1) More importantly, the Navigation Acts of 1660 and 1661 took the critically important Scottish labour out of the orbit of Barbadian planters.

The Barbadian Assembly responded to this labour crisis by cutting the length of service by 30%-50%. It was hoped that this would attract a larger number of servants to the colony, but with servant prices stabilised around £12-£15, this in effect meant the doubling of servant labour cost.(2) Merchants responded by

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1. Gov. William Willoughby to Privy Council, 16 Dec. 1667, C.S.P.C. 1661-68, p.526.

2. Petition of the President, Council, and Assembly of Barbados to the Lords of Foreign Plantations, 11 May 1661, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.30.

\* . M.P.P.=marginal physical product: P=price: I.S=indenture servant



demanding a price for indentured labour of £18 to £20, which now only served 3-5 years. Meanwhile, The Company of Royal Adventurers trading into Africa, which was chartered in 1663, began to supply slaves at £14 to £18 per head.(1) By 1665, the price of slaves had fallen by over 50% (2) from the 1640s level, while the price of servant labour had increased by over 80%. Slave labour was now much cheaper than servant labour.

By the late 1660s, the planters were well experienced in the organisation and exploitation of African slave labour. Slave breeding became a feature of the plantation, which reflected the growing sophistication of management techniques, and the maturity of the slave market. The evidence suggests that planters now valued slave children as an important part of the capital accumulation process; their market value rising from £2 to £6 at birth. (3)

By the mid-1660s, the planters, faced with a supply crisis in servant labour and doubling of prices, found slave labour more economical. At this stage, the specific and exclusive equation of 'Sugar and African Slavery' became more meaningful and true, and subsequently, sugar expansion meant the expansion of the slave labour force. The transition to Blacks in field labour during the mid-1660s was reflected throughout the colony, and can be illustrated by a compilation of the few surviving inventories for the period.

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1. Journal of the 'Company of Royal Adventurers trading in Africa', C O. 1/17, No.2.
  2. In 1663-64, prices of slaves quoted in Barbados were £17-20. See, Sir Thomas Modyford to Royal Africa Company, 20 March 1664 C.S.P.C. 1661-68, p.194.
  3. Journal of Henry Whistler, 1654/5 in: Firth, C.H., ed., The Narrative of General Venables, pp.144-7. Also, Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America, Vol.2. p.136.



T.30 - Labour Structure of Nine Barbadian Plantations, 1662-71.(1)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Owner of Plantation<br/>&amp; Location (Parish)</u> | <u>Size<br/>(Acres)</u> | <u>No. of<br/>Slaves</u> | <u>No. of<br/>Servants</u> |
|-------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1662        | John William<br>(St.Peter)                             | -                       | 34                       | 1                          |
| 1662        | Ann Brown<br>(St.Peter)                                | -                       | 46                       | 2                          |
| 1667        | 'Fisher Pond Estate'<br>(St.Thomas)                    | -                       | 125                      | 4                          |
| 1667        | Hugh Powell<br>(St.Philip)                             | 140                     | 30                       | 7                          |
| 1667        | John Steward<br>(St.Philip)                            | 120                     | 48                       | -                          |
| 1668        | Capt. Downing<br>(St.Joseph)                           | 240                     | 20                       | 2                          |
| 1670        | Thomas Batson<br>(St.George)                           | 360                     | 157                      | 8                          |
| 1670        | Robert Moore<br>(St.Philip)                            | 108                     | 22                       | 7                          |
| 1671        | William Merricke<br>(St.Andrew/St.Peter)               | 168                     | 222                      | 12                         |

Gemery and Hogendorn suggested, '... it seems clear that entrepreneurial calculations, however poorly articulated, recognised more than the labour hours derived from slave ownership', (2) and that planters were highly aware of the non-pecuniary returns of servile labour. But the non-pecuniary returns of slave labour

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- Inventories of the above plantations listed in order tabulated, are found in- R B. 3/3, ff. 273, 27, 165-6, 190, 199.  
R B. 3/8, ff. 6-8; R. B. 3/3, ff.58-63, 153-4, 334-5, Bar.Arc.
  - Gemery, H, and Hogendorn, J.S., 'The Atlantic Slave Trade', p.226.

were satisfactorily and equally derived from indentured servant labour.

The changed relative prices and supply conditions of slave and servant labour, therefore, accounted for the rapid transition to slave labour in the post-Restoration period. The post-Restoration anti-emigration movement in England succeeded in portraying Barbados as a place worse than hell for servants,(1) which greatly hindered emigration. Furthermore, North American colonists offered merchants higher prices for servants sold on the open market, and servants conceived of these colonies as offering more rewards than Barbados. The planters in Barbados were not satisfied with paying £18 for servants who served only two to four years, when slaves were being sold for the same price and served a much longer period. The drastic reduction in servant imports was, therefore, associated with rising servant costs and falling slave prices. The explanation for the timing of the rapid transition from servants to slaves in field work lies in the changed relative supply prices of servant and slave labour, which made the latter more attractive. Any other choice would have been irrational from a market viewpoint. In 1675, Gov. Atkins pointed out that the planters now found '... by experience that they keep three blacks who work better and cheaper than one white-man.'(2) This was an exaggeration, but it illustrates the price trends in the market for labour after the late 1660s.

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1. Williams, E., From Columbus to Castro, pp.103-4.

2. Gov. Atkins to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 11 August 1675, C.O. 29/2, f.92, Also C O. 1/37, No.174.



Part BThe Development of a white labour Elite:  
Indentured Servants, 1665-80

After the 1660s, indentured servants became a skilled labour elite in the plantation system, as the African slaves dominated most unskilled-manual and field work. The servants monopolised the artisan and low-level supervisory occupations, both on and off the plantations. The society and economy reflected this division of labour, and during this period, the concepts of race and labour organisation were developed as powerful instruments in the occupational and social stratification of the servant and slave classes. The apparent absence of skills in the slave population, and their alleged inability to acquire these skills, were advocated as reasons for the development and maintenance of a white labour elite.

Richard Ligon's views on the Africans were typical of those held by the planter class. He argued that the Africans, in spite of their physical subtlety and muscular acuteness, were completely ignorant of the basic scientific laws of the world, and could be taught only monotonous and unimaginative skills.(1) These views were propagated throughout the English Empire, as part of their justification of slavery and the servant's monopoly of the skilled occupations. In March 1680, Gov. Dutton informed Whitehall that the Blacks' '...savage brutishness renders them wholly incapable...' (2) of learning the sophisticated skills that are needed for the plantation.

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, pp. 49-50.

2. Gov. Dutton to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 30 March 1680, CO.31/1, f. 336.



During this period, the occupational stratification of the economy reflected the microism of the plantation, and could be expressed as follows:

T.31 -The Racial Divisions of Plantation Occupations, 1665-80.

| <u>Field</u>                       | <u>General</u>                                     | <u>Factory</u>   |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| overseers }<br>drivers } white     | domestics }<br>carpenters } white<br>masons, etc } | millwrights }<br>boliers } white<br>distillers }<br>coopers }<br>mechanics } |
| slave gangs }<br>few Irish } mixed | unskilled }<br>manual }                            | unskilled }<br>manual }  |
|                                    |  | black  |

Apart from the gangs of unskilled, the most highly valued workers on the plantations, in terms of market value, were the prime overseers and boilers. The prime overseer was usually an ex-servant working for a wage, or a servant who had worked on the plantation for a few years and was both trusted and familiar with the operations of the productive system. Beneath the prime overseers were the slave and servant drivers, or subordinate overseers as contemporaries called them. They had to make sure that the workers fulfilled their allotted daily tasks, and were directly answerable to the prime overseer. Together with the artisans and the mechanics who operated the sugar factory they were the labour elite of the plantation system.

In 1685, the Assembly produced a document entitled ' A moderate Calculation of the annual charge and produce of a Plantation in Barbados,' (1) in which the optimum labour force for an ideal sugar plantation of 100 acres was estimated.

1. A moderate Calculation of the annual charge and produce of a Plantation in Barbados, 16 Sept. 1685, CO.31/3, ff.6-8.

According to the computation, such an estate could best function with a labour force of fifty slaves and seven servants. The servants were to be the overseers and artisans, while the slaves were to be employed in the fields. This pattern would produce a racial division of labour which corresponded to the planter class's ideology of race and labour. This ideal labour force represented ratios of one servant per 14.2 acres, one slave per two acres and one servant per 7.1 slaves. The economic organisation of the plantations in this period was closely conforming to this ideal labour / land structure. Two inventories for one plantation show how a planter tried to conform to the assembly's ideals. In 1668, Capt. Downing had the following labour force on his 240 acre plantation:

T.32- Labour Composition of Downing's Plantation, 1668. (1)

|            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| 20 slaves  | 2 servants      |
| 7 men      | Thomas White    |
| 8 women    | Richard Borrows |
| 5 children |                 |

Ratios

1 servant per 120 acres  
 1 slave per 20 acres  
 1 man servant per 34.3 acres  
 1 servant per 10 slaves.

According to the Assembly's computations, Downing's plantation was greatly understocked with labour, both Black and white. In June 1670, the plantation was bought by Thomas Issack,

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1. Inventory of Capt. Downing's plantation, 1668, RB.3/3, ff.6-8.

who began the task of rationalising it for the production of 'sugar and rumbullion'. Issack expanded the labour force , and by July 1679 the labour structure of the plantation was as follows: (1)

T33- Labour Composition of Thomas Issack's Plantation, July 1670

11 servants

72 slaves

35 males

28 females

9 children

Ratios

Ideal ratios of 1685

1 servant per 21.8 acres

1 per 14.2

1 slave per 3 acres

1 per 2

1 servant per 6.5 slaves

1 per 7.1

As expected, among the servants bought were a boiler, a distiller, a clayer and an overseer; these were the workers who were critical to sugar production during this period.

Since most of the servants were employed in the sugar manufacturing stages, the regional distribution of the sugar works determined the distribution of the servant population. The relationship between the distribution of the sugar works and the servant population is informative about the relative success of the planters in reaching the Assembly's ideal standards of 1685. This relationship in 1683/4 was as follows:

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1. Inventory of Thomas Issack's plantation, July 1670,

RB.3/8, ff.105-8.



T.34- Parish Distribution of Servants and Sugar works in Barbados (1)  
1683/4.

| <u>10 Parishes</u> | <u>Serv.Pop.</u> | <u>Sugar works</u> | <u>Serv./sugar W.</u> |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| St.Thomas          | 258              | 39                 | 6.6                   |
| Christ Church      | 305              | 39                 | 7.8                   |
| St.John            | 191              | 32                 | 5.9                   |
| St.Peter           | 212              | 41                 | 5.1                   |
| St.Lucy            | 75               | 16                 | 4.6                   |
| St. Joseph         | 90               | 20                 | 4.5                   |
| St.George          | 274              | 48                 | 5.7                   |
| St. Phillip        | 206              | 31                 | 6.6                   |
| St. James          | 210              | 29                 | 7.2                   |
| St. Andrew         | <u>109</u>       | <u>38</u>          | <u>3.4</u>            |
| <u>totals</u>      | <u>1,930</u>     | <u>333</u>         | <u>5.7</u>            |

The data show that the number of servants in a parish was generally determined by the number of sugar works in that parish. The parishes of St.Lucy and St. Joseph which had the least number of sugar works also had the smallest servant populations, while the parishes of St.Thomas, Christ Church and St. George had both the largest number of sugar works and servants.

The manufacture of sugar was a complicated process. After the cane was harvested it had to be crushed and boiled for the extraction of the sugar. The mill and the boiling house were central to these industrial operations. In the boiling houses were located the coppers, coolers, basins, ladles and cisterns which were the instruments used for the extraction of the sugar crystals from the cane juice. The

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1. Schomburgh, R., The History of Barbados, p.82.

boiler was the man who was primarily responsible for the successful completion of the process.(1) Dunn described the operation of this craftsman as follows:

It was the job of the boiler, the most valued labourer on the plantation staff, to ladle freshly extracted juice from the cistern into the first copper, skimm off the impurities that rose to the surface, and ladle the remaining liquid into the second copper.(2)

According to Dunn, the boiler had to be something of an 'artist', for there was no sure way of knowing whether the sugar had tempered enough or too much, or when it was ready to strike.(3)

During the 1680s, when the Barbadian planters received the Monmouth rebels, they immediately set about retraining them for these plantation roles: twenty years earlier many of them would have been reduced to ganged field work with the slaves, like the Salisbury rebels of the mid-1650s. Governor Kendal noted that the planters '...taught them to be their boilers, distillers and refiners....'(4) This retraining was greatly facilitated by the youthfulness of the rebels, and also because the majority of them were already in possession of some industrial skill. The occupational and age structure of one consignment was as follows:

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1. Dash, J.S., 'The Windmills and Copper Walls of Barbados', J.B.M.H.S., vol.31(1963/4), pp.43-60.
  2. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.194.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Gov. Kendal to the Earl of Schrewsbury, 26 June 1690, C.S.P.C., 1689- 92, p.289.

T.35

Age and Occupational structure of a Consignment of Monmouth rebels  
shipped to Barbados in 1685(1)

| <u>Age structure</u> | <u>No.</u> |
|----------------------|------------|
| 15-18                | 11         |
| 19-22                | 25         |
| 23-26                | 11         |
| 27-30                | 13         |
| 31-34                | 2          |
| 35-38                | 4          |
| 38-42                | 1          |
|                      | <u>67</u>  |

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>No.</u> | <u>Occupation</u> | <u>no.</u> |
|-------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| woolcomber        | 10         | boucher           | 3          |
| husbandman        | 1          | tailor            | 2          |
| weaver            | 15         | shoemaker         | 2          |
| plowman           | 14         | glover            | 1          |
| clothier          | 5          | soapmaker         | 1          |
| carpenter         | 2          | hatter            | 1          |
| tanner            | 1          | carrier           | 1          |
| mason             | 2          | mercier           | 1          |
| not given         | 5          |                   |            |

The planters developed a great dependence upon these retrained craftsmen, and when King William of Orange ordered their freedom, as part of his policy of pardoning political prisoners, Gov.

Kendal replied that '...if these men are freed, the loss to the planters will be great....'(2) He argued that a more reasonable

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1. Tabulated from Hotton, J., ed., The Original List, pp.317-9.

2. Gov. Kendal to the Earl of Schresbury, 26 June 1690, C.S.P.C., 1689-92, p.289.



idea was the reduction of their servitude from ten years to seven years. (1)

The rise of the sugar industry in Jamaica and the Leeward Islands during this period, led to vigorous competition for the rapidly diminishing pool of potential British labour. The shortage of free artisans was acute, especially of those who '...could draw a plan, and pursue the design they framed with great diligence....' (2) The construction industry was booming in Barbados as the enriched colonists built their grand houses, and the non-plantation employers of artisan labour got the better of the sugar planters. The shortage was also acute in the Leewards. In 1681, Jeaffreson noted that '...for a taylor, a cooper, a carpenter, a joyner, a mason, a smith or such like-which are the trades most necessary here-I would allow to such one, when a good workman, 1000lbs. of sugar wages for each year....' (3)

The experience of William Whaley, planter of Bybrook plantation in the parish of St. Katherine-Jamaica, with his labour force was typical of West Indian planters in this period. In 1674, Whaley wrote to his agent and partner, William Helyar, demanding a supply of servants from London; not unskilled labourers but artisans, including '...a potter and cooper and a carpenter or two if possible.' (4) Whaley was unable to get many servants, and the few

1. Ibid.

2. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.42.

3. Jeaffreson to Poyntz, 11 May 1677, Young Squire, vol.1, p.257.

4. Bennett, J.H., 'William Whaley; Planter of Seventeenth Century Jamaica', Agricultural History, vol.4, no.2 (1966) p.119.

he was able to obtain were the 'riff raff' who were '...both a charge and a trouble....'(1) In December 1675, he insisted on having a mason, a carpenter, a sugar refiner and a boiler, otherwise the plantation would be like '... a man without clothes.'(2) He had already spent £160 on fourteen servants, one of which ran away in an attempt to reach London and cost him £7 for his retrieval. These problems, associated with the supply and inconvenience of white servant labour, increased as the century moved on. But not all planters were prepared to tolerate these problems, and the slaves were seen as the solution. The supply crisis

T.36. Changes in the Servant Population of Barbados, 1679/80 to 1683/4

| <u>Parish</u>     | <u>size of change</u> | (3) |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----|
| St. Thomas        | plus 32               |     |
| St. John          | " 33                  |     |
| Christ Church     | " 126                 |     |
| St. Peter         | " 167                 |     |
| St. Lucy          | minus 43              |     |
| St. Joseph        | Plus 18               |     |
| St. George        | " 163                 |     |
| St. Philip        | " 83                  |     |
| St. James         | " 77                  |     |
| <u>St. Andrew</u> | " <u>62</u>           |     |

in white labour was the basis from which the planters made the transition to Black artisan labour in the last quarter of the century.

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1. Ibid., p.120

2. Ibid.

3. Census of Barbados, 1679/80.

Schomburgh, R., The History of Barbados, p.82.

Part CThe Distribution of the Servant Population  
1680-85

By 1680, the servant population was fairly evenly distributed over the island, but tending towards<sup>a</sup> concentration in the urban areas where they were employed as clerks, warehousemen, tavern assistants, porters and artisans. The analysis of servant distribution in this period is informative about the social structure and regional economic variations of the colony. The distribution of the property owning elite was directly related to the geographical conditions of the colony, since topographical factors were primarily responsible for the location and nature of the sugar industry. The quantity and quality of the arable land in the various parishes, therefore, determined the size of the property owning class in those parishes. (see maps overleaf)

According to the census of 1679/80, the parochial distribution of the property owning class was as follows:

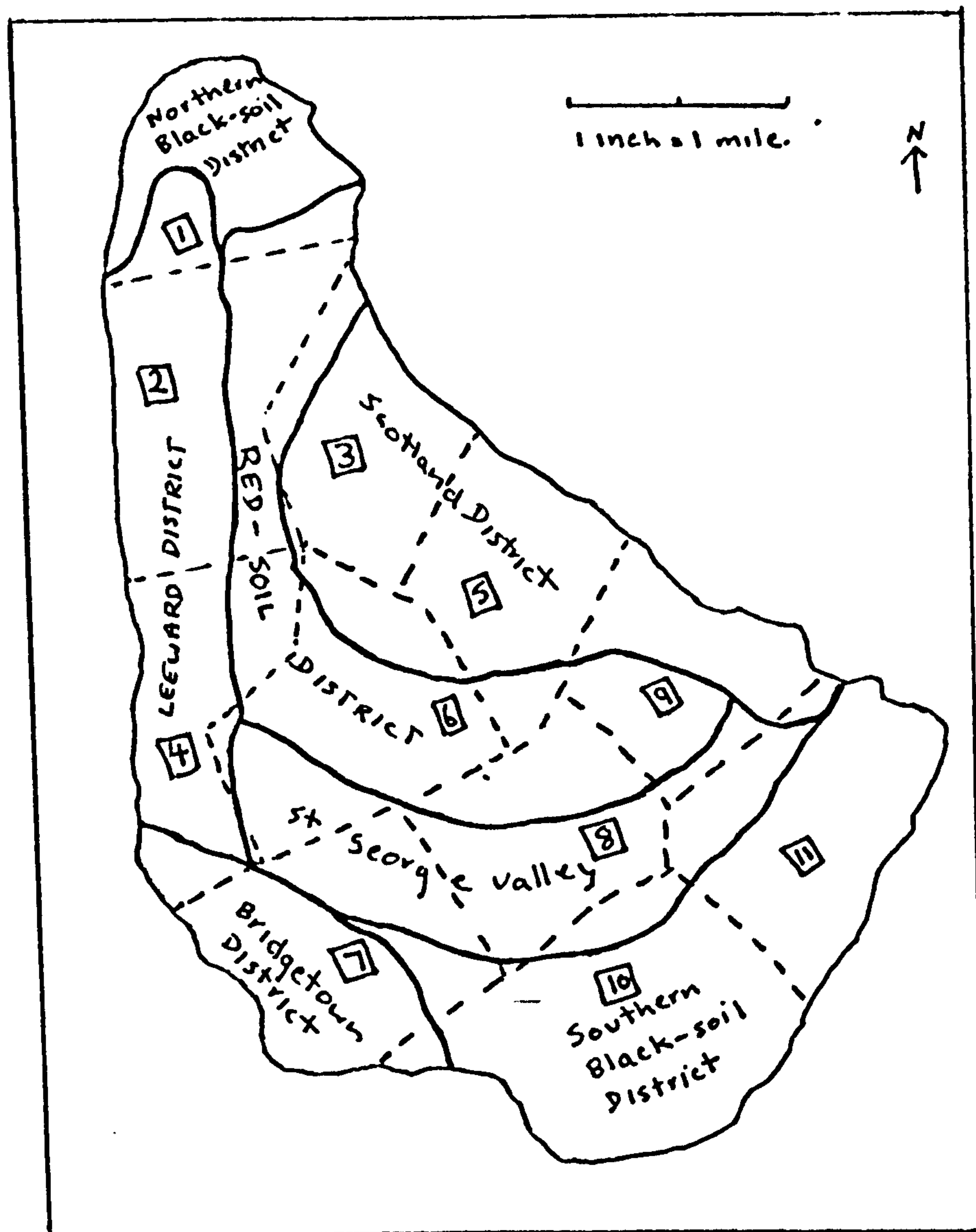
T.37-The Distribution of the Property holders in Barbados, 1679/80 (1)

| <u>Parish</u> | <u>No. of holders</u> | <u>Size of parish (acres)</u> | <u>Acres/holder</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| St. Lucy      | 437                   | 6,800                         | 15.56               |
| St. Peter     | 208                   | 6,846½                        | 32.91               |
| St. John      | 124                   | 7,659                         | 61.76               |
| St. James     | 183                   | 6,729                         | 36.77               |
| St. Michael   | 1,034                 | 7,301                         | 7.06                |
| St. Andrew    | 109                   | 7,576                         | 69.50               |
| St. Thomas    | 192                   | 7,765                         | 40.44               |
| St. Joseph    | 98                    | 4,858                         | 49.57               |
| St. Phillip   | 407                   | 12,743                        | 31.30               |
| Christ Church | 410                   | 13,154                        | 32.08               |
| St. George    | 122                   | 9,569                         | 78.43               |
| <u>totals</u> | <u>3,324</u>          | <u>91,000½</u>                | <u>27.37</u>        |

1. census of Barbados 1679/80, vols. 1-2, f. 217, Bar. Arc.



Fig.10



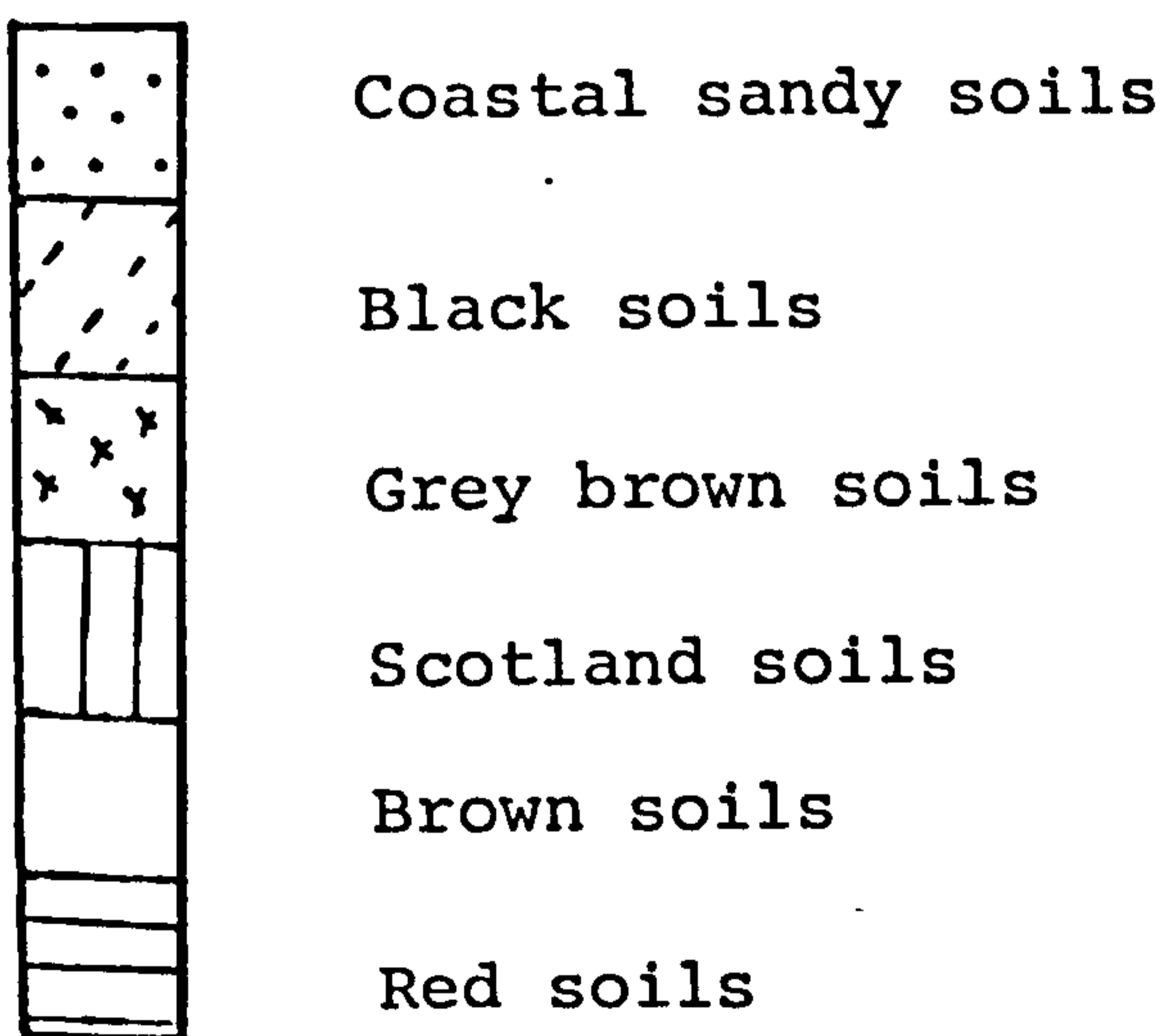
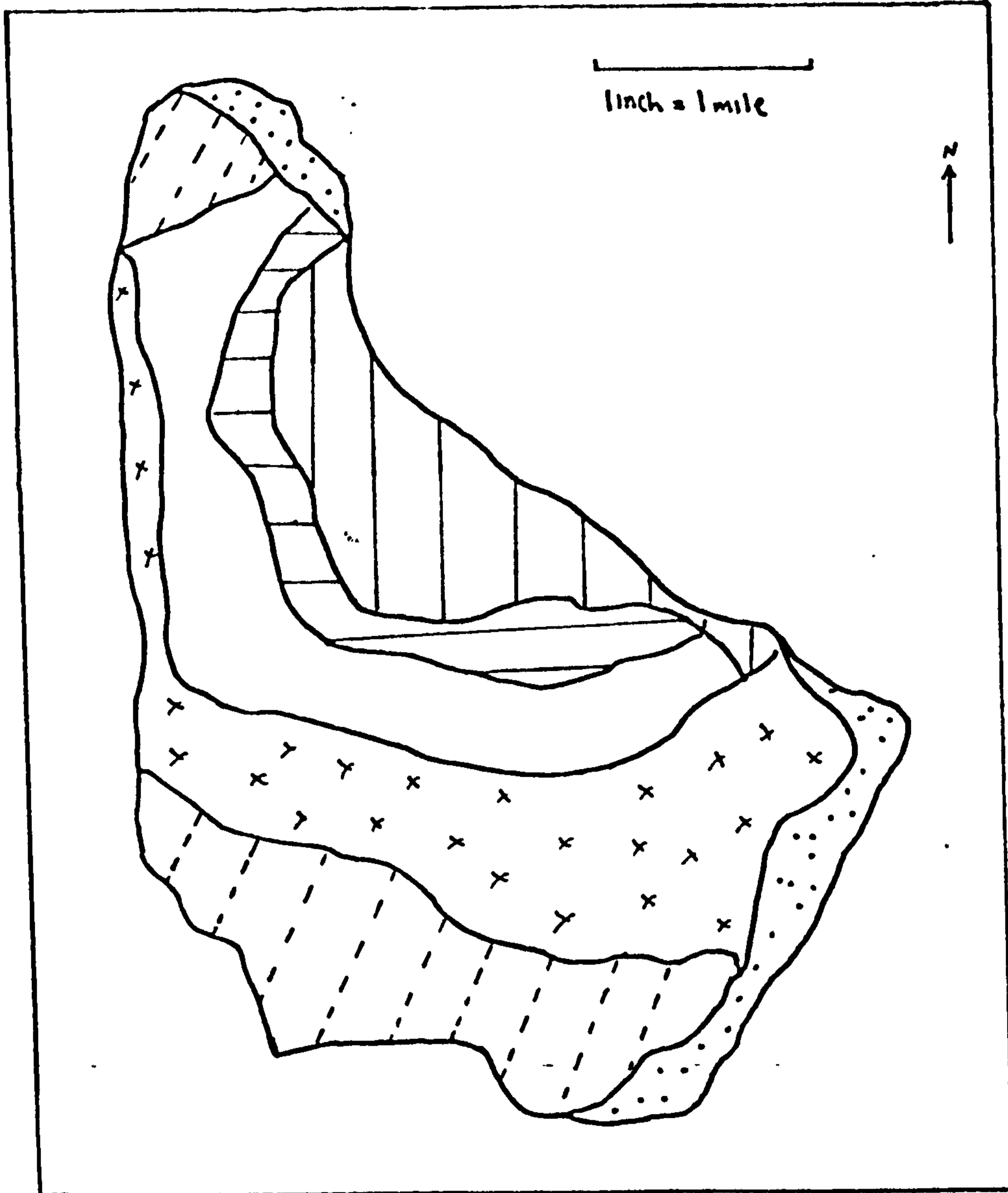
REGIONAL MAP OF BARBADOS (1)

Key to Parish Divisions

- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. St. Lucy   | 6. St. Thomas     |
| 2. St. Peter  | 7. St. Michael    |
| 3. St. Andrew | 8. St. George     |
| 4. St. James  | 9. St. John       |
| 5. St. Joseph | 10. Christ Church |
|               | 11. St. Philip    |

1. Adapted from - Starkey, O., The Economic Geography of Barbados (N.Y., 1939), fig. 9.

Fig.11. SOILS OF BARBADOS (1)



1. Adapted from - Watts, D., Man's Influence on the Vegetation of Barbados, 1627-1800 (Hull, 1976), fig.2.

The rocky and thin soils of the northern parish of St. Lucy were generally unsuited to sugar production, and land values were much lower than in the other parishes. This resulted in the existence of a cotton and tobacco industry in this parish, which was carried out by a concentration of small planters and 'poor whites'; those who were unable to raise the necessary capital for sugar production. John Scott, in his description of Barbados in 1667, noted that this parish was a Catholic stronghold, inhabited mainly by ex-servants of the Irish nation. (1).

The parish of St. Joseph was also exceptional; mountainous and wet, it was also unsuited to sugar production or any other form of arable activity. In this parish, there were only ninety eight property holders, as opposed to 437 in St. Lucy. Along the coastline of the southern parish of St. Philip, a thin strip of dry sandy soil created a similar social composition to that of the St. Lucy parish. Again, because of low land values and the suitability of the regions to small scale cotton and tobacco farming, a large number of 'poor white' communities developed, mainly of Catholic-Irish and Quakers. (2) This concentration of poor Irish people in these regions was largely the result of English racism. The English discriminated against the Irish on the labour market, and offer<sup>-ed</sup> them only field work with the slaves, which they largely refused. Their subsequent withdrawal from the dominant English controlled white community led to their segregation in the backlands of the colony.

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1. A Description of Barbados, 1667, Sloane Mss, 3662, B.L..

2. Ibid.



The prime sugar lands of St. George, St. Thomas, St. Peter, St. John and St. James, all located within the rich brown soils zones, were the monopoly of the large and medium property holders. A clear relationship evolved between the distribution of sugar estates and social composition. The distribution of the servant population in 1679/80 was as follows;

T.38-Distribution of the Servant and Slave Populations in 1679/80.(1)

| <u>Parish</u>            | <u>Servants</u> | <u>Slaves</u> | <u>Acres/serv.</u> | <u>Acres/slav.</u> | <u>Slav./serv.</u> |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| St. Michael<br>(country) | 303             | 3,765         | 23.83              | 1.91               | 12.42              |
| Bridgetown               | 407             | 1,430         | 0.19               | 0.05               | 3.51               |
| St. George               | 111             | 4,316         | 86.20              | 2.21               | 38.88              |
| Ch. Church               | 179             | 4,789         | 73.48              | 2.74               | 26.75              |
| St. Philip               | 123             | 4,407         | 103.60             | 2.89               | 35.82              |
| St. James                | 133             | 2,895         | 50.59              | 2.32               | 21.76              |
| St. Joseph               | 72              | 2,070         | 67.47              | 2.34               | 28.75              |
| St. Lucy                 | 118             | 1,965         | 57.62              | 3.46               | 16.65              |
| St. Thomas               | 226             | 3,386         | 34.35              | 2.29               | 14.98              |
| St. John                 | 158             | 3,303         | 48.47              | 2.31               | 20.90              |
| St. Peter                | 379             | 2,977         | 18.06              | 2.29               | 7.85               |
| St. Andrew               | 47              | 2,248         | 161.19             | 3.37               | 47.82              |

The parishes of St. Joseph and St. Andrew, with the two smallest numbers of property holders (98 and 109 respectively), also contained the two smallest servant populations, 72 and 47 respectively. These two parishes, which were not fully developed for sugar production,

1. Census of Barbados 1679/80, Bar. Arc. The figures cited in the C.S.P.C., 1677-80, pp. 508-9, differs from the above. The figure given in the Calendar for the servant populations of Christ Church, St. Phillip and Bridgetown are 173, 115 and 412 respectively.

demanded less servant labour for the artisan occupations.

The Assembly's model plantation of 1685, needed a ratio of one servant per 14.2 acres for optimal efficiency. Only the parish of St. Peter came close to this ratio with an aggregate of one servant per 18 acres. These totals illustrate how the plantations were understocked with servant labour, and why the Assembly found it necessary to carry out 'efficiency research' to assist the planters in increasing their productivity.

The census of 1679/80 shows that a significant number of servants were employed in the urban areas. Planters who had been able to organise their own warehousing and shipping needed servants in the towns to handle their business. The census shows that Bridgetown, for example, had a servant population of 407, which was larger than the plantation hinterland, which had only 303. The urban servants were well placed to obtain a wider vision of colonial life and its economic functions, and to develop a different consciousness to that of the rural servants, whose entire lives were confined to the plantations. This makes it possible to conceptualize of a polarised urban-rural servant class with varying socio-cultural consciousness, rather than a homogeneous class with common experiences and outlooks. The parish compilers of the 1679/80 census made this important urban - rural distinction for the St. Michael parish, and tabulated the data as follows :

T.39 - Servants and Households in Bridgetown, 1679/80.(1)

|                                |     |      |
|--------------------------------|-----|------|
| No. of English Households      |     | 350  |
| No. of White Servants - bought | 129 |      |
| - hired                        | 278 | 407  |
| No. of Servants per Household  |     | 1.16 |

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1. Census of 1679/80.



This can be compared with the rural hinterland of Bridgetown, which had the following servant population;

T.40-Servants and Landholders in Rural St.Michael,1679/80.(1)

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| No. of landholders             | 250   |
| No. of servants                |       |
| hired                          | 42    |
| bought                         | 161   |
|                                | 303   |
| No. of Servants per landholder | 1.34. |

As expected, the number of hired servants in Bridgetown was 53% greater than the number of bought servants. As rural servants completed their servitude on the plantation, a large number migrated to the town in the hope of achieving social mobility and owning property; goals which were not generally obtainable in the plantation hinterlands. Urban householders, therefore, found a ready supply of labour which was organised by the wage-nexus. Rural planters were forced to buy their servant labour as a result of this migration pattern. The number of bought servants in the rural hinterland of the town was 11.8½ greater than the number of hired servants.

Bridgetown had a very poorly developed family structure after fifty years of settlement. Out of 350 households, 198 were childless, and another sixty had only one child each. Only twenty households, that is 5.7% of the total households,

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1. Barbados census of 1679/80.



had four or more children. Household functions which normally would have been performed by members of the family, from bookkeeping to slave-buying, became the work of servants.

T.41- English Family Structure and Servant Distribution in Bridgetown, 1679/80 (1)

| <u>Size of household</u> | <u>No. of Households</u> | <u>No. of Hired serv.</u> | <u>No. of bought Serv.</u> | <u>No. of Slaves</u> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 0 children               | 198                      | 148                       | 54                         | 465                  |
| 1 child                  | 60                       | 49                        | 20                         | 270                  |
| 2 children               | 50                       | 46                        | 24                         | 249                  |
| 3 children               | 22                       | 10                        | 19                         | 175                  |
| 4 children               | 7                        | 8                         | 6                          | 142                  |
| 5 children               | 10                       | 11                        | 2                          | 57                   |
| 6 children               | 2                        | 3                         | 2                          | 6                    |
| 7 children               | 1                        | 3                         | 2                          | 3                    |
|                          | <u>350</u>               | <u>278</u>                | <u>129</u>                 | <u>1,267</u>         |

The continued importance of servants in Bridgetown was, therefore, directly related to a poor and undeveloped family and household structure. A significant number of the hired servants were females, employed as domestics and tavern attendants. Female servants generally dominated the domestic and service sector of the Bridgetown economy in the seventeenth century.

The servants on the plantations were not evenly distributed amongst the planters. The very large plantation owners, who were concentrated in the St. Michael-St. George valley, found the

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1. Ibid.

servants very important to their operations. The ten largest plantations in the St. George parish, comprising 3,889 acres, employed fifty of the 111 servants in the parish as follows:

T.42- Labour Composition of the 10 largest Plantations in St. George, 1679/80 (1)

| <u>Owner</u>    | <u>Acres</u> | <u>No. of serv.</u> |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Col. Drax       | 705          | 7                   |
| Grace Silvester | 515          | 10                  |
| Samuel Husbands | 420          | 3                   |
| - -             | 400          | -                   |
| Peter Leave     | 336          | 8                   |
| Edward Cleypole | 325          | 12                  |
| - -             | 317          | -                   |
| William Bulkley | 308          | 2                   |
| Robert Davers   | 305          | 8                   |
| - -             | <u>258</u>   | <u>-</u>            |
|                 | <u>3,889</u> | <u>50</u>           |

The planters of the St. Andrew parish, the largest of whom were much smaller than their St. George counterparts, were reducing their reliance upon indentured labour. The ten largest of them in 1679/80 employed only twenty seven servants, distributed as follows:

T.43- Labour Composition of the 10 largest Plantations in St. Andrew, 1679/80. (2)

| <u>Acres</u> | <u>No. of Owners</u> | <u>Servants</u> |
|--------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 170-200      | 5                    | 4               |
| 200-280      | 4                    | 22              |
| 280-350      | 1                    | 1               |

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

The relationship between the size of plantations and the number of servants<sup>they</sup>/employed can be demonstrated from the St. George and St. Andrew data as follows:

T.44- Servant Distribution and Plantation Size in St. George and St. Andrew, 1679/80 (1)

| <u>St. George</u>                 |            |                         |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Size of plantation (acres)</u> | <u>No.</u> | <u>No. of servants.</u> |
| 500-700                           | 2          | 17                      |
| 300-500                           | 7          | 26                      |
| 200-300                           | 5          | 16                      |
| 100-200                           | 19         | 29                      |
| 50-100                            | 12         | 7                       |
| 20-50                             | 26         | 5                       |
| 1-20                              | 39         | 7                       |
| <u>St. Andrew</u>                 |            |                         |
| 200-400                           | 6          | 15                      |
| 100-200                           | 14         | 14                      |
| 50-100                            | 15         | 10                      |
| 20-50                             | 12         | -                       |
| 1-20                              | 33         | -                       |

The explanation of this distribution pattern lies in the nature of the sugar industry. The larger the plantation, the greater was the need for overseers and slave drivers. Many of the large plantations of St. George had more than one mill and sugar work, where the cane of the small planters was processed. The result was that these large planters were employing the servants who the small planters would have employed if they<sup>had</sup> had their own sugar works.

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1. Ibid.



There were many individuals who held no landed property, but owned servants and made a living by renting them on the market to planters, merchants and local vestries. In the St. James parish there were forty two men who held servants and slaves but no land in 1680.

T.45- Landless owners of Labour in St. James, 1679/80. (1)

| <u>No. of servants</u> | <u>No. of owners</u> |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 servant              | 15                   |
| 2 servants             | 9                    |
| 3 servants             | 6                    |
| 4 servants             | 4                    |
| 5 servants             | 4                    |
| 6 servants             | 3                    |
| 7 servants             | 1                    |

These servants were an integral and important component of the labour market, though not numerically a significant section of the servant class. Their presence reflected the planters' need to maintain white labourers as an elite within the slave plantation economy and society.

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1. Ibid.

The socio-economic and ideological contradictions at the core of the ' world the slaveholders made ' (1), were constantly being exposed as the planters adjusted to new market conditions. One area in which this was clearly evident - one which is largely unworked by historians - concerns the rise of a Black labour elite in the early slave system of production. Barbados was the first English colony in the New World to develop a skilled slave elite in the productive and service sectors of the economy and society, because it was here that sugar and slave management techniques were first matured and concretized.

But until the 1670s, the sugar planters, with few exceptions, gave little thought to the possibility of creating a class of black artisans, domestics and low level supervisors on the plantations. The dominant conception was that the Blacks had no other contribution to make to the plantation economy and society beyond that of field labour. There was a general hostility to the use of slaves in occupations which involved any form of intellectual reasoning. This was largely the result of a general fear in the white community, that the slave's intellect, once mobilized, would be employed in the politics of resistance. The planters had to reshape their ideological outlook in their effort to adjust to adverse market forces in the last quarter of the century.

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1. See Genovese, E., The World the Slaveholders Made (N.Y., 1969).

For a good review of the work of Genovese on the ' slave mode of production', see King, R.H., ' Marxism and the Slave South ', American Quarterly, vol. 39 (1977), pp. 120-130.



The dominant forces which the planters had to contend with from the mid-1660s to the end of the century were falling sugar prices, declining productivity and profits, and a diminishing share of the European sugar market, as the Jamaicans and Leeward Islanders increased their production and share of West Indian exports.(1) This created general economic stagnation in the Barbadian economy between the 1670s and the 1690s, to which the planters had to respond. The years 1672 to 1676, and 1685 to 1694 were particularly depressive, aggravated by war and international political uncertainty. Between 1655 and 1661, the prices of cattle, horses, dry goods and most other necessary commodities doubled.(2) The price of sugar on the London market fell from £4 per c.w.t. in the 1640s to £2 per c.w.t. in the 1660s, and to a low of 16s per c.w.t. in the period 1685-7. In 1685, the merchants were paying the Barbadians only 8s per c.w.t. for their sugar.(3)

On top of this, the cost of insurance and freight soared to ruinous proportions. In 1691, Governor Kendal was forced to fix the freight charges at 6s.6d per c.w.t. for muscovado, and 7s.6d per c.w.t. for white sugar, in order '...to protect the poor planters from the impositions of merchant men, for without such relief they would be ruined.'(4) The free market rates of freight were estimated in 1691 at £30 per ton for all sugar.(5)

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1. See appendix 30.

2. Petition of Council to the Lords of Foreign Plantations, 11 May 1661, C.S.P.C., p.30

3. Petition of planters, merchants and mariners of Barbados to the King, 12 July 1661, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.47

4. Gov. Kendal to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 4 April 1691, C.S.P.C., 1689-92, p.406.

5. Ibid.



The planters also objected to the 4½% tax which was paid to the Monarch on all dead exports from the island, which, together with falling sugar prices undermined the profitability of the sugar industry. Successive Councils and Assemblies explained the effects of this crisis in the falling volume of shipping, the diminishing percentage of land allocated to sugar, the declining credit facilities on the island, and the general impoverishment of the small planters.(1)

During the 1670s, the planters undertook a general policy of rationalization to deal effectively with these adverse market conditions. In many ways, the sugar boom of the Interregnum had allowed many inefficient and uneconomical practices to develop in plantation management, and these became more apparent as prices, profits and productivity began to fall. It was generally agreed among the planters that the cost of sugar production had to be cut at every corner in order to compete with the other West Indians, who were using fresher soils on an extensive scale.

The planter elite, like most capitalist classes experiencing economic crises, responded by developing monopolistic structures.(2) They started by vertically integrating the entire productive process, including the distribution and marketing operations. Planters such as Drax, Kendal and Colleton, took over the activities of factors, merchants and insurance agents. They bought their own shipping network, employed their own agents and insured their own sugar by forming local syndicates. They also mobilized the political and legal forces of the colony to defend their interests against

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1. Petition of the planters and merchants of Barbados to King, 12 July 1661, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.47. Also, Lt. Gov. Stede to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 10 March 1686, C.S.P.C., 1685-88, p.518.
  2. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, pp.207-8.

the merchants, to whom they were largely in debt, especially the Royal Africa Company. Many merchants now found that their petitions to the Assembly were generally being ignored. Some magistrates refused to give adequate attention to the cases merchants brought against the planters, and some lawyers refused to accept the cases of merchants against the planters. (1) The result of this was the effective financial and legal insulation of the planter elite against the mercantile interests.

Much time and many resources were devoted to technical and scientific innovations within the industry (contrary to established belief which emphasises considerable technical inertia in the production of sugar). There was great joy in the colony in 1675, when one planter, Andrew Orgill, ( who has been overlooked by historians) after much research invented a cost cutting device applicable to sugar manufacture. He had —

... invented a way of casting iron cases whereby the outside of the rollers of those engines which squeeze the sugar cane were so cast in that it was of very great advantage and savings to them, and the charge inconsiderable; whereby His Majesty's subjects were enabled to sell cheap and in a fair way of spoiling the sugar trade belonging to other nations who wanted the help of this invention... (2)

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1. For a discussion of this development see, Minutes of the Council for Foreign Plantations, 27 May 1663, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.113, nos. 458, 459.
  2. Calendar of Treasury Books, 1676-79, vol.5, part 1, p.104.



It was around this time that the planters embarked on the most progressive path in the process of overall rationalisation, that of educating and retraining their slaves for artisan, domestic and supervisory roles on the plantations. The process of technological de-skilling which had typified Black slavery during the sugar boom was partially halted. The rise of the slave artisan in Barbados was, therefore, directly related to the economic crisis of the plantation economy. The ideologies which the planters had established to reduce the slaves to unskilled manual and field work were reconsidered. At this stage, reactionary planters, committed to the existing racial division of labour, could no longer argue that Blacks were intellectually unsuited to artisan-supervisory roles, for this was clearly demonstrated to be untrue. They needed a more economically rational form of reasoning.

The rationale of Peter Colleton, planter-Assemblyman, and the most expressive spokesman for keeping Blacks in the field, was that any form of education or training of slaves would adversely affect the economy and society. Firstly, according to Colleton, the education and retraining would '...impair their value and price and injure not only the planters but the African Company...' (1) Secondly, it would '...endanger the island, in as much as converted negroes grow more perverse and intractable than others, and hence of less value for labour or sale....' (2) Here, then, are the arguments

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1. Journal of the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 8 October, 1680, C.S.P.C., 1677-80, p.611.

2. Ibid.



of that section of the planter class still insistent on keeping the white servants as the artisan-supervisory elite in the colony. They were departures from the crude formulations of the earlier planters, who used psuedo-biological and cultural arguments for the relegation of all Blacks to the fields.

This kind of reasoning was also applied to the issue of converting the slaves to Christianity. Whereas, the earlier planters of Anglican belief argued that their religion was above the Blacks who could not perceive the concept of 'faith', nor penetrate the vision of Christ, planters in this period of production rationalization gave economic reasons against the conversion of slaves to Christainity. Gov. Russell, in 1695, noted that 'As to the conversion of negroes to Christainity, I apprehend that the keeping of Christian holy days will be the greatest obstacle, most planters thinking Sundays too much to be spared from work.' (1)

More progressive planters, however, were aware that the slaves brought significant skills from Africa, from cattle rearing to industrial skills, such as pottery, bronzework, weaving and glasswork. These skills could no longer be suppressed, but had to be encouraged and articulated into the productive process, in an effort to cut costs and improve plantation productivity.

In the late 1670s, Gov. Atkins noted that the rise of the skilled slaves was a response to their cheapness and convenience. The inconvenience of white servants was related to the external problems of the planters. They were losing their servants because of European rivalry in the region, and though the Treasurer gave financial compensation to the planters for the loss of their

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1. Gov. Russell to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 23 March 1695, C.S.P.C., 1693-6, p. 448.

servants by this means, the payment was hardly adequate, given that the loss of a boiler or a distiller during the harvest period could seriously injure the planter. Many planters, therefore, had to ensure that their craftsmen were under their total control, and they began to train the slaves in certain important and critical occupations.

The planters had become extremely angry over the loss of servants during the Penn and Venables expedition to Hispaniola and Jamaica in 1655, and during the Anglo-Dutch wars of the 1660s. Many of them had, at this stage, formulated '...a design to have all their craftsmen, sugar boilers...of their blacks, and put blacks with all their tradesmen...' (1) as apprentices. But these were only plans, and they had little success only amongst those planters who were most affected. In 1667, John Scott noted that he had '... inspected many plantations and seen ... negroes at their trades in good condition....' (2)

By the 1680s, according to Oldmixon, it was well established on the Island that some slaves were as '...ingenious and apt to learn as any people....' (3) Within a decade, the slaves had largely replaced the white servants in most skilled occupations on and off the plantations, with the exception of the overseer function. One

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1. Some observations on the island of Barbados, 1667, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.530.

2. Ibid.

3. Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America, vol.2, p.136.

planter argued that if they

...had not slaves to mind our mills and our coppers,  
and hoop our casks ...we must often stand still and  
could not send our sugar to market. There is no  
dependence on whitemen and they are so  
extravagant in their prices....(1)

Oldmixon noted that it was clear from his investigations that by  
the 1690s, the planters had generally '...taken the slaves into the  
Boiling-House, the Curing-House, or Dwelling-House...and others are  
employed in handicraft trades, as Coopers, Joiners, Carpenters, Smiths  
Masons, and the like....'(2)

A selection of scattered data on the labour composition of  
plantations in this period shows that most plantations were no  
longer dependent on white indentured servants for artisan, domestic  
and some supervisory roles. The census of 1679/80 gives some  
indication of the advancement of this labour replacement process.  
In the parish of St. George, the most fertile arable region in the  
colony, sixty out of 122 landholders employed only one servant each  
for these roles.(3) By 1700, the vast majority of the large planters  
had completed their transition to Black labour within the skilled  
occupations of the plantations.

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1. Cited in Wyndham, H.A., Problems of Imperial Trusteeship: The Atlantic and Slavery (Oxford, 1935), p.279.
  2. Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America, vol.2, p.129.
  3. Barbados census of 1679/80, vols.1-2, Bar.Arc.



The success of the Black artisans throughout the economy and society was now widely acknowledged. Their mastery of the role of boiler, probably the most critical occupation on the plantation, was well established. Oldmixon noted that at the turn of the century the finest made sugar that came from Barbados was made by Sir Timothy Thornhill, Sir John Bawdon and Mr. Walter. The former had a Black boiler who was allowed to communicate his art to one of Bawdon's slaves, who then became so excellent in his craft that he would not sell him for £500.(1) The boiler then instructed the servant of Mr. Walter, who then began to make 'excellent' sugar.(2) Oldmixon concluded from his investigations of the Barbados sugar industry, that it was the rise of the Black boilers which '...contributed most to the goodness of ...'(3) Barbadian sugar.

In the 1690s, the slave artisans were a common feature of Barbadian society, and an active market had developed in skilled slave labour. A good slave mechanic in the 1690s was valued at £150, compared with £20 to £40 for an unskilled slave.(4) But for a boiler, like that of Bawdon's, a planter would have found it reasonable to offer £400.

The slaves also penetrated and dominated domestic occupations, and thereby replaced the female indentured servants. Oldmixon noted

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1. Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America, vol. 2, p. 154.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

that from the 1660s, the planters generally took the 'handsomest', and 'cleanliest' female slaves, who were bred to domestic service. (1) Many planters found female slaves more congenial, both from the viewpoint of economics and social convenience. The female servants would generally leave the master's household after their servitude, leaving a gap in the domestic economy. Both female slaves and servants, however, were used in satisfying the sexual demands of the planters, though the tyranny of the planters was most unpleasant in respect of their relations with the female slaves.

Lord Willoughby had argued from the late 1650s that female slaves were the best domestic servants in the island '...if well tutored...', for they cost little, '...only a canvass petticoat <sup>more</sup> once a year, and there is no/trouble with them.' (2) By 1675, when John Blake arrived in the colony, Black female slaves were beginning to dominate the domestic occupations. Blake wrote home to his brother stating that his white domestic servant was a 'totally useless slut, and his wife could not do the work, because'...washing, starching, making drinks and keeping the house in order is no small taske to undergo here....' (3) He decided, like many other planters, to buy '...a neger wench...', who he was going to have 'brought to knowledge'. (4) He then planned to abandon his white maid or put her to other use. By 1680, 49% of the English homes in Bridgetown had no white maid servants, and 92% had domestic slaves. (5)

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1. Ibid., p. 129.

2. Cited in Davis, N.D., Cavaliers and Roundheads of Barbados, p. 103.

3. John Blake to William Blake, Nov. 1, 1675, in Gwynn, A., ed., 'Documents relating to the Irish in the West Indies', Analectica Hibernica, no. 4.

4. Ibid.

5. Census of Barbados, 1679/80

Slaves were also replacing servants in other prestigious roles in the society. Oldmixon noted that of the male slaves '... the properest, cleanest limbed fellows...' were trained as '...coachmen, footmen, grooms and lacquies.'(1) The rise of these slaves into the domestic and artisan occupations was an expression of the maturity of the ' slave mode of production'; it destroyed the socio-economic viability of the system of indentured servitude in Barbados.

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1. Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America, vol. 2, p. 129.



Part AOn Paternalism

The indenture system was a seventeenth century method of labour organisation and class exploitation. Its contractual framework, as established in England, was firmly rooted within the tradition of social paternalism, whereby the concepts of 'mutual obligation' and 'duty' were dominant. However, the Barbadian plantocracy, the socio-economic innovators of seventeenth century West Indian society, took this paternalistic institution and transformed it into a bond which rested on the planters property rights and interests in servants. Social customs and laws were used to protect these rights and interests; servants were reduced to property relationships, and the institution of indentured servitude was far removed from its English counterpart. The paternalism of Barbadian servitude rested not upon 'moral obligation' and 'responsibility', but upon clearly rationalised legal-contractual concepts, which were determined by market forces. It had little to do with planter benevolence, but more with a modern method of exploiting labour to make profits. Servitude, therefore, legalised much hostility and bitter class antagonism.

The planters saw their servants primarily as units of capital and property; a clear market conception of labour. On the other hand, the servants regarded their masters as exploiters, who were indifferent, some even opposed, to their interests. Indentured servitude institutionalised a fundamental and intolerable contradiction inherent in the plantation economy and society. It

was a modern market determined relationship, embodied within the traditional institutional framework of pre-industrialised society. The transformation of the traditional relationship into a particularly harsh form of servitude, was largely the outcome of economic developments in the pre-sugar era, when servants represented a significant proportion of the plantation's capital stock. These servants could be bought and sold as property, and used as circulating and fixed capital on the market.

To protect these property rights, the planters could not, therefore, depend on moral commitments or on other non-market ideologies. Neither could they depend entirely upon the proliferation of contractual terms of servitude, whereby every indenture contract would be unique in its basic terms. Servitude was too important an institution to Barbadian socio-economic development, therefore, some form of standardisation was necessary. This was provided, in the early period, by the concept of 'the custom of the country', whereby the plantocracy developed rules and criteria which determined the functions and nature of servitude. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the planters had moved away from this reliance upon the 'custom of the country', to the use of a comprehensive Statute which defined, <sup>d</sup>judged, and directed indentured servitude on the island. The stated aims of the Statute were to protect the planters' interests, and defend the servants against the planters' unreasonable impositions. In the process, however, it legalised a system of harsh servitude, and gave the planters an important instrument for the oppression of the servants. As Genovese wrote,

Paternalism in any historical setting defines relations of superordination and subordination. Its strength as a prevailing ethos increases as the members of the community accept - or feel compelled to accept - these relations as legitimate. Brutality lies inherent in this



acceptance of patronage and dependence, no matter how organic the paternalistic order.(1)

By this Statute, the planters effectively destroyed any social or moral obligation to be benevolent towards their servants, as would have been expected from masters in England. The provisions explicitly showed that the masters' and servants' interests were recognised as unharmonious and contradictory. Furthermore, the masters were placed in a position to determine the legitimate parameters of the servants' behaviour whilst under servitude.

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1. Genoyese, E., Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made  
(N.Y., 1976), p.6.



In September 1661, after thirty four years of exploiting servant labour, the Barbadian planters took a very remarkable step in the development of their legal system - a step which clearly reflected their use and conception of indentured servants. This was the passing of a 'servant code', entitled 'An Act for the Ordaining of Rights between Masters and Servants'. The Code was comprehensive and codified all previous legislation and customs which dealt with indentured servitude. It was an innovation in the legal handling of servants, and became a model for the other West Indian colonies. The Jamaicans, in 1664, copied and used the Code until they enacted a more indigenous - code in 1681. Antigua and St. Christopher passed similar legislation in 1669 and 1722 respectively, that expressed the Barbadian views of indentured servants. (1)

The Code was enacted at the time when indentured servitude, as a system, was undergoing a transition in Barbados. (2) As Blacks were replacing servants in fieldwork and servants were being elevated as the skilled labour elite, the planters felt that law was necessary to concretize the existing relationships with their servants. It was also a period when

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1. Mss. Laws of Jamaica, 1662-74, CO.139/1. Mss. Laws of the Leeward Islands, CO. 154/1.

2. This Code is filed in 'The Charter of Barbados', Davis Mss. Box 11. Also Hall, R., Mss. Laws of Barbados, CO.30/1, no.30, P.R.O.

the supply crisis in white labour was becoming a very serious problem to the planters who were dependent on white labour for filling the artisan and supervisory occupations in the colony. The planters, therefore, wanted more effective control of their servants, and resorted to legislation. Furthermore, the legislators had hoped, at this time, to clearly set servitude upon firm legal foundations, in a similar manner to Black slavery.

Smith argued that these colonial master and servant laws were concerned primarily with the proper regulation of indenture contracts for the mutual interest of both masters and servants. Furthermore, that the laws were the result of a form of protective paternalism which was found in England and transplanted to the colonies. These views, however, fail to penetrate the ideological and actual nature of the planters' objectives, and the subtlety of Barbadian law makers, the chief of whom in this period was Col. Thomas Modyford. (1) The Code was the logical outcome of the use of the servants as a 'species of property' that had only one function, that of assisting the planters to get rich/quickly. as possible. (2)

The servants' readiness to offer their labour to be easily exploited for little or no return, naturally, was not in their interest; their subsequent refusal was interpreted by the planters as a problem which could have adverse effects upon capital accumulation and socio-political stability. These issues

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1. Smith, A.E., Colonists in Bondage, pp.227-9.

2. For an analysis of the cases under this Code see part C.

were expressed in the preamble to the Code as follows:

Whereas much of the interest and substance of this island consist in the servants brought to, and disposed of in the same, and in their labour during the time they have to serve, wherein notwithstanding provision hath been made by many good laws, yet great and often damages hath happened to the people of this place, through the unruliness, obstinacy and refractiveness of the servants. And whereas, also it much concern the peace of this island, that a continual strict course should be taken to prevent the bold extravagancy and wandering of servants, who frequently run from and desert their Master's service making use of all advantage and occasions to disturb the public peace, and prejudice their masters: whereas and wherefore the President, Council and Assembly, upon serious and mature consideration of these premises, and for the good regulation and governing of servants in all things concerning their masters and themselves have enacted this statute. (1)

The Code, like the French 'Code Noir' of 1685, was very thorough in its wording, and dealt with almost every area of the servants' behaviour. (2) Its clarity reflected the importance of white labour to the plantation economy and society. It began,

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1. Hall, R., Mss. laws of Barbados, CO.30/1, f. 1

2. For an analysis of the Code Noir of 1685 see, Peytraud, L., L'Esclavage aux Antilles Francois Avant, 1789 (Paris, 1897), pp.156-8.



as expected, with the reproduction of the servant class. Barbados, by 1661, had acquired the reputation of being a place 'worse than hell' for white servants, and with the mercantile interests against the servant trade, the planters were concerned that the Code reflected a mild paternalistic institution. Clause one stated that the importation of 'children of the English nation' who were under the age of fourteen years as servants, was punishable by the imprisonment of the importer, until he had lodged £100 with the Secretary as security that the youth would be returned to England. If the servant had no guardian, then, a principal person was to give consent, and the child's age was to be adjudged by inspection. (1) That the Code specifically referred to English children is not surprising. The English planters, in an age of nationalism, and proud of the ascent of their nation in the New World, had no scruples in importing Irish or Scottish youths for plantation exploitation.

It was well known that Barbados, after the 1650s, obtained a large number of kidnapped servants, and became the largest single market for this kind of labour. Planters were told in the 1650s by their mainland cousins that they could obtain white labour only by the coalition of merchants and kidnappers. This widespread view embarrassed the more concerned planters, and clause two of the Code was addressed to the subject of kidnapping. It provided that any servant who was brought to the island under duress or any form of violent compulsion, had the right to lodge a complaint with

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1. Hall, R., Mss. laws, CO.30/1, f. 35.

any magistrate within thirty days of arrival, in order to be freed.(1) After these preliminaries were established, the Code dealt with the central issue of servitude, that is, the length of the period of service. In order to break away from the system of the previous thirty four years, whereby the specific conditions of servitude were generally determined by individual contracts, the legislators provided that all servants who came to the island without written indentures, if under the age of eighteen, should serve for seven years, and if over that age for five years.(2)

After the construction of a standard legal framework of servitude, the legislators dealt with the socio-economic existence of the servants on the plantations. At this juncture, the similarities with the slave laws became very apparent. The ability of servants to trade on their own account was seen by the legislators as contradictory to the planters' conception of them as a 'species of property!'. In this respect, both the servants and the slaves were placed within the same category. This common categorisation was clearly stated in clause three of the Code as follows:

That no freeman or trader whatsoever shall presume to buy or sell any commodities whatsoever with any servant or slave within this island without the consent of the masters, or the contracts and covanances so made by such servants or slaves to be utterly void and of no effect.(3)

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1. Ibid., ff. 35-6.

2. Ibid., f.40. In Maryland servants without contracts served on arrival five years, in Virginia seven years and in Antigua four years after 1660.

3. Ibid., f.36.



Individuals were frequently fined by the courts for trading with servants and slaves under this law. In such cases, the servant's indenture was extended by two years.(1)

Many servants found the institution of servitude an organised system of planter class violence. Clause four of the Code dealt with their physical responses to the planters. It provided that any servant who '...shall lay violent hands upon his master or his mistress, or overseer, or any person put over him in authority to govern him, and being thereof convicted before any Justice of the peace shall...' (2) serve his master or mistress for the period of one extra year. Very few servants were able to withstand seven years of servitude without breaking this law at least once.(3)

The planters, like most capitalists, tended to employ more resources for the protection of property than for the protection of individuals in the society. It was, therefore, not surprising that a greater penalty was imposed on servants who embezzled their masters property than for striking their masters. Existing on very poor diets, the slaves and servants devised various methods to obtain extra food; some sold their master's property, and others raided the foodstores and livestock during the night. For these offences, the Code specified under clause five, that the servant was to serve for two extra years.(4)

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1. See part C of this section.

2. Hall, R., Mss. Laws of Barbados, CO.30/1, f.36.

3. See part C of this section.

4. Hall, R., Mss. Laws of Barbados, CO.30/1, f.36.



Slave societies were generally characterised by distorted sexual relationships and male sexual tyranny. From the latter, the female servants and slaves were not protected. The planters of seventeenth century Barbados did not encourage <sup>either</sup> the slaves or the servants into stable monogamous family life. Planters were of the opinion that the stabilization of family and sexual relations, with the support of religious dogma, was not central to the reproduction of an efficient, obedient labour force. Emotional ties, resulting from family relations, it was argued, would detract from the servant's ability to accept their subordinate position peacefully. Furthermore, they would complicate the servant's functions as an alienable commodity. The Code, therefore, suppressed the ability of the servants to form steady relationships.

The planters were empowered to determine the socio-sexual activities of the servants. Clause eight of the Code provided that if a man servant should presume to marry without the consent of his master, he was to be penalised by the extension of his servitude by four years. (1) The planters considered it their priority to have access to all females on the plantations, and they did this to the detriment of the male servants and the white community's reproductive capacity. A freeman who married a female servant had to pay, under clause eight, the servant's owner twice her market value before she could be freed. Female servants, therefore, found that marriage to freemen was in line with their objectives of freedom and social mobility.

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Ibid., f. 37.

But not all relationships which female servants entered led to marriage, most merely led to pregnancy, and on this issue the Code was very severe on male servants who became fathers. If the servant became pregnant and the reputed father was a freeman, he was to provide the servant's owner with another servant of full time '...in recompence for the said master's ...loss and charge in bringing up the bastard child, and damages received by disabling his woman servant.' (1) If the reputed father was a servant, he was to serve the woman's owner for a period of three years after the completion of his original contract. Occasionally, the child was placed in the care of the parish, and in such cases the father was to serve the parish for one year in financial compensation. (2)

The planters lived with the fear that their servants and slaves would, given the opportunity, run away and escape from the island. The control of the servants on the plantations was a subject which was much discussed by <sup>the</sup> planters. It was generally agreed that the servants should be kept confined to the plantation as much as possible during their servitude, thereby, keeping their knowledge of the colony at a minimal level. The planters resorted to the practice, already in common use for the policing of the slaves, of using tickets or passes as the only legitimisation of the servants' movements off the plantation to which they belonged.

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1. Ibid., ff. 36-7.

2. Ibid.

Under clause nine of the Code, any freeman had the right to stop a servant in transit and demand to see his or her pass. If the servant could not produce the pass, the freeman had a right to arrest and convey that servant to the first constable or the nearest gaol. (1) Clause nine of the Code also provided that any servant who

... wilfully and obstinately absent him or herself out of his, or her master's or mistress's plantation and service, either on Saturday, Sunday or any other day or time, not having licence, or ticket in writting...shall, for every two hours absent ...serve ...one whole year after his time.... (2)

This clause was strictly enforced, and became important in the suppression of the servant class over the century. (3) But if 'credible information' was provided that the servant's intention was to escape the island, then the convicted servant was to serve for an extra three years of servitude. (4)

The harbouring of runaway slaves and servants was seen by the courts as a form of robbery, which was subject to civil or criminal proceedings. The Code provided that any 'freeperson' who wilfully entertained or harboured a servant or slave, knowing them to be runaways, or without permission of leave in the form of a written pass signed by the owner, was to pay '...500 pounds of sugar for every night of entertainment...of the said servant or slave....' (5) If the guilty person was a servant, then, the

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1. Charter of Barbados, Davis Mss. Box 11, f.15.
  2. Hall, R., Mss. laws of Barbados, CO.30/1, f.38
  3. See part C of this section.
  4. Hall, R., Mss. laws of Barbados, CO.30/1, f.42.
  5. Charter of Barbados, Davis Mss. box 11, ff.14-15.



local magistrate was compelled by law to enforce one extra year of servitude.(1) The overriding principle was that the planter must not, in any way, be deprived of his property without due and adequate compensation ; the form of compensation most readily accepted by most planters was the drastic extension of the servant's servitude.

It was a common practice for Barbadian planters to abandon their servants who became unproductive in the long term as a result of sickness, old age or disability.(2) The Poor Law authorities frequently complained that

... many master, when their servants grow sick, and unable to perform their daily labour, will seem to remit some of their time, to be clear of them, or turn them off, to the intent they may not at all be chargeable to them for their recovery, whereby many of the said servants may most miserably perish....(3)

The Assembly were concerned about this practice because the result was that the poor relief apparatus became overburdened with such servants. To remedy this situation, the Code provided that a fine of 2,200 pounds of sugar was to be imposed upon any guilty master, to be paid to the parish for the poor law fund. But the onus was on the servant to prove that , in the case of illness and injury, it was not the result of his or her ' negligence or wilful misbehaviour'.(4)

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1. Ibid., f. 16.

2. Bennett, J.H., Bondsmen and Bishops, p.45.

3. Hall, R., Mss. laws of Barbados, CO.30/1, f.38

4. Ibid.

The legislators were also aware of the 'malicious killing' of servants 'up and down the colony' by brutal masters. The introduction to clause twelve of the Code was as follows:

... it is much feared that some persons within this island, have exercised violence and great oppression, to and upon their servants, through which some of them have been murdered and destroyed and the authors and causers of such their destruction have gone clear, undiscovered and unpunished, by reason of the sudden interning of servants so destroyed and murdered....(1)

In order to prevent this destruction of life and 'property', the Code provided that criminal proceedings should be brought against such masters. The bodies of all dead servants were to be investigated by the coroner, who was to decide whether or not the servant met with a violent death, and if the verdict was affirmative, against whom the proceedings should be brought. (2) This provision had little effect on the problem, and by the time of Gov. Atkins' census of 1679/80, some masters were still murdering and interning their servants secretly. (3)

The lucrative exploitation of servant labour led to problems over the date of termination of the servant's contract. Some servants were illiterate, and some held no copy of the contract which specified, with all its alterations, the date of its expiration. Masters used every form of trickery to obtain

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1. Ibid., ff. 38-9.

2. Ibid.

3. Gov. Atkins to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 1 April 1680  
C.S.P.C., 1677-80, no. 1336.

more time out of the servants, and the Assembly had to make specific regulations for dealing with this issue. Clause nine of the Code, which updated an Act of 1652, gave the servants the right, two at a time from any one plantation, to bring their cases against their masters at common law. If the master was found guilty, he was ordered to pay the servant an extra twenty pounds of sugar in freedom due, but if the servant was found and adjudged to be malicious, corporal punishment and an extension of servitude was ordered by the Court.(1)

The Code reflected the contradiction between the principles of oppressive exploitation and those of protective paternalism. It provided the model for the erection of Slave Codes later in the century. It is in this respect that Williams argued that one key to understanding the slave system lies in the firm understanding of white servitude , both in custom and law.(2)

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1. See Part C of this section.

2. Williams, E., Capitalism and Slavery, pp.9-18.



By 1661, the planter class in Barbados was highly organised for the protection of its interests, both locally and internationally. The large planters were in effective control of the domestic organs of government and law, and manipulated the labour market for their own interests. This meant that those servants who took legal action against their masters, or who had poor records of servitude, were discriminated against on the labour market after their servitude<sup>had</sup>/expired.<sup>(1)</sup> This victimisation forced many ex-servants either to become dependent upon the poor law, or to emigrate, in spite of the growing scarcity of white labour after the 1660s. The oppressiveness of the planters' rule was, therefore, a significant obstacle to the servants' legal protest, which explains the existence of so few cases brought before the courts by servants against their masters. The Code was generally enforced to comply with the planters' interests as defined by the Council and Assembly, though the servants were protected occasionally from the more outrageous impositions of some planters.

A law of 1636 provided that any servant who came to the colony without the financial means to survive as a free person, was to be received as a servant. This placed great hardship on newly arrived and poor immigrants. Many individuals were illegally reduced to servitude and had to petition the Council for their freedom. In 1655, Abraham Delabury arrived in Barbados as a free person. He was reduced

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1. This was made easy because of the small size of the island.

to servitude by Thomas Andrew, a sugar planter, who had promised to employ him as a free wage labourer. Delabury was able to petition the Governor in Council for his freedom in 1656. The Council ruled that the petitioner should be set free, and be empowered to take action against Andrew for compensation.(1) Some Blacks also found themselves in Delabury's position, for the law which gave whites this right to petition for freedom was a civil law that applied to all free persons. For example, in 1654, Anthony Iland, a Negro, petitioned the Council to be freed from William Leachy, a sugar planter. Iland argued that he had arrived in the island a free person on his own account, but was kidnapped and enslaved by Leachy. The Council ruled that the '... said negro be referred to the Common Law for trial for his freedom, and... that the said negro to have liberty to commence his action... at the court for the precinct of St. George...' (2)-there to gain his freedom. Another case occurred when three free Blacks were enslaved in 1687, and petitioned for their freedom. The Council ruled that the '... said negroes be freed and be able to dispose of themselves as they shall see fit.' (3)

One primary consideration of the planters was that their servants should have no socio-economic functions outside those of the plantation and its operation, which meant that any form of activity, such as trading, was forbidden by law. Clause three of the Code which nullified all servant contracts and trading arrangements was rigorously applied. In 1654, Capt. John Frere commenced an action against John Woolworth in the precinct court of Christ Church for trading with his servant. He won the action and recovered

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1. Minutes of Council, 15 March 1656, Lucas Mss. Reel 1, f.444, B.P.L.
  2. Minutes of Council, 10 March 1654, Lucas Mss. Reel 1, f.92, B.P.L.
  3. Minutes of Council, Sept. 1687, Lucas Mss. Reel 2, f.383.



7,000 lbs. of sugar in damages.(1) The servant's servitude was extended by two years, and the court held that Woolworth, by trading with the servant, had undermined Frere's property rights and title in his servant. Furthermore, on the 13 March 1653, Richard Dent brought an action before Governor Searle in Council against Daniell Machigee, for 'entertaining' his woman servant.(2) He won the case and recovered 8,000 lbs. of sugar in damages.

The data point toward the very strict application of the Code; the servants' servitude was extended at every possible juncture. For example, under Clause eight, a Grand Jury in 1664 found Jeremy Taylor, a servant, guilty of '... presuming to marry without a licence.'(3) The contract of marriage was nullified, and Taylor's servitude was extended by four years. Likewise, in the same year, the court found a servant guilty of having had a sexual relationship. Ann Pace, a servant, was found guilty under Clause six for '...having a bastard child...' (4), and her servitude was extended by one year - though her pregnancy would have terminated her work for only one to two months. Robert Tothill was found guilty of '... frequently accompanying her...' (5) and being a free man he was merely fined. The prohibition of marriage, no doubt, encouraged illicit relationships amongst those who, ordinarily, would have developed normal relationships.

Barbadian justice was by no means impartial. The laws were shabby and overtly responsive to the individual planter's interests, especially in their defence against the servant's legal actions.

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1. Minutes of Council ---- 1655, Lucas Mss. Reel 1, ff.458-9.
  2. Minutes of Council, 13 March 1653, Reel 1, f.220.
  3. Proceedings of the Grand Jury of Barbados, 13 Dec. 1664, C.S.P.C. 1661-68, p.259.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Ibid.



For example, in March 1685, Ralph Lane petitioned the Council and stated that the case brought against him by his servant, Margaret Wetherby, should not be heard under Sir Timothy Thornhill, Chief Justice for the St. James precinct court. The said Judge, he noted, had a '... particular disrespect for him...' (1) and would be unable to do justice to his case. The case was transferred, which shows how the law worked against the servant, and how the planters could manipulate the law if they felt that it was not going to produce the desired decision. As a result, the planters with the ability to more or less select their judge, invariably won their cases against the servants. Many planters had little respect for legal procedure and law, especially in their relationships with their servants. Their conception of the servants as 'property' contradicted the idea of being in court to defend themselves against that property. An example of the effect of this contradiction emerged from the case of one servant, Daniel Duncombe, in December 1656. He petitioned the Governor in Council to plead that his master, Capt. John Symonds, had refused to pay his 'freedom due' in accordance with the indenture agreement. The Governor ordered Symonds to pay the sum of £10 or 400 lbs. of sugar. Symonds not only openly refused to pay or to attend the hearing, but took hold of the servant and gave him a 'sound beating' for his audacity in bringing an action against his master. (2) This contempt for the servants' 'legal rights' by the planters, plus the certainty of subsequent victimisation, were significant obstacles to servants bringing actions against their masters.

Servants found that, occasionally, they could benefit from the planters' political disputes. One typical case of this nature occurred under Gov. Searle's administration. Searle, a man of

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1. Minutes of Council, 9 June 1688, Lucas Mss. Reel 2, f.162.

2. Minutes of Council, 10 Dec. 1656, Lucas Mss. Reel 1, ff.327-28.

strong Puritan views, was infamous on the island for his frequent assertions that the root cause of social problems and planter - servant conflict was the 'enormous and evil of drunkenness' of the masters. In August 1654, one servant, Thomas Carter, who was given a ticket by his master, John Colleton, to visit his friends on a neighbouring estate for one day, stayed an extra day. Colleton, in accordance with the law, ordered his servant to serve for one extra year for his overstay. The case went before Gov. Searle, who on hearing the evidence, reversed Colleton's order. Colleton's decision was not reversed because of its outrageous nature, since it was consistent with the law. Research into the political history of this period reveals that Gov. Searle and John Colleton were arch enemies, who were in conflict over a wide range of issues. On previous occasions, Searle had exercised his authority unfairly against the Colleton family (which formed a dynasty both in Barbados and South Carolina). There seems to be little doubt that Searle had selected this particular case to make another attack upon Colleton, for his decision was against the established law, and showed how politics could transcend law on the island. (1)

Observing the law in action, Gov. Atkins noted in 1680 that the courts of Barbados worked only in the interest of the court officials and the wealthy planters. (2)

The dominant aspiration of the servants was not justice, but freedom, an objective which drove many to make desperate decisions. For example, in 1646, one master cheated the Treasurer of taxes, which were usually paid in cotton. The master, in order to save his neck, made a deal with one of his servants. The deal was that

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1. Minutes of Council, 1655, Lucas Mss. Reel 1, ff.244-50.
  2. Gov. Atkins to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 1 April 1680, C.S.P.C. 1677-80, p.504.

Boulton, the servant, would admit to the crime by stating that he was to deliver the cotton but disposed of it for personal gain, and in return he would obtain his freedom. Boulton was aware of the penalty which the court would impose for theft or embezzlement, but valued his freedom more. The court ordered his ears be cut off, a sacrifice which Boulton, no doubt, considered was worth making to be emancipated from life as a servant under the laws of Barbados. These cases are a representative sample of decisions made by the courts concerning the legal experiences of servants.

Generally, therefore, servants did not fare very well under the Code. Their relationship with the law was merely an extension of their treatment on the plantations, which was consistently harsh and oppressive.



The discussion of 'treatment' must be located within the wider socio-economic and ideological structure of colonial society, and not simply related to the character compatibility of individual masters and servants. The very concept of 'treatment' implies a power relationship, whereby decisions are made independently by one group in the interest of another. On the plantation, where forced labour was the rule, it would be absurd to argue that decisions were made from the planters' power perspective for the direct benefit of the servants, who like the slaves, were in need of freedom and not 'good exploitation'. The concept of 'treatment' will therefore be seen in terms of the planters' authority over their servants, as expressed in the areas of work relations and general social activity.

The first comprehensive account of the 'treatment' of indentured servants came from Richard Ligon, who observed very closely their relationship with the masters and overseers in the work process. He noted that the variations in treatment were the result not of law, custom or other institutional guidance, but whether '... the masters are merciful or cruel...' (1) In other words, Ligon accepted the inevitability of master exploitation and brutality, and placed the degrees of such treatment upon the individual planter's characteristics. He noted, '... those that are merciful, treat their servants well, both in their meat, drink, and lodging, and give them such work as is not unfit for Christians to do. But if the master be cruel the servants have very wearisome and miserable lives.' (2) But the sugar planters were not overtly

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.44.

2. Ibid.

concerned about the establishment of a moral-traditional social relation of production; they were concerned with profitability.

On the day of their arrival in the island, after six to twelve weeks in the middle passage, the planter took the servants off the ship and sent

... them instantly with a guid to his plantation, and being come, commands them instantly to make their cabins, which they not knowing how to do, are to be advised by others of their servants, that are their seniors; but if they be churlish, and will not shew them, or if the materials be wanting... then they are to lye on the ground that night. (1)

Although it was customary for slaves to be given light tasks during the 'seasoning' period, the masters did not arrange such a transitional period for indentured servants. Observing the management on the plantation of Walrond, Modyford, and Hilliard, Ligon noted that the servants were put to the most demanding regime of field labour from the beginning of servitude. The day after their arrival on the island '... they are rung out with a bell to work, at six o'clock in the morning, with a severe overseer to command them...' (2) Between eleven o'clock and one o'clock they were off to lunch, then back to labour between two and six o'clock. Furthermore,

... if it chance to rain, and wet them through, they have no shirt, but must lye so all night. If they put off their cloaths, the cold of the night will strike into them; and if they be not strong men, this ill lodging will put them into a sickness: if they complain, they are beaten by the overseer; if they resist, their time is doubled...(3)

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.



During the early period, the overseers, in order to extract a set amount of work from their servant gangs, used the whip freely. The planters had not yet generally developed the more subtle and sophisticated labour management techniques of articulating incentives and stimuli with punishments. Ligon further noted,

...I have seen an overseer beat a servant with a cane about the head, till the blood has followed, for a fault that is not worth the speaking of; and yet he must be patience, or worse will follow. Truly, I have seen such cruelty there done to servants, as I did not think one christian could have done to another.(1)

The Salisbury Rebels, sold in Barbados between 1655 and 1657, related their experiences in a petition to the House of Commons. They stated how the planters had them

... generally grinding at the mills and attending the furnace, or digging in this scorching island; having naught to feed on... but potatoe root, nor drink but water... made miserable beyond expression or christian imagination... (2)

John Scott stated in 1667, when slave labour had largely replaced indentured labour in field occupations, that there still existed gangs of white servants working in the fields without shirts or shoes, driven by severe overseers.(3) This was considered by certain contemporary pamphleteers to be the ultimate level of degradation experienced by servants.(4) Ironically, what the

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1. Ibid.

2. Petition of Rivers and Foyle, 25 March 1659 in Burton, T., - Parliamentary Diary, pp.256-7.

3. Description of Barbados, 1667, Sloane Mss. 3662, B.L.

4. Ibid.



servants considered degrading was not the harsh field labour and brutal physical treatment, but rather the experience of labouring in the fields with slave gangs. in a society where such work was seen as the criterion of inferiority and unfreedom.

Some planters developed social relations on their estates that were based on a distinct capitalist paternalism. These were the more rational and advanced planters, who employed various incentive schemes in labour management in order to increase productivity and labour efficiency. These men were the forefathers of modern management. One planter who developed a distinctly 'workable paternalism' on his estate was Col. Walrond. He increased the material comfort of his servants above the general standard by a policy which was apparently costly, though it was over compensated for by higher servant productivity. Ligon noted the exceptional Walrond's method with detail. He commented on how the key to Walrond's policy was to improve the conditions of labour above the expected norm. Walrond on '... seeing his servants when they come home, toiled with their labour and wet through with their sweating... send into England for rug gowns, such as poor people wear in hospitals...' (1) to improve their resting period. He also provided them with hammocks, (2) a privilege of the planter class, as most servants slept on wooden benches or on the ground. Furthermore, and this was the economic rationale, the '... care and charity of colonel Walrond lost him nothing in the conclusion; for he got such love of his servants, as they thought all too little they could do for him...' (3) to improve his plantation.

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, pp.44-5.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

But Ligon was keen to observe that the distinctiveness of Walrond's labour management technique resided in the fact that it was developed in a period when it was the accepted norm for 'cruel masters' (1) to impose a standard of '... extream ill usage;..' (2) upon their servants.

The evidence shows consistently that 'whipping' was a common punishment method used by masters and overseers for acts or omissions committed by the servants. It was at this juncture that the servant's right to petition the local J.P. was arbitrarily interpreted, and reduced to a mere theoretical form.(3) This was largely the outcome of a case in 1630 which had a remarkable impact upon early Barbadian society. In that year, several groups of servants collectively appeared before Gov. William Tufton and pleaded cases of extreme ill-treatment. These cases were investigated, and resulted in the Governor giving orders for the removal of certain servants from their masters' plantations.(4) This decision was interpreted by the plantocracy as an attack upon their property rights and interests. Subsequently, the Governor lost the planters' support and was replaced within the year. There is no evidence of this course being taken again over the century, though the Governors in Council reserved the right to 'free' servants from extreme mal-treatment, while enforcing the principle that planters had<sup>a</sup>/legitimate right to punish their servants within reason.

Extreme mal-treatment was considered to be that which destroyed the servant's functions as a producer; this is not surprising since the destruction of property was-and is-condemned in any society

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Harlow, V.T., History of Barbados, p.307.

4. Smith, A.E., Colonists in Bondage, p.248.



based upon private ownership of the means of production. Anything short of this was considered legitimate and acceptable. For example, in 1640 one servant, John Thomas, complained to the Governor in Council that he was 'inhumanly and unchristianlike' tortured by his masters, Francis Leaven and Samuel Hodgkins. On investigation, it was found that the method of punishment employed by the masters involved hanging the servant up '... by the hands, and putting fired matches between his fingers....'(1) The servant consequently '... lost the use of the severall joynts' and was '... in great danger to loose the use of his right hand.'(2) The Council considered this to be 'extreme mal-treatment', and ordered the master to pay 5,000 lbs. of cotton for the medical treatment of the servant, who was freed from his servitude.(3) Similarly, in December 1656, Patrick Cornelius petitioned the local J.P. that his master had punished him to the extent that his health was so impaired that he could no longer perform his duties. Two J.P.'s, after a strict examination of the evidence, decided that the punishment was far too excessive, as the servant lost the free use of his left leg. They gave the servant his freedom.(4)

The general mal-treatment of servants led to occasional murder, even during the second half of the century when servant labour had become increasingly scarce and expensive. A Grand Jury of 1673 reported that as a result of '... the severity of some masters and overseers towards their christian servants... some have lately been destroyed'.(5) The investigation of these cases

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1. Minutes of Council, 7 May 1640, Davis Mss. Box 4.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Minutes of Council, 7 May 1640, Davis Mss. Box 4.
  4. Minutes of Council, Dec. 1656, Davis Mss. Box 7, No.21.
  5. Presentments of the Grand Jury in Barbados, 8 July 1673, C.S.P.C. 1669-74, p.507.



by the J.P.'s was not consistent. Planter-class solidarity inevitably helped to distort the objectivity and neutrality of the application of the law. Two cases of 1678 can illustrate more clearly this relationship/<sup>which</sup>the planters developed with the law. In that year, Charles Grimlin, a substantial planter, murdered his maid servant. The case was heard by Gov. Atkins, who, it must be noted, was one of the few Governors who had no landed property on the island, and relied heavily upon the planter-class' financial concessions to supplement his small salary from Whitehall.(1) Not surprisingly, Grimlin was reprieved by Atkins; a decision which had no precedent, and was clearly erroneous. By law, he should have been convicted and either severely fined or imprisoned. Atkins, after making the decision, and knowing it to be incorrect, refused to be responsible by stating in his summary that the verdict was made at the popular request of '... most of the ministers and very many gentlemen of the island.'(2)

The same year, a woman of 'low origins', probably an ex-servant, killed her husband who was a propertied man on the island. The court, with Atkins' consent, decided that she was to be '... burnt alive according to the law.'(3) The 'undue and inhuman correction' (4) of servants was, therefore, the norm, and this was widely known both in Europe and on the mainland.

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1. Dunn, R., 'Profile of the Richest Colony: Barbados Census of 1680', W.M.Q. Vol.26 (1969), pp.3-30.
  2. Gov. Atkins to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 12 Jan. 1677, C.S.P.C. 1677-80, p.202.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Minutes of Council, 8 July 1673, C O. 1/30, No.150.

The colony became renowned, not only for the greatly flaunted wealth of the planters, but also for the general physical maltreatment of the servant and ex-servant population. In 1688, Sir Thomas Montgomery wrote from Barbados to the Lords of Trade and Plantations,

I beg ... care for the poor white servants here, who are used with more barbarous cruelty than if in Algiers. Their bodies and souls are used as if hell commenced here and only continued in the world to come. They want the merest necessities of food and raiment, and many die daily in consequence. (1)

Referring to the Grimlin case, Montgomery noted, '... one planter was found guilty of murder last Grand Sessions, whom the Governor reprieved, but he had better been hanged....' (2)

Whitehall, on receiving the information from Montgomery, merely instructed Governor Stede on the necessity to remedy the situation by legal methods. At this stage, Gov. Stede explained to the Lords of Trade that many contradictions and ambiguities were involved in the 'treatment' of servants on the island.

The planters were aware that the emigration of ex-servants, and the refusal of servants to fight keenly, which severely weakened the militia, were the direct results of the brutality imposed on servants over the century. (3) As a result, Gov. Stede noted that on all occasions he looked diligently into servant complaints and dispensed justice fairly, and occasionally ordered

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1. Sir Thomas Montgomery to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 3 Aug. 1688, C.S.P.C. 1685-88, p.577.
  2. Ibid..
  3. Lt. Gov. Stede to the Earl of Sunderland, 25 April 1688, C.S.P.C. 1685-88, p.535.



the freeing of some mal-treated servants as the law demanded.(1)  
 On the other hand, Stede noted that the characters and personalities of the servants limited the success of any 'amelioration' policy. He informed the Lords of Trade that:

Most of the white servants sent here being taken from the gaols and being men whose lives have taught them all kinds of villanies... it is impossible to keep them in due order and obedience such as is required by their masters and by the safety of the islands unless there be severe laws to punish any insolence towards masters.(2)

Furthermore, Stede noted, the attempted amelioration policy of Gov. Atkins in the late 1670s had given the servants '... so much encouragement that they were more refractory than ever and provoked their masters and then dared them to strike or whip them...'(3)

Governor Stede represented the views of the planters adamantly against Whitehall. He argued for the necessity to severely punish servants, and for the general acceptance of such punishment in the manner that the mal-treatment of Africans was generally accepted and legitimised. His views embodied the contradiction that planters faced over their relationship with indentured servants. There was the need to exploit this labour by a rigorous regime of control and subjection, yet there was a dependence on servants for military and police protection against slaves and foreign invaders. Gov. Stede's rationalisation,

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1. Lt. Gov. Stede to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, C.S.P.C. 1685-88, pp.584-5.
  2. Lt. Gov. Stede to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 30 Aug. 1688, C.S.P.C. 1685-88, p.584.
  3. Ibid.



nevertheless, resulted in the passing of a law in 1689 '... for the restraining of any exuberant severities which ill-masters or overseers may... use towards their christian servants ....' (1) This Act was designed to maintain the masters' right to punish their servants, but not to 'break the skin' or disable the servant in the process. (2)

The nature of 'treatment' in the dynamics of planter-servant relationships reflected the planters perception of most servants; that they did not live up to expected standards of labour. However, the few 'good' servants and the 'good' slaves were frequently rewarded by their masters. The mention of servants and slaves in the wills of planters and masters as beneficiaries is proof that some servants and slaves were indeed positively responsive to the masters standards and expectations. The wills for the period show that masters were not overtly rewarding their good servants any more than the good slaves. Their relative contribution to capital accumulation was ultimately more important than their racial origins in planter-class social decisions. Between 1672 and 1675, the wills data reveal only fourteen cases in which servants and slaves were beneficiaries. The slave beneficiaries were all female, which suggests that rewards were made mainly for sexual and domestic functions. These bequests can be tabulated as follows :-

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1. Minutes of Council, 3 Jan, 1689, Lucas Mss. Reel 2, f.215.
  2. See appendix 6.

T.47 - Slave and Servant Beneficiaries of Barbadian Wills,  
1672-75. (1)

| Date of Entry | Will Maker         | Beneficiary       |                     | Bequest   |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---|
|               |                    | Servant           | Slave               |   |
| Oct.1673      | Mary Glascock      |                   | Moll Bess           | £5<br>Clothing                                      |
| Nov.1673      | Jeremiah Legginton | Chris Fabell      |                     | 2000lbs.sugar                                       |
|               |                    | John Brown        |                     | 1000 " "  |
| Jan.1673      | Tobias Bridges     | Robert Bamby      |                     | £20   |
| Feb.1673      | H. Brockden        | Thomas Hollis     |                     | 500lbs.sugar & freedom                              |
|               |                    | Margaret Cleghome |                     | 500lbs.sugar & freedom                              |
| Feb.1673      | Eliz. Fletcher     |                   | Sarah Asha          | 500lbs.sugar<br>500 " "                             |
| Jul.1674      | William Morrison   | Lewis William     |                     | 500lbs.sugar after service                          |
|               |                    | Others            |                     | 200lbs.sugar  |
| Jul.1674      | Thomas Burham      | George Bredd      |                     | 6000lbs.sugar on condition he works for Mrs. Burham |
| Jul.1673      | Roger Scott        |                   | Moll                | 10 acres land & freedom                             |
| Mar.1675      | Edward Harrison    |                   | Slave mulatto woman | freedom   |
| Dec.1672      | Eliz. Hayne        |                   | Judith              | 1 cow, clothes, household stuff                     |
| Feb.1673      | John Hill          | Matthew Jones     |                     | 2000lbs.sugar                                       |
| Aug.1673      | Edward Estwick     | Margaret Moore    |                     | 300lbs.sugar  |
| Jan.1673      | Richard Goare      | John Blackman     |                     | 2000lbs.sugar                                       |
| Nov.1675      | Robert Bernson     | Ann Poyner        |                     | 500lbs.sugar  |

1. Wills of Barbados, 1672-75, R.B. 6/9 ff.12, 20, 43, 49, 54/5, 128-9, 152, 156, 376, 178, 168, 162, 362, 366.

Many of the bequests were valid only on the future ' good ' behaviour of the beneficiary, and others on the condition that the servant continued to work for the family. Since the planters had to rely upon the servant class to reproduce the overseer groups, certain servants were singled out for special treatment. In this respect the better treatment of some servants merely reflected the planter's interests, and not a more humane conception of the master-servant relationship.



According to the 'custom of the country', the planters were obliged to provide a basic standard of food, clothing and shelter for the material satisfaction of the servants. This standard was defined during the early days of settlement, when the material level was very low, and hardly changed over the century. The rise of the sugar industry considerably reduced the percentage of arable land which was allocated to the production of foodstuffs. Between 1635 and 1665, the colony lost its reputation as the 'granary of the Indies', and became heavily dependent upon foodstuffs imported mainly from Ireland and New England.

The costs of provisions increased considerably over the century, as the population more than trebled during the thirty years between 1635 and 1665. Food bills in the second half of the century were generally the largest single recurrent expenditure of the planters, and the dietary structure of the servants and slaves reflected the need to keep costs as low as possible. It was, indeed, unfortunate for the Barbadian servant that he ate from his master's pocket, and every mouthful was measured in cash. (1)

The servant's diet differed little from that of the slaves. Imported corn, fish, salted pork and beef, with locally produced roots such as potatoes, cassava and yams were the basis of their diet. Throughout the century, the planters complained about high costs of imported provisions, but made little agricultural diversification in order to become more self-sufficient. The yield of one acre of sugar cane could pay for the growth of six acres of corn, which made it economical for the planters to import provisions.

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1. See Bennett, J.H., Bondsmen and Bishops, p. 37.

Ligon made a detailed study of the servant's dietary structure during the early sugar revolution, which he considered to be sub-standard, monotonous and generally unsuited to the rigour of field labour in the tropics. According to Ligon, the servants were given every day a dinner and supper which consisted of a '...few potatoes with corn-meal for meat, and water or mobbie for drink.' (1) The boiled cornmeal, or loblolly as it was called, was the basis of the servant's diet, which, according to Ligon, the slaves rejected. (2) Occasionally, there was variety in the servant's diet, which was hardly considered an improvement. Pickled turtle was sometimes imported from the Leeward Islands, but its taste was far from the exotic flavour usually associated with this dish. The planters found it so '...uncleanly ordered that they could hardly find it in their hearts to eat it....' (3) It was reserved for the servants, and sometimes the slaves got a little.

The servants got no fresh bone meat, unless, according to Ligon, an ox died. (4) It did not matter if the '...ox dyed by mischance, or by disease...' (5), the servants ate the body, and the slaves ate the skin, head and intrails. (6) Meanwhile, the planters ate better than some English princes. (7) By the late 1650s, the diet of the servants had hardly changed. The Salisbury rebels

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.44.

2. Ibid., p.31

3. Ibid., p.37

4. Ibid., p.43.

5. Ibid., pp.37,43.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., pp.38-9.

noted how their labour in the sugar fields was interrupted with a few potatoes, corn meal and water.

Oldmixon made a comparative analysis of the servant's diet in Barbados with that of the English labourer, and concluded that the former were worse fed during the seventeenth century.(1) It was not until 1682 that the Barbadians followed the Jamaican example and legislated on the servants' diet in an effort to reduce the level of malnutrition amongst this class. A law of that year promised each servant five pounds of meat or fish per week, compared with the three and a half pounds promised in Jamaica. This level was raised in 1696 to six pounds per week.(2)

The salted beef, fish and pork were invariably of very poor quality, and detrimental to the servants' health. Fresh meat was a luxury which was reserved for the plantocracy. Though the sweet potato was a better food than the white potato, because of its high vitamin A,C and calcium content, it was not allocated in sufficiently large quantities to make a sound contribution to the servants' health. The widespread application of the 1682 Law led to a steep increase in the level of servant mortality, and the law was not enforced. The 1696 law was abandoned, after much discussion, in 1700.(3) Nevertheless, between 1682 and 1700 the servants had the legal right to complain to the magistrates about this lethal diet; they most probably thought that they would die more '... happily on a meat diet.'(4)

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1. Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America, vol. 2, p. 129.

2. Mss. Laws of Jamaica, CO.139/1, f.125. Mss. Laws of Barbados, CO.30/5, f.45 and CO.28/3, no.44.

3. Council to the Board of Trade, 4 May 1700, C.S.P.C., 1700, no.391.

4. Smith, A.E., Colonists in Bondage, p.44.



The servants' standard of housing did not improve between the pre-sugar era and the more materially developed society of the second half of the century. The planters exercised their legal obligation to provide shelter for the servants by the creation of a very crude standard. They had to build their own huts, or cabins as they were called, from '...sticks, withs, and plantine leaves...' (1) which were located on pieces of terrain that were unproductive. The huts were identical to those constructed by the slaves, though they were not located near to the slave quarters. They had no floors but the dry ground itself, and mere planks of wood provided beds and furniture. Constructed with one little window and a door, they were in marked contrast to the more developed cottages inhabited by the English labourers and peasants. The Salisbury rebels noted that these huts were worse than those slept in by dogs in England. (2)

The clothes of the servants and the slaves were made of the same basic material. Canvas was used to make petticoats for the females and drawers for the males. (3) It was not until the 1670s that the Assembly discussed the subject of the servants' dirty and unkempt attire. Peter Colleton wanted to see the servants clothed with dignity, but his campaign failed miserably. (4) The ideal standard which Ligon constructed in the early 1650s was not reached in Barbados during the century. This standard

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p. 44.
  2. Stock, L., ed., Proceedings and Debates, vol. 1, p. 249.
  3. Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America, vol. 2, p. 128.
  4. Sir Peter Colleton to the Council and Assembly of Barbados, 14 Dec. 1670, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, p. 141.

would have left the servants well clad and clearly differentiated from the slaves.

T.46 - Ideal Annual Clothing Allowance of Servants in the Early Sugar Revolution, 1645-1652 (1)

Males

| <u>Subordinate Overseers</u> | <u>Common Servants</u>   |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6 shirts                     | 6 shirts                 |
| 2 pairs of drawers           | 6 drawers                |
| 12 pairs of canvas shoes     | 12 pairs of canvas shoes |
| 6 pairs of stockings         |                          |
| 3 monmouth caps              |                          |
| 2 doublets of canvas         |                          |
| 6 Holland bands              |                          |

Females

| <u>Domestics</u>  | <u>Common Servants</u> |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 6 smocks          | 4 smocks               |
| 3 petticoats      | 3 petticoats           |
| 3 waistcoats      | 4 caps                 |
| 6 caps            | 12 pairs of shoes      |
| 12 pairs of shoes |                        |

In 1696, the Barbadians finally legislated on the clothing of their servants. The Law of that year promised each servant annually four shirts, three pairs of drawers, two jackets, one hat and four pairs of canvas shoes. (2) These provisions fell short

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.115.
  2. Acts of Council and Assembly, 1696, CO.30/5, f.45, also CO.28/3, no.44.

of the ideal standard which was proposed in the early sugar revolution (as shown above). Barbadian servants were, therefore, described as shabby and unkempt, while their masters were frequently ridiculed for being over-dressed with expensive costumes that were largely unsuited to tropical conditions.



Karl Marx, in his brief analysis of American slavery, noted that ' Labour with a white skin cannot emancipate itself where labour with a black skin is branded.' (1) The perceptiveness of this statement is illustrated by the analysis of the white labourers' political struggles in Barbadian society during the seventeenth century. Some servants, and the oppressed Irish poor, realised that servitude was, in general, an organised system of harsh and legitimised oppression, and subsequently politicised their class position in relation to their masters. The effective political control of these ' poorer sorts ' subsequently pre-occupied the planters from the 1630s until the end of the century.

The planters, however, were able to co-opt a significant section of the servant class for the performance of police and military functions to suppress and control the rebels, who, over the century, had launched a consistent and organised resistance and offensive against the planter-class. The co-opted servants and freemen were instrumental in the frustration of the workers' struggle. They were bound to the planters by links which were firm enough to account for their position in this conflict. Their economic and social interest and their world view were similar to those of the planters.

The dominant aspiration of most white labourers was to be elevated into the ranks of small landholders. But social mobility and property accumulation meant the effective use and

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1. Cited in Aptheker, H., Essays in the History of the American Negro (N.Y., 1945), p.204. I have been unable to find this reference in Marx's work.

acceptance of the slave system of production. It was, therefore, a 'natural' thing for servants with these ideals to endorse slavery and perform critical protective functions, which secured the institution and relationships that were necessary for the attainment of their ideals. Nevertheless, the hostility which they encountered created many contradictions in their objectives, and they were forced to struggle in order to fulfill their aspirations.

The servants and freemen responded to their situation by collective rebellion, individual acts of physical hostility, arson, sabotage and by running away. To counter these actions Westminster gave orders to all the Governors and Councils to '...fight, kill, slay, repress and subdue all such as shall in hostile or mutinied manner...disturb the peace....'(1) This policy was applied to both the servants and the slaves. The planters designed policies to divide the servants and slaves, and to split racially the servant class, in order to keep their politics at the level of individual spontaneous actions. Dickson noted that this policy was very effective, for it drew '...an impassable boundry line between blacks and white servants...', which operated so effectively on the servants' pride that they found it very difficult to conceive of a political alliance with the slaves.(2)

The slaveholders quickly learnt the subtle political craft of using tribal differences to divide the slaves and undermine their organisations. Likewise with the servants, their racial and religious characteristics were used for divisive means. They

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1. Commission appointing Col.D'Oyley Governor of Jamaica, 8 Feb. 1661,C.S.P.C., 1661-68,p.6.
  2. Dickson,W.,Mitigation of Slavery,p.26.



were graded by the planters throughout the century; the criteria which were used in both cases were their respective aptitude for plantation style occupations, and their propensity for passive acceptance of the social realities of the plantation. The Scottish were stereotyped as loyal, hard working and responsive to patronage, whilst the Irish were seen as violent, dangerous, lazy and untrustworthy. (1) The English and the Welsh fell in between these two extremes. The Scottish were largely co-opted into the pro-planter camp, and many Scottish freemen became military tenants. The Irish were the aggressors, and the planters kept them out of government, the military and all other posts of authority.

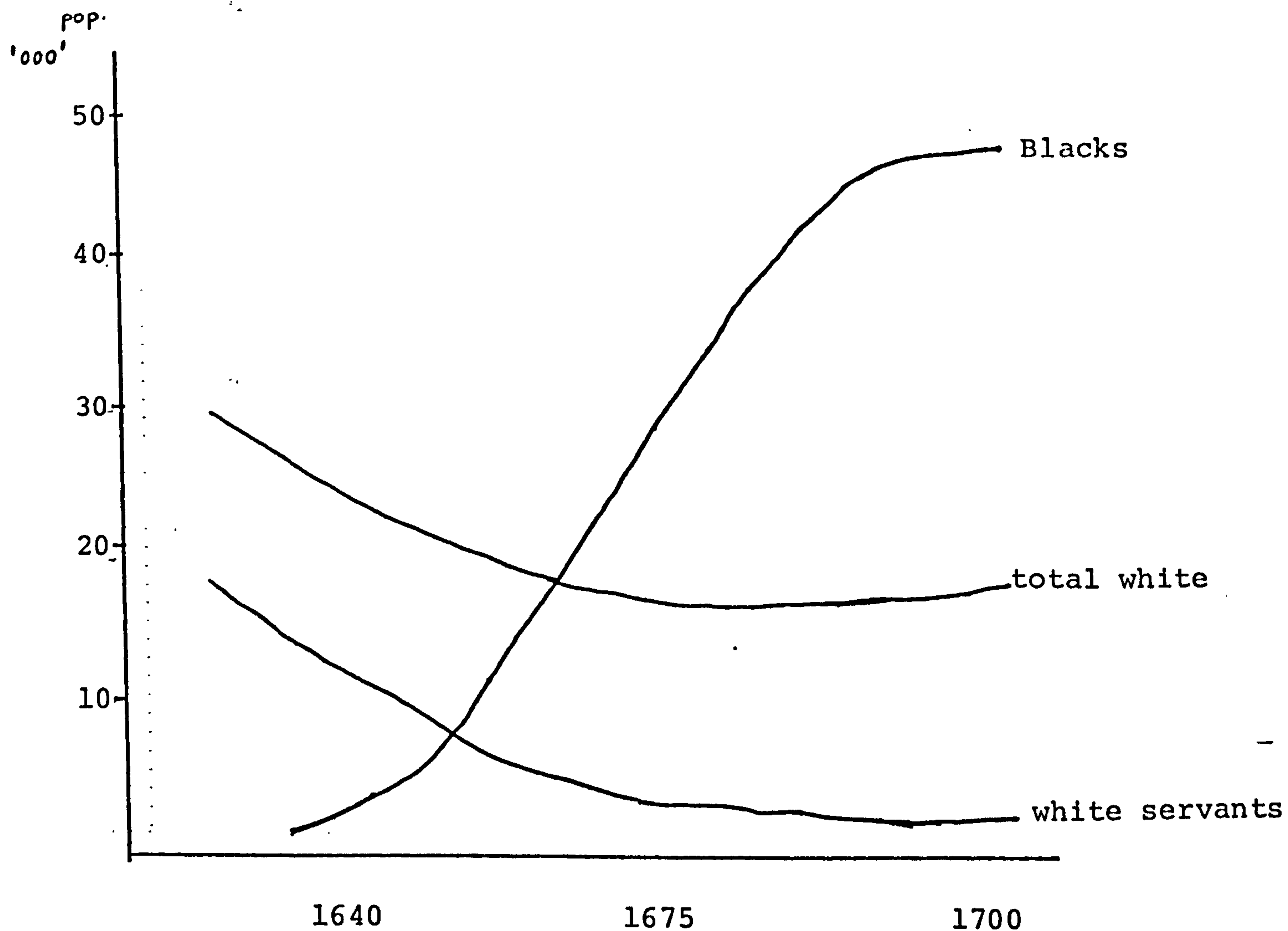
The goals of the struggle shifted over the century. This was directly related to changes in the racial composition of the society. (2) In the early stages of the struggle, the white workers considerably outnumbered the Black population; this led white workers to believe that Africans could pose no threat politically to a white society turned 'upside down'. The result was that the white workers' political objectives gravitated towards the destruction of the plantocracy, and the establishment of themselves as the ruling class. As the Black population rapidly increased to outnumber the white by the mid 1650s, the radical servants became more reformist. They demanded amelioration in their 'treatment', the right to petty land ownership, and some wanted the franchise - an objective which the planters rejected outright. There was probably a conscious fear on the servants' part that a bloody political struggle in the white community would lead to

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1. Nicholas Blake to King, 20 Oct. 1670, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, p.116.

2. see diagram overleaf.



Fig.12 - Population Change of Seventeenth Century Barbados. (1)

1. Gov. Atkins to Secretary Blathwayt, 1 April 1680, C.S.P.C., 1677-80, No.1336.

Also, Egerton Mss. 2395, B.L.

and, Harlow, V.T., History of Barbados, p.338.

the 'common ruin of the contending parties', giving the Blacks the opportunity to take political power cheaply.

The range of servant resistance and offensives against the planters, therefore, was varied, but the punishment systems imposed by the planters were consistently severe. As expected, resistance activity which related to more than one plantation or planter was quickly exaggerated as being general. The punishments were brutal, reflecting the basic political insecurity of the plantocracy. Even verbal abuse by servants of their masters was severely punished. In 1654, for example, the Governor in Council ruled that one servant, Daniel Malisee, should be placed in the pillory unclothed to endure the mid-day sun for scandalously talking about the planters of the island.(1) The element of racism directed against the Irish servants was clearly evident, and at times determinant in the planters' responses. In 1678, the Assembly instructed the Provost Marshall to arrest an Irish servant upon the plantation of his master, for speaking '... irreverently and profanely of the Holy Bible and making bad expressions of Englishmen....'(2) Such cases of punishment for verbal hostility were common, and generally led to both imprisonment and thirty to forty lashes on the bare back by the common hangman.

The servants' most common political response was to run away; it was the 'great refusal' to be subjected and exploited. To the individual planter it represented a loss of labour time and capital; to the planter class it was behaviour which could undermine the entire fabric of plantation production. It was at this juncture

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1. Minutes of Council, 1655, Lucas Mss., Reel 1, f.186. B.P.L.
  2. Minutes of Council, 16 Dec. 1677, Lucas Mss., Reel 2, f.486. B.P.L.

that the true nature of the planters' conception of labour, both Black and white, was revealed. In the retrieval and punishment of runaway servants and slaves, the racial consideration was minimal. From the early 1630s, when Sir Henry Colt visited the island, one of the major problems of the planters was the controlling of large numbers of servants running off the island. Colt noted that most ships, including his own, were pestered with servants escaping their estates at night hoping to stow away.<sup>(1)</sup> Planters, at this stage, had not yet developed the necessary organisation to recapture servants who fled to other islands, and to have them 'extradited'. This was not achieved until the buccaneers were brought under control in the 1680s. As a result, servants felt confident that they could start a new career on reaching another English colony within the region.

Governor Stede noted that under his administration (1685-90) — and those of his predecessors, it was common for servants to group together in bands, and organise routes to specific parts of the coast. They would then seize small boats (2) and escape <sup>from</sup> the island, inflicting severe property losses on their masters, and often endangering the production process. The frequency of these activities prompted the Assembly to legislate that all owners of such vessels were to keep them secure, and if servants obtained them for escaping, penalties would be imposed for negligence. Throughout the century, these laws were revised and renewed, illustrating their continued relevance.

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1. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.6.

2. Lt. Gov. Stede to Lords of Trade and plantations, 30 August 1688, C.S.P.C. 1685-88, p.584.



By a law of 1652 and earlier customs, convicted servants were gaoled, and also had to serve one extra month for every two hours they were absent. If the master did not collect the servant from gaol after the specified period of imprisonment, the constable of the precinct was empowered, either to sell the servant by auction to retrieve the prison fee, or to set the servant to work on the precinct's account. The number of servants gaoled for running away constantly increased over the century. In 1687, the Provost Marshall informed the Governor that both the Common Gaol and the 'Cages', which were constructed to harbour 'runaway servants and slaves', were not large enough nor strong enough to keep the growing number of inmates, and either an extension, or another gaol was needed for this purpose. (1) But for those servants and slaves who escaped the plantation and hid in the woods, caves and gullies about the island, the Assembly in 1655 gave orders for their destruction.

The Irish servants consistently rebelled, and posed fundamental security problems for the planters. They represented between forty to fifty per cent of the servant population between 1650 and 1690, and this was the period when their political activities reached a peak in the colony. The explosive nature of the hostile relationship between English masters and Irish servants was conditioned by certain racial and religious factors expressed in English political life, and partly transcended the socio-economic forces of colonial society. The colony, in many ways, merely provided a more confined geographical setting for the enactment of forces already formed and in motion.

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1. Minutes of Council, 10 May 1687, Lucas Mss., Reel 2, f.584.

Christopher Hill suggested that the workers' radicalism in early Stuart and Cromwellian England should have affected the political climate of the colonies - especially those colonies like Barbados - which absorbed emigrants in large numbers during the period. The workers were mobilised by radical groups such as the Levellers, Ranters and Diggers, who were concerned with the protection of the poor against the rich.(1) Revolutionary ideas, such as the equal redistribution of property, and the destruction of private ownership were advocated by these groups. Several articulate radicals at this time were either transported or voluntarily emigrated to the West Indies. Joseph Salmon, for example, after being arrested in Coventry for making political speeches, emigrated to Barbados (2), so did John Perrot, an advocate of the Ranters principles. (3) Though these men do not appear in the data, they probably inspired, if not encouraged, the white workers into anti-planter politics.(4)

Irish servants and the slaves were the most feared sections of the labouring classes for their constant undermining of the planters'

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1. Hill, C., The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution (Lon., 1972), pp.11-16.
  2. Ibid. pp.175-6.
  3. Ibid. p.204, footnote 120.
  4. There is, however, a tendency for radicals to renege on their radicalism when in exile. This was evident in the case of English radicals who went to Australia in the Nineteenth Century.



confidence and production organisation. The Irish servants' contempt and hatred for the English plantocracy can be illustrated by a remark made on January 15, 1655, when a servant was given twenty lashes on the bare back by the common hangman for having said '... as he was eating meat in a tray, that if there was so much English blood in the tray as there was meat he would eat it...' and demand more. (1) Not surprisingly, the first maroon (2) group in Barbadian history was a multi-racial coalition of Irish servants and slaves. They were probably the first such group in New World history, a phenomenon which seems consistent with the planters' early conception of servants as a form of 'chattel property'. These maroons, numbering no more than thirty, found the only surviving area in mid-1650s Barbados which could sustain maroon activity; this was the wooded part of the St. Philip parish referred to as 'The Thicket'. (3) From the 'Thicket' these marooned servants and slaves raided the plantations during the night for food supplies.

The overt cooperation between the slaves and Irish servants does not imply that the Irish servants did not accept the planters' racist views and conception of Blacks. Indeed, some must have done so; the cooperation was largely evidence that certain groups, in spite of different ideological positions, arrived at certain historical junctures where decisions were made for mutual strategic objectives; the logic being that your enemy's enemy was your ally, though not necessarily your friend.

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1. Minutes of Council, 15 Jan. 1655, Davis Mss. Box.12, No.1.

2. Maroons were slaves or other servile workers who escaped from the plantations and hid in woods, caves and other such areas.

3. 'The Thicket' is shown on Ford's Map of 1675.



In 1655 , after a few years of tolerance, a petition from Richard Goodall and John Jones (two planters on neighbouring plantations) to the Council stated that something had to be done about '...these several Irish servants and negroes out in rebellion in ye thicketts and thereabout...' (1), for they would not stop their attacks upon the plantation stores. The petition further stated that the arrogant manner of these rebels not only set a bad example to other servants and slaves but it made a mockery of the law. (2) The Council was alarmed by this evidence, and ordered Lt.Col. John Higginbottom to raise Col. Henry Hawley's regiment and ...follow ye said servants and runaway negroes, and if he shall meet with any of them to cause them forthwith to be secured, and to send them before the Governor, or some Justice of the Peace , to be dealt with according to justice; but if the said servants and runaway negroes shall make any opposition, and resist his forces, and refuse to come peaceably and submit themselves, then to use his utmost endeavour to suppress or destroy them.... (3)

These maroons were apparently captured or killed as there exists no further evidence which concerns them.

Col. Standfast's regiment was also instrumental in the recapture of servants and slaves who ran away from their plantations. Standfast was able to obtain large numbers of servants and freemen to form the vanguard of his hunting unit. The social composition

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1. Minutes of Council, 6 Nov. 1655, Davis Mss. box 12, no. 1.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.

of his regiment, like that of Henry Hawley, reveals this clearly.

T.48- The Social Composition of Col. Standfast's Regiment (1)

| <u>Divisions</u>  | <u>Tenants</u> | <u>Freemen</u> | <u>Servants</u> |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Col. Standfast    | 7              | 12             | 17              |
| Col. Riddocks     | 8              | 31             | 10              |
| Major Waterman    | 7              | 32             | 6               |
| Col. Standford    | 12             | 23             | 10              |
| Capt. Alleyne     | 12             | 27             | 15              |
| Capt. Johnstownes | 18             | 10             | 10              |
| Capt. Davies      | 5              | 23             | 22              |
| Capt. Waterman    | <u>18</u>      | <u>27</u>      | <u>10</u>       |
|                   | <u>87</u>      | <u>185</u>     | <u>100</u>      |

Inspite of several injuries sustained by the servants and freemen in pursuit of rebellious slaves and servants they persisted in this occupation. The planters rarely rewarded injured trackers with their freedom; it was more common to give them small amounts of sugar. For example, Peter Leare, a servant, lost his arm in 1691 while <sup>he</sup> attempted to capture a runaway slave and was rewarded only £5. Two years later, Robert Frument, a servant of Othoniell Higgs, in pursuit of one of his master's runaway slaves, lost his right arm from a blow inflicted by the slave. The slave was executed according to the law, for which the master was compensated the sum of £22 by the Treasurer for his loss of property. The servant, however, had to petition the Council 'praying relief', since the master refused to compensate him.

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1. Census of Barbados, 1679/80, ff.354-64, Bar.Arc.



More frequent than running off the plantations and the island, were the series of individual spontaneous actions which intimidated the planters, and which brought the local constables onto the plantations to restore order. The Irish servants were the sponsors of this method of resistance. For example, on 1 September 1657, Mr. Edmond Hollingsteade complained to the Council that his two Irish servants, George Dumohan and Walter Welsh '...have rebelliously and mutinously behaved themselves towards him...whereby he has been in fear of his life by the said servants....' (1) The Council, after hearing the case, ordered that '...the said Dumohan and Welsh should receive thirty-one lashes each, soundly laid on their bare backs by the common hangman and returned to the common gaol during ye pleasure of ye said master.' (2) Similarly, in July 1654, Lt. Col. Higginbottom, popular for his retrieval of runaways, was ordered to examine the case of 'riotous' servants on the plantation of Robert Margott. Twelve servants were arrested, flogged and imprisoned at the 'master's pleasure'.

Surprisingly, servants very rarely used arson as a method of attack on the planters' property - surprising since arson was an important weapon of the agricultural workers in most European societies in the pre-industrial period. Only one case of arson can so far be identified. James Holdip, one of the pioneer sugar planters on the island, bought twenty five men servants from Thomas Applewait in the early 1640s. (3) He apparently ill-treated these servants, who in 1644 burnt down his house and his crop, and in the process Holdip lost '...at least £10,000 value in cane ...' and property. (4)

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1. Minutes of Council, 1 Sept. 1657, Lucas Mss., reel 1, f. 361.

2. Ibid.

3. Anon., Memoirs of the First Settlement, app. 1.

4. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p. 45.



Two instances exist on record when the servants were able to organise beyond spontaneous riots and rebellion on isolated plantations, to plan general conspiracies with wider political objectives. In this respect, the Bacon Rebellion of 1676 in Virginia, when Nathaniel Bacon led a coalition of servants, freemen and Blacks against the plantocracy, was merely part of the wider political response to the colonial planter-class. Father John White, who landed at Barbados on 3 January 1634, found an organised and active conspiracy of indentured servants being defeated by 800 armed men of the local militia. White noted that the servants' objectives were to kill all the planters and put to sea. One of the participants gave the plot away and the main leader was executed.(1)

The effect of this conspiracy on the planter-class was very significant. For the next decade they lived in fear of another, and took extreme measures to reduce their sense of insecurity. Ligon noted when he arrived on the Island in in 1647 that the planters built their houses'...in manner of fortification in case there should be any uproar or commotion on the island, whether by the christian servants or negroe slaves....'(2) They also organised and instituted a system of defense based on the tranference of signals. If a revolt was started on an estate, the owner was under obligation to fire a musket which alarmed the next plantation, and so on, until the constables were able to mobilise the militia to put it down.(3)

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1. Smith, J., Narrative of a Voyage to Maryland (Baltimore, 1875), p.24.

2. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.29.

3. Ibid.

In 1647, these defense mechanisms were put to the test by the discovery of an island-wide conspiracy. Ligon, who documented this conspiracy in detail, noted that the servants' '...suffering being grown to a great height, and their daily complainings to one another ( of the intolerable burdens they labour'd under) being spread throughout the island, at the last, some amongst them, whose spirits were not able to endure such slavery, resolved to break through it or dye in the act.' (1) Unlike the 1634 revolt, the objectives of this conspiracy were not to put to sea, but to kill all the planters '...and by that means, to make themselves not only freemen, but masters of the island....' (2)

A day was chosen for the execution of the plot, but like so many conspiracies in this period, it was betrayed -in this case by a servant on the plantation of Hethersall the day before its execution, '...either by the failing of his courage or some new obligation from the love of his master....' (3) This betrayal was probably an act to gain freedom from servitude, a motivation which was always strong in the politics of the oppressed. Like failed slave revolts in the New World, the captives were dealt with ruthlessly. Eighteen of the principal leaders in the plot were put to death. According to Ligon, they had achieved such a high level of political consciousness that the planters felt convinced they were certain to '...become actors in a second plot....' (4)

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1. Ibid., p.45

2. Ibid., p.46.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Col. Guy Molesworth was accused of being a central figure in the organisation of the conspiracy, which apparently accounted for its generality and its bold objectives. The Colonel was arrested and deported. He returned to the Colony in 1661 to plead his case. Many servants were tortured for confessions by having firedmatches put between their fingers, and knotted ropes about their necks, but none of them confessed to the involvement of the Colonel. Dame Mary Pearce said that two of her husband's servants were tortured and finally hung, but refused to implicate the Colonel. Four of Colonel Waldron's servants were also hung in an attempt to extract confessions. In 1662 Colonel Molesworth was declared innocent, and the Assembly passed 'An Act for a annual Day of Thanksgiving our deliverance from the late Insurrection of Servants.'<sup>(1)</sup>

What the planters feared most of all was a coalition of servants and slaves, which was seen by the Assemblymen as highly feasible. In this respect, the 1686 and 1692 slave plots were of special interest. In 1686, several Irish servants were arrested and imprisoned for '...being concerned, or privy to the rising of negroes to destroy all masters and mistresses....'<sup>(2)</sup> The Governor, however, after making the best possible enquiry into/<sup>the</sup>alleged '...combination of servants and negroes...'<sup>(3)</sup> found that it was merely a rumour. Oldmixon noted that the Black's principal objective in this plot was to kill the masters and keep their wives as concubines and their children as slaves.<sup>(4)</sup> The arrested servants were freed and twenty slaves were executed.

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1. Mss. Laws of Barbados, Davis Mss. box 7, no. 22.

2. Minutes of Council, 18 Dec. 1683, Lucas Mss. reel 2, f.160.

3. Ibid.

4. Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America, vol.2, p.42.



The existence of this fear of a slave-servant coalition can be seen in Gov. Stede's orders in Council in 1686. He instructed the Constables of the Colony to '...search the negroes' houses within their parishes for arms and ammunition, and to secure the arms and such negroes as shall be suspected of an intention to rebel, there being signs of an insurrection of negroes and white servants.' (1) Six years later, Governor Kendal was more inclined to dismiss the servants as docile and passive. He stated, in 1692, that the '...dangerous enemies are the black slaves, and the frequent alarms to prevent their devilish designs have caused such consternation and so much revealed our weaknesses.' (2)

In 1692, a conspiracy was discovered which was organised by the slaves and a few Irish servants. The objectives of the plot were to kill the Governor, liberate certain imprisoned slaves, take control of the forts and seize the planters. The slaves were to use the servants in the critical stage of the plan, which was to take control of Needham Fort. (3) The servants were to be sent into the fort with money for the purchase of drink, and there to take the guards by force. The ammunition taken was to be used to sink all the ships in the harbour to prevent the communication of the Revolution. Bridgetown was to be burnt to the ground and the harbour destroyed. (4) The plot was betrayed, and, during the interrogations, the planters were alarmed at the slaves' confidence that they could have established a viable government.

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1. Minutes of Council, 16 Feb. 1686, C.S.P.C., 1685-88, p.155.

2. Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the Negro Conspiracy, 1692, C.S.P.C., 1689-92, pp.733-4.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

The Irish freemen posed a considerable problem for the planters, especially under the administration of Governor Searle between 1652 and 1660. They were disarmed in 1656 and were not allowed to purchase arms in the colony. In 1657, Searle noted that he was informed that '...several of the Irish Nation, freemen and women, who have no certain place of residence ...do wander up and down from plantation to plantation as vagabonds, refusing to labour and...put themselves on evil practices, as pilfering and theft... for their living... much to the damage of the planters' property.' (1) Furthermore, according to Searle, they

...have of late uttered threatening words and menacing language to several ye inhabitants...and demeaned themselves in a very peremptory and insolent way of carriage and behaviour, and that some of them have endeavoured to secure themselves with arms, and others are now forth in rebellion.... (2)

At this juncture, Searle mobilised the English planters for a firm application of law and force against these freemen. Freemen were prevented by law from moving out of their parish of residence without a ticket signed by the magistrate of that parish. Those freemen without residence were settled by the constables in any convenient parish. Within two weeks of this planter-class offensive, Governor Searle was informed that the rebels were mobilising '...from plantation to plantation with counterfeit and forged testimonials....' (3) But the planters were firm in their desire to break the Irish rebels, and, by the 1690s the various gaols on the island were filled with the Irish rebels, many of them for giving the French intelligence on the colony's fortification.

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1. Minutes of Council, 2 Sept. 1657, Lucas Mss. reel 1, f. 372.

2. Ibid.

3. Minutes of Council, 22 Sept. 1657, Lucas Mss. reel 1, ff. 374-5.



Between 1696 and 1700, the planters obtained over 2,000 military tenants, mainly disbanded English soldiers, at a cost of £36,000 for the suppression of rebellious servants and slaves.(1) These tenants became the mainstay of the pro-planter cause. In the face of such organised power, the servants and freemen, now reduced to about 4,000 in number, were powerless. They were unable after seventy five years of struggle to attain any reforms and amelioration whatsoever to the institution of servitude. If they threw up one radical hero it was Cornelius Bryan, an Irish piper, who was imprisoned on numerous occasions and regularly whipped by the common hangman for his anti-planter speeches to assembled servants and freemen. He was finally deported from the island, which was a great loss to the workers' struggle. During the eighteenth century, the planters had only the slaves to contend with; they had completely squashed the struggle of the white workers.

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1. William Bridges to William Popple, 13 Nov. 1699, C.S.P.C., 1699, no.954. Also Minutes of Council, 15 Feb. 1700, C.S.P.C., 1700, p.68.



Part AFrom Servant to Freeman: The Formation of a Proletariat

People emigrated to the West Indies under indenture for multifarious reasons, but the dominant aspiration was for land ownership. To the seventeenth century European, this was the real and functional basis of social and economic status. Land ownership was, therefore, the ideal used by colonising agents and emigration agencies to lure thousands of Europeans to the Barbadian plantations. From the early days of settlement it was popularly believed that the Earl of Carlisle (Lord Proprietor of the Island) had stipulated that indentured servants, on the expiration of their servitudes, were to be granted ten acres of land. This was propagated around Europe, and made a significant contribution to the increase in the population of the island after 1628. But the Barbadian ex-servants did not become peasants in the seventeenth century. They became a proletariat, the nature of which was determined by the forces of commodity production.

Merivale argued that the extraordinary popul<sup>o</sup>usness of the island

... was affected chiefly by granting out lots of ten acres each to poor settlers and white servnats who had fulfilled the term of their indentures. The persons found ten acres sufficient to provide them with the necessaries of life....(1)

Built upon the idea that this policy was implemented throughout

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1. Merivale, H., Lectures on Colonisation, p.79.

the century, there developed the myth of the ' ten acre men'; those thousands of ex-servants who were said to have possessed ten acres of land granted under this policy.(1)

There was a clear contradiction between the settlement policy and the land distribution practices of Carlisle's representative Governors. The idea of granting land to the ex-servants was largely settlement propaganda which was designed to attract large numbers of servants to the colony, and was inconsistent with the socio-economic order that was envisaged by the mercantile interests. The implementation of the policy would have led to a proliferation of peasant communities. This contradicted the merchants' interest and their vision of the articulation of the colony into the world trade system, and the monopolisation of land and other productive facilities into the hands of an elite, competent enough to produce a surplus for world trade. This clearly meant the alienation of the ex-servants from the land, and the transformation of the servant class into a pool of landless wage labourers to be exploited in the accumulation process.

The mercantile vision of the colony was rigorously pursued by the Governors and the planter elite. The empirical evidence of land tenure and social stratification shows that the mercantile theory of colonisation found fertile soil in Barbados, if not in the mainland colonies. In late 1630, Gov. Tufton was replaced by Henry Hawley,(2) a change of leadership which was a significant watershed not only in the economic history of the colony, but also in the history of indentured servitude. Governor Hawley's

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1. Beckles, H. McD., ' Land distribution and Class Formation in Barbados', p. 137.

2. See appendix 1.



administration was characterised by a land policy which was designed to monopolise the good arable land into the hands of a small elite, and to ruthlessly block all the avenues of the servants' social mobility and their possible acquisition of land.

In 1639, the Lord Proprietor instructed Governor Hunck to investigate the complaints that servants were denied all access to land as 'freedom dues'.(1) A committee was set up and reported the findings of their investigation in 1640.(2) They found that Governor Henry Hawley had created a racket in land sales, which functioned for his own financial gain and purposefully defrauded the Lord Proprietor. Hawley obtained the land from the Proprietor by overstating the number of servants on his, or any other plantation, who were about to complete their indenture and become eligible for ten acres. The committee found, also, that William Hawley, the Governor's brother, had obtained forty acres of land when he stated that it was the freedom dues of his four men servants who were about to be freed. This forty acres of land which lay near the plantation of Captain James Drax (3) in the fertile St. George valley, was not given to the ex-servants, but was sold illegally to William Smart for a nominal fee of '... a pocket watch at twelve pounds sterling...' (4) Land so engrossed by the Governors under the settlement policy was distributed amongst the planter class to consolidate and enlarge their estates.

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1. see Appendix 3.

2. Report of the Committee Investigating the Disposal of Land in Barbados, 1639/40 R B. 3/1, ff.9-12. Bar.Arc.

3. Ibid., ff.9-10.

4. Ibid., f.9.



The Hawley brothers obtained 2,000 acres of land from the Proprietor in this way when they stated that they were in possession of 200 servants about to finish their servitudes. The committee revealed, however, that

... the sayd Capt. Henry Hawley hath at noe one time for the space of one whole year together for himself and Capt. William Hawley his brother ever employed upon theire severall plantations within this Iland above the number of nynety servants... (1)

The maximum claim which the brothers could have legitimately made was for 900 acres. The land was not distributed to ex-servants, but sold privately on the land market. Four hundred and thirty acres of this illegal appropriated land was sold to William Hilliard, a well established planter. The administrations of the Hawley brothers, between 1630 and 1639, (2) were involved in the disposal of land, not only '... with fraudulent intent to defeat his Majesty the Earl of Carlisle...' (3) but also to defraud the servant inhabitants of the colony. For the entire decade, servants were denied land as their 'freedom dues', and were kept on the labour market. The committee concluded that

... the servants tymes ... should be presently reviewed and appraised... (so that these)... poore men who have spent their meanes and tyme upon the said land that if they may not enjoy it especiall orders may be sent over to restore such of their specialityes... (4)

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1. Ibid.
  2. see Appendix 1.
  3. Report of the Committee Investigating the Disposal of Land in Barbados, 1639/40. R B. 3/1, f.9. Bar.Arc.
  4. Ibid., f.11.

Throughout the 1640s, the servants were granted ten pounds sterling as the customary freedom due, or its commodity equivalent, rather than land. In 1647, Lord Carlisle proclaimed that there was no possibility of land in Barbados for ex-servants, and that they could obtain ten acres as their freedom due only if they were prepared to emigrate from Barbados to his other colonies in the Leeward Islands, which were severely underpopulated.(1) Again, it was the use of ten acres of land as the incentive to encourage servant emigration, rather than as a model for the socio-economic structure of a colony. Throughout the remainder of Barbadian history, indentured servants, as a policy, received a monetary levy on the expiration of servitude, rather than land as was customary in Virginia, Maryland and Carolina.(2)

On emancipation from servitude, the servants made a definite transition into a higher social category; they were now called 'freemen' and 'freewomen'. One observer of the social structure in Barbados, during the second half of the century, noted that

The inhabitants of this island are of four sorts. First the freeholders who formerly held land from the Earl of Carlisle... the next sort are those they call freemen who are such as having served out their time they contracted for are freed from their masters and now serve in the country for wages. The third sort are those they call Christian Servants for distinction whose time of service is not yet expired.

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1. see Appendix 4

2. see Appendix 3.



The last sort are the negroes... who live as absolute slaves to their masters.(1)

The freemen were launched onto the open labour market with a capital stock of £10, or its commodity equivalent as defined by custom. Henry Winthrop, in the early 1630s, informed his father that ten pounds sterling was the highest capital stock which was paid to ex-servants.(2) In the early 1650s, one observer noted that 'It's the custome for a christian servant to serve... and then enjoy his freedome; (and which he hath dearly earn) which is 10 pounds sterling or the value of it in goods.'(3)

The planters conceived of the freedom due not as a paternalistic bonus which was paid to assist the servants in their social mobility and property accumulation, but as a deferred cost of production. They were, therefore, keen to keep it to a minimum and, where possible, to avoid its payment. Every conceivable method was used to reduce the value of the freedom due in order to keep the servant on the labour market. There was no legislation which specified exactly when the freedom due was to be paid. It could be paid weeks, months or even longer, after the expiration of the servant's contract. In the interim period, the ex-servants were forced to labour for wages, frequently on the same plantation. A few masters were generous and sensitive to the aspirations of their servants. For example, John Barwicke specified in his will of 1677 that the 'freedome due' of his servant William Cooke, was

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1. An Account of His Majesty's Island of Barbados and the Government thereof, 1675, C O. 29/2. Also, Sloane Mss. 2441, f.12.

2. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.50.

3. A Briefe Description of the Island of Barbados, 1650/1 in Harlow, V.T., Colonising Expeditions, p.44.



to be doubled after his servitude.(1) The author of a 1650s 'Description of Barbados', after stating the level of freedom dues paid to male servants in the colony, noted that the critical factor was if the masters '... bee honest as to pay it.'(2)

The onus was on the servant to claim at law, but the magistrates were not too sympathetic to the pleas of non-property owners. Cases of non-payment, after they found no remedy in the Courts of Common Pleas, went before the Governor in Council. For example, in 1655, one Captain John Symond, planter, refused to pay the freedom dues of his Irish servant, Daniel Duncumbe. The local magistrates were unable to enforce the payment, and the property owners could not be arrested without the Governor's permission. The Governor, after hearing the petition, ordered Symond to pay the amount or to come before the Council and explain his refusal. Symond refused to pay or attend the hearing in Council, and Duncumbe started his petition for the second time, but to no avail.(3)

More subtle means were used to undermine the financial strength of the freemen. The planters, aware of the fluctuations in the value of sugar, made their payment in sugar when market values were low, and thus significantly reduced the effectiveness of the freeman's capital. Such attempts to juggle the value of the freeman's capital were common tricks of the West Indian planters.(4) The freedom due was not upgraded during the second half of the century, and was further eroded in its real value by the high rate of inflation.(5)

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1. Will of John Barwicke, 28 April 1677, RB.6/13, f. 390.
  2. Harlow, V.T., ed., Colonising Expeditions, p.44.
  3. Minutes of Council, June 1655, Lucas Mss. reel 1, f. 332.
  4. Higham, C.S., The Development of the Leeward Islands, p.167.
  5. Minutes of Council, ? June 1682, Lucas Mss. reel 2, ff. 461-2.

Many freemen became prime overseers and represented, numerically, a significant section of the white proletariat. According to Ligon, the prime overseers were paid about £50 annually during the late 1640s.(1) In the mid-1650s, overseers were paid £60 annually, and in the 1690s as much as £100 annually.(2) Occupational continuity from servant to wage worker on the same plantation was a common feature of the plantation economy in the second half of the century. This inertia was predominately a response to the increased difficulty of white unskilled workers in securing work. Many planters also provided for the permanent employment of some of their servants. The wills of the planters contain much information on this subject. For example, Thomas Boystone specified that his servant, Thomas Lillington, was to be employed as a debt-collector for his estate at the termination of his indenture. Similarly, Joan Sparewick provided that her servant, William Butler, was to be employed as a cattleman on the estate for the rest of his life.(3)

Like the slaves after emancipation, many servants made an exodus from the plantations at the termination of their servitude. There was significant migration into the urban areas of Bridgetown, Speightown and Oistins, where many of them were employed in the shipping and warehousing industries. For example, William Coppe on the termination of his indenture on Bawdon's plantation in 1664, migrated into Bridgetown and found work as a porter and boatman.(4) But the urban proletariat, in spite of

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, pp. 114-5.

2. Representation of the Council and Assembly, July 1696, C.S.P.C., 1696-7, p. 62.

3. Will of Thomas Boystone, 10 Dec. 1653, RB. 6/13, ff. 44-5. Will of Joan Sparewick, 9 Feb. 1679, RB. 6/14, f. 16.

4. Deeds of Barbados, RB. 3/9, f. 66.



its geographical alienation from the plantations, was still under the direct influence of the sugar industry, as seasonal and other fluctuations in this industry were clearly reflected on the urban labour market.

Life for the unskilled servant who was unable to/a prime <sup>obtain</sup> overseer post was very difficult. With no skills to bargain with on the labour market, he frequently had to stay on the plantation of his servitude and work as a waged labourer. For example, Robert Frument was a 'common servant' on the plantation of Othoniell/<sup>Higges</sup>during the 1670s. On the expiration of his indenture he was unable to find work, and continued as a waged labourer for Higges. His occupation involved field work, manual and domestic work, and the retrieval of runaway servants and slaves. (1)

The labour market for freewomen was more attractive than for unskilled freemen. Unlike their counterparts on the mainland colonies, white women were not allowed to perform field work in the second half of the century. For those who were attractive, opportunities existed for their betterment. They became the wives of the planters, especially in the early decades of settlement. (2) The less fortunate freewomen became wage workers in a wide spectrum of occupations from whoring to nursing. The many taverns of Bridgetown were staffed with freewomen who catered for the transient shipping crew.

Many planters hired freewomen as seamstresses who turned out the crude garments for the servants and slaves. On the Codrington plantation, for example, freewomen were employed in the seventeenth century and turned out '... negro garments by the hundreds at a charge of 3s. 1d. to 3s. 9d. per dozen.' (3) They were also employed

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1. Minutes of Council, Sept. 1686, Lucas Mss. reel 2, ff. 31, 77.

2. Journal of Henry Whistler, 1654/5, in Firth, C., ed., Narrative of General Venables Expedition to the West Indies.

3. Bennett, J., Bondsmen and Bishops, p. 36.



as nurses in the sickhouses of the plantations, and by the local vestries to look after the infants, orphans and other individuals kept in poor law institutions. For example, the St. Michael Vestry, in 1661, hired Katherine Williams, who had served for five years as an indentured servant, to look after the poor law children at a monthly wage of 150 lbs. of sugar. (1) After the 1660s, the Vestries expanded their social programmes which demanded a larger number of freewomen. In 1677, the St. Michael Vestry, in order to cope with their increasing number of poor law inmates, employed Ann Coleman and Tomasine Rayden, after their indentures had expired, as nurses and social workers at a monthly wage of 120 lbs. of sugar. (2) Such wage levels compar<sup>ed</sup>-favourably with those of the unskilled male labourers.

The local fishing industry provided employment for both the freemen and freewomen. The St. John Vestry reported that many of the freemen and other 'poor whites' in the parish drew '...their principle livelihood and subsistence by these trades and occupation of fishing.' (3) In the parishes of St. Michael and St. James, freemen monopolised the manual work of the passenger and goods freight industry. As late as the mid-eighteenth century, freemen were still found in this occupation. (4) But during the seventeenth century, these occupations were insufficiently expansive to accommodate the annual increase in the number of freemen, and unemployment was the most visible characteristic of the unskilled freeman's social existence.

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1. Minutes of the St. Michael Vestry, 1677, in J.B.M.H.S., vol.14, no.4 (Aug., 1947), p.180.

2. Ibid., vol.16, nos.1-2 (Nov., 1948-Feb., 1949), p.63.

3. Minutes of the St. John Vestry, 1649-82, f.35. Bar.Arc.

4, Edwards, P., ed., Equiano's Travels, chap.8.

To remedy unemployment among the freemen and to exploit their cheap labour, successive Governors implemented policies to provide work in the building of roads, bridges and forts. Under the administration of Gov. Searle (1652-1660), the Treasurer was ordered to fix the wages of all freemen employed by the Government in construction at '...two hundred and fifty pounds of sugar a month at every month end.' (1) Hundreds of unskilled freemen, such as William Ringham and Thomas Kidd, worked for this wage on the construction of the St. Michael fort between 1685 and 1688. (2) In 1661, in order to impose a tighter control system on freeman labour, the Assembly passed a law that all waged workers on government contracts were not to leave their service without giving two weeks notice. This law was considered by the freemen as an attack upon their freedom, a commodity so highly prized in slave societies.

During the 1650s, the unskilled labourers expected a daily wage of around fifteen to seventeen pence, paid on a monthly basis. (3) But as a result of rising slave competition, this wage level fell in the 1670s to around four to five pence per day. (4) The 1680s, especially under the administration of Gov. Dutton, saw a series of attempts to improve the wage levels of these freemen which met with some success. By the early 1690s,

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1. Minutes of Council, Sept. 1655, Lucas Mss., reel 1, f. 254.
  2. Minutes of Council, Jan., 1685-Sept. 1687, Lucas Mss. reel 2, ff. 536, 576.
  3. Minutes of Council, 1655-56, Lucas Mss. reel 1, f. 254.
  4. Minutes of Council, ? 1675, C.S.P.C., 1675-76, p. 154.



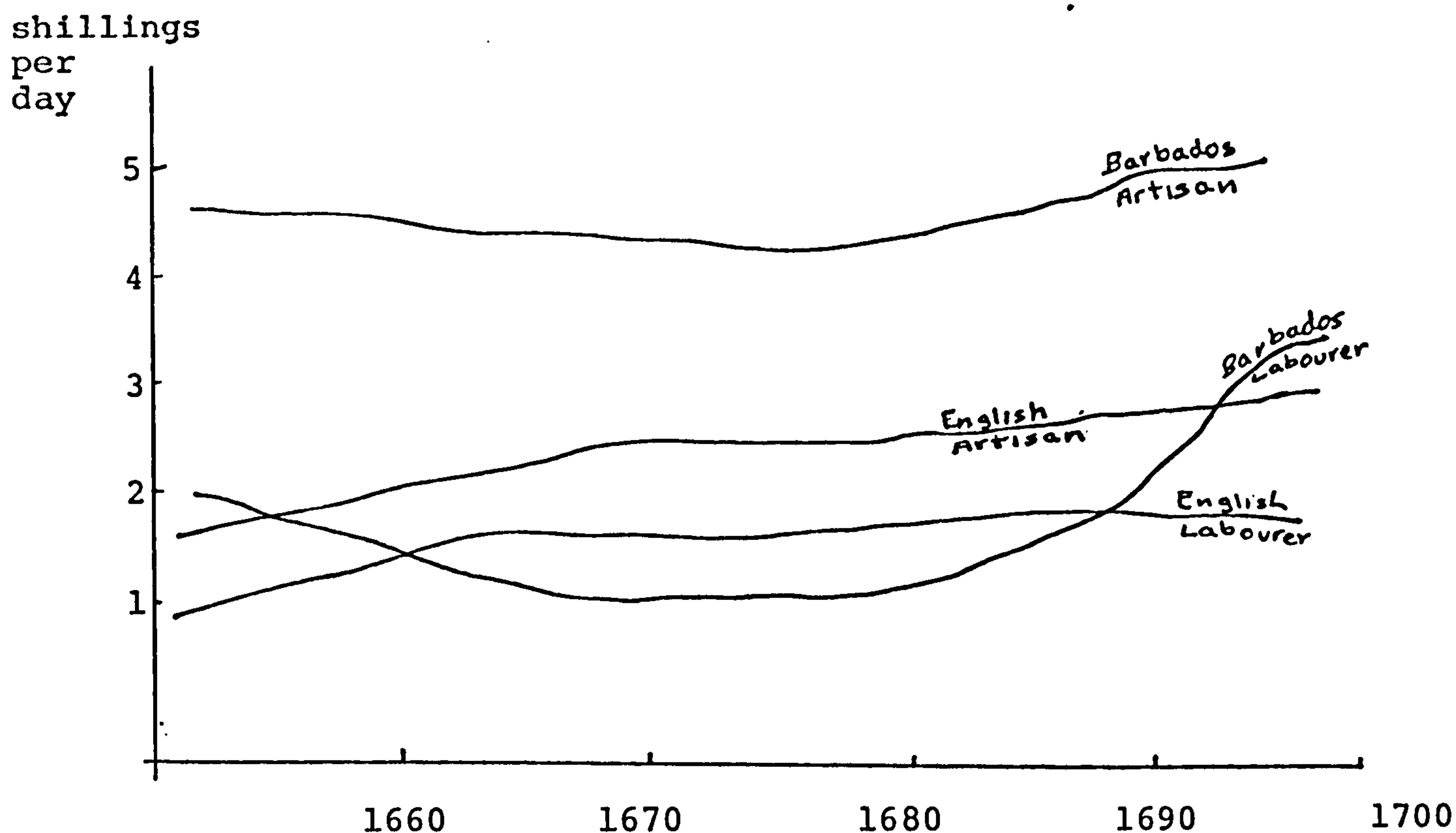
wages were forced up to a level of 22½ pence per day for common labourers.(1) For the next two decades, government action succeeded in maintaining this wage level in the colony for unskilled freemen.(2)

The wages of skilled freemen were considerably higher, and employment steadier and more secure. In the mid century, carpenters and masons were paid a wage of six to eight shillings per day. In the 1680s, most mechanics earned at least five to six shillings per day.(3) These wage levels remained steady throughout the century, and in the 1690s, most artisans were employed at a daily rate of five shillings.(4) A comparison of money wages between the Barbadian and English proletariats, in the second half of the century, reveals some interesting features about the Barbadian labour market. The majority of the Barbadian artisans and common labourers were engaged in the construction industries, from the building of churches to massive fortification programmes. A crude tabulation of wages in the building and construction industries of the two economies can be shown as follows:

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1. Gov. Russell to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 24 October 1694, C.S.P.C., 1693-4, p.386.
  2. Agent for Barbados to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 25 October 1697, C.S.P.C., 1696-7, p.672.
  3. Petition of Thomas Bringhurst to Council, 18 January 1684, Lucas Mss. Reel 2, f.223.
  4. Representation of Council and Assembly, July 1696, C.S.P.C., 1696-7, f.62.



Fig.13- Comparison of Daily Wages of Barbadian Wage Workers with Craftsmen and Labourers in the Building Industry of Southern England, 1650-1700. (1)



1. Phelps-Brown, E.H., and S.V. Hopkin, 'Seven Centuries of Building Wages', Economica (1955), pp. 198-99.

Minutes of Council, 1655 Lucas Mss. reel 1, f. 254.

Petition of Thomas Bringhurst to Council, 1684, Lucas Mss. reel 2, f. 396.

Gov. Russell to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 24 Oct. 1694, C.S.P.C., 1693-6, p. 386.

Agent for Barbados to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 25 Oct. 1697, C.S.P.C., 1696-7, f. 672.

Mss. of Sec. Williamson on Sugar manufacture in Barbados, 1674-5, C.S.P.C., 1675-6, p. 154.

Representation of Council and Assembly, July 1696, C.S.P.C., 1696-7, p. 62.

By 1660, only the skilled workers were able to include fresh meat in their diets. Between 1662 and 1678, the price of pork, beef and mutton fluctuated around five to eight pence per pound, while the wages of the common labourers never reached seven pence per day. In the 1680s, it was noted that most provisions were very dear and scarce, which placed an intolerable burden upon the unskilled freemen. (1) Governor Russell noted that under his administration (1694-96) a common man could not live on less than fifteen pence per day, and that many freemen were driven to rely upon the poor law and on public begging in order to subsist. (2)

By 1699, the price of beef had risen to an alarming twelve pence per pound, veal to fifteen pence per pound and turkey to twenty one pence per pound. (3) The skilled freemen were generally able to subsist more comfortably on their wages. They were the beneficiaries of international conflict in the West Indies. After the failure of Cromwell's 'Grand Design' and the Anglo-Dutch wars of the 1660s, the skilled freemen found steady employment in a massive fortification programme which the Assembly carried out until the 1690s.

The construction of the New Magazine in St. Michael, the Hole Fort at St. James and the Fort at Needham created work for hundreds of <sup>skilled</sup> freemen. The orders of Council to the Treasurer for the payment of these workers illustrate the wide range of skills that were mobilised, and the level of wages that were paid.

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1 .Lt.Gov. Stede to the Lords of Trade, 19 Sept. 1687, C.S.P.C., 1685-88, p.444.

2. Gov.Russell to the Lords of Trade, 24 Oct.1694, C.S.P.C., 1693-6, p. 386.

3. Gov.Grey to the Council of Trade and Foreign Plantations, 13 Sept. 1701, C.S.P.C., 1701, p.517.

T. 49- Freeman Labour and the Building of the New Magazine  
1682-85 (1)

| <u>Worker</u>     | <u>Skills/work</u> | <u>Wage to be paid</u>        |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Thomas Holland    | Carpentry          | £45. 5s. 9d.<br>£68. 18s. 5d. |
| Thomas Bringhurst | Cooper             | £99. 4s. 9d.                  |
| Symon Cooper      | Mason              | £400                          |
| John Saunders     | Sawyerwork         | £22. 18s. 0d.                 |

T. 50- Freeman Labour and the Building of the Hole Fort, 1682-91 (2)

|               |            |                             |
|---------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| Robert Haynes | Carpentry  | £62. 11s. 0d<br>£54. 3s. 3d |
| Henry Gamble  | Blacksmith | £32. 9s. 6d                 |
| Abel Alleyne  | Mason      | £79. 12s. 6d                |
| John Merrick  | Carpentry  | £54. 9s. 6d                 |
| Sarah         | Hardwork   | £16. 2s. 0d.                |

T. 51- Freeman Labour and the Building of the St. Michael  
Fort, 1682-90 (3)

|                |            |               |
|----------------|------------|---------------|
| John Stubbs    | Gunsmith   | £68. 10s. 4d  |
| John Atkins    | Glazier    | - - -         |
| Thomas Holland | Blacksmith | £108. 10s. 7d |

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1. Minutes of Council, 1682-86, Lucas Mss, reel 2, ff. 115, 130, 223, 486, 489, 492.
  2. Ibid., ff. 116, 244, 334, 339, 395, 335, 512.
  3. Ibid., ff. 14, 396, 432, 455, 575, 576.



Not all of these payments were money wages, some were advances to the craftsman in order to purchase the necessary building materials wholesale for particular tasks. For example, when William Withington, carpenter, was contracted by the Government in 1655 to build thirty carriages, he was given an advance of 1,000 pounds of sugar to purchase the necessary timber and iron work. (1)

During long term government contracts, the freemen were paid very irregularly by the Treasurer. They were frequently in debt to merchants and shopkeepers between the various payments. For example, John Saunders, carpenter, petitioned the Council for frequent payment of his wages, '...he being a poor man and not well able to be out of his money for any time....' (2) Barbados, therefore, produced a proletariat which was neither homogeneous nor economically secure. Even the skilled workers were dependent on the governments for employment, for which they were irregularly paid. Indentured servitude was essentially a transitional institution for the formation of a proletariat and not a peasantry.

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1. Minutes of Council, Jan. 1655, Lucas Mss. reel 1, f. 323.

2. Minutes of Council, Sept. 1683, Lucas Mss. reel 2, f. 14.

Peter Colleton, planter and Assemblyman, noted in 1675, that although he had no direct arguments against Negro slavery in itself, moral or otherwise, he was angered by its ruinous effects upon the free artisans and craftsmen. Slavery, he noted, made the honourable occupations of the white proletariat disreputable and created a sense of despair amongst them. By 1700, the triumph of the slave artisans and domestics over the freeman proletariat was undisputed.(1) One historian stated that in some slave societies of the New World, the slave owners encouraged Black slavery in order to exploit the white non-property holders. This was made possible by the subordination of the latter to capital, the monopoly of which was the basis of the slave owners socio-economic and political position in those societies.(2)

The competition between contracted slaves and the white proletariat was a common feature of the 1680s. The governments, which exercised a certain commitment to the unemployed workers throughout the fortification and construction programme, began to accept tenders from large slave contractors. The slaves performed the same work for lower wages than the freemen. For example, in 1685, the Council ordered the Treasurer to pay the following wages for construction work done by slaves.

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1. Molen, P., 'Population and Social Patterns in Barbados in the Early Eighteenth Century' W.M.Q. Vol.28(1971) p.288.
  2. Nye, R.B., Fettered Freedom (East Lansing, 1949), p.30.



T.52 - Order of Council for the Payment of Slave Contractors,  
1685. (1)

|                           |     |     |    |                  |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|----|------------------|
| Ann Wade                  | £57 | 1s  | 0d | for 'negro work' |
| John Stout                | £80 | 2s  | 3d | "                |
| George Farmer             | £3  | 16s | 0d | "                |
| Lt. Col. Thomas<br>Holmes | £69 | 10s | 9d | "                |

The labour force which built the fort at Codrington in 1688-9, included seventy five hired slaves, who were paid at the very low rate of one shilling per day.(2) By 1690, contracted slave labour was found on most plantations, and white wage workers were largely replaced in this important sector of the labour market.

Slave labour also effectively undermined the proletariat in the clothing industry. The rise of the Black tailors and seamstresses was sudden, and by 1700 they had replaced most of their urban and rural ex-servant counterparts in the production of low quality slave and 'poor white' garments. The data on the Codrington estate show that, whereas, in the late seventeenth century the wage payments of freewomen seamstresses were a large annual expenditure, by the early eighteenth century the costs had disappeared from the accounts. The slave apprentices had taken over these occupations.(3)

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1. Minutes of Council, 1685, Lucas Mss. Reel 2, ff.244-6, 334.
  2. Bennett, J.H., Bondsmen and Bishops, p.63.
  3. Ibid. p.36.



Freemen in the northern parish of St. Lucy and on the southern coastline of St. Philip, who had acquired small tracts of infertile or poorly drained soil, had developed by the mid-century a market garden industry to supply the local markets with foodstuffs, which supplemented their wage incomes. Many freemen and freewomen became part-time 'hawkers', who sold milk, poultry, vegetables and eggs, and played an important role in the internal marketing system. This role became more important as the sugar planters monopolised all the good arable land and increased the dependence of the colony upon imported foodstuffs.

By the 1680s, this branch of the internal market system was infiltrated by Black and mulatto freedmen.<sup>(1)</sup> The Blacks had brought highly developed market skills, deeply entrenched in West African culture, to compete with the freemen and other petty merchants on the street corners and at the week-end markets. Frequent accusations were made to the Council that the commodities sold by the Blacks were stolen from the plantations. But the planters saw the Black hawkers as the providers of foodstuffs so badly needed, and at very reasonable prices. Some slaves raised commodities on their patches of land (which was allocated by the planters to reduce their food import bill) and sold the small surplus to the free Blacks. The integration of the free Blacks into the economy at the commercial level, partially undermined the viability of the proletariat, which was semi-dependent upon petty trade.

The slaves even competed with the female proletarian nurses who worked in the sickhouses of the plantations. Most seventeenth century planters hired a physician and a nurse at a rate of £40 to £50 per year, to make occasional visits to their plantations.

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1. Manumitted or freed Blacks or mulatto's were called 'freedmen' to differentiate them from freemen. They were usually given a few acres by their former masters on which to survive, and market gardening became one of their main industries.

Ligon, from his own experience, believed that the majority of Barbadian doctors were quacks. Most of them held fantastic notions of Africans, such as their alleged possession of black blood. The maturity of slave society in the last quarter of the century, contributed to the importance of the 'Negro doctor' as an important component of plantation personnel. The quacks could not diagnose the psychological problems of the slaves, nor <sup>penetrate</sup> their self-induced illnesses. In order to reduce the slaves' mortality, the planters were forced to accept and legitimise the role of African medicine on the plantation, at the expense of paid European doctors and nurses. For example, the data for Codrington plantation in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, contain many payments to 'Negro Doctors' for curing sick slaves.(1) These 'Negro Doctors' spread rapidly throughout the colony after the 1690s, and largely replaced European medicine with African amongst the slave classes.(2)

The rise of the slave artisan and the general infiltration of most waged occupational roles in the economy by these slaves, led to an unemployment crisis within the freeman class. Equiano, the ex-slave, noted, '... I suppose nine tenth of the mechanics throughout the West Indies are Negro Slaves.'(3) By mechanics he meant all skilled manual craftsmen such as coopers, blacksmiths, bricklayers, boilers, and masons. The planters were worried about the increased proletarian unemployment, but they did not consider it to be the product of their own more rational, post-Restoration labour management. In 1695, Governor Russell wrote

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1. Bennett, J.H., Bondsmen and Bishops, p.40.

2. Ibid.

3. Edwards, P., ed., Equiano's Travels, p.68.



to the Lords of Trade,

I dare say that there are hundreds of white servants in the island who have been out of their time for many years, and who have never a bit of fresh meat bestowed on them nor a dram of rum... and this in time will undoubtedly drive away all the commonalty of the white people. (1)

The planters conceived of the unemployed as lazy, thriftless, and victims of their own vices. This conception affected the social responses of planters to the proletariat. According to Governor Russell '... they cannot be more miserable than their countrymen and fellow subjects make them here.' (2) Many sold rum to the Blacks on the plantations (generally that which was poorly distilled from the worst stills) in order to make a living. This was soon seen by the planters as a main cause of the frequent deaths amongst the slaves. In 1692, the Assembly made this traffic illegal and imposed heavy penalties upon offenders. (3)

It was Sir Peter Colleton and a few other prominent planters who, during the last quarter of the century, launched a campaign against the advancement of the Black artisans, in an effort to secure employment for the white proletariat. Colleton was a shrewd politician, and was aware that the rise of the slave artisan was a response to the economic crises in the sugar economy, and an irreversible socio-economic change. He had heard many arguments about the cheapness and reliability of slave labour compared with wage labour. He, therefore, developed a policy which was designed to confine the Black artisans and the contracted slaves to the

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1. Gov. Russell to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 23 March 1695, C.S.P.C., 1693-6, p.446.

2. Ibid.

3. Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America, Vol.2, p.52.



plantations, thus giving all non-plantation work to the freemen. In a letter read before the Assembly on 7 March 1670, he argued that in order to create employment for white wage workers, there should be legislation which provided that Blacks should be employed only as artificers to the masters of sugar works on their own plantations. (1)

The Assembly refused to legislate; a policy was preferred which relied upon the planter's individual discretion and reason in labour organisation. Many Assemblymen, themselves large sugar planters, were dependent on hired slaves. After much debate, in 1696, the Assembly passed an Act to encourage the planters, by non-financial means, to employ white wage workers as assistants and apprentices.(2) But the only area in which the Assembly succeeded in ousting the Blacks was in the boating business. An Act was passed which banned all Blacks from ship and dock work.(3) Here, the argument used to pass the law was not the provision of employment for the white workers, but the need to improve the security of the island and to prevent the slaves from escaping.

The structure of the internal market system also came under discussion. In October 1694, two bills were discussed in the Assembly; the first was to prohibit '... the sale of goods to Negroes...' (4), and the second to prohibit '... the employment of Negroes in selling.' (5) Few areas were left unturned in the effort

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1. The Assembly was not particularly impressed by this viewpoint. They saw it as resulting in Government intervention in their economic business.
  2. Oldmixon, J., The British Empire in America, Vol.2, p.45.
  3. Minutes of Council, 15 Jan. 1695, C.S.P.C. 1693-6, p.426.
  4. Journal of Assembly of Barbados, 17 Oct. 1694, C.S.P.C. 1693-6, p.381.
  5. Ibid.

to create employment for an impoverished proletariat, but little success was achieved. This discussion involved most men who were concerned with socio-political planning based upon the idea of white supremacy. The plight of the white worker was publicised in England by mercantilist theorists. In November 1697, an anonymous letter from England arrived in Barbados addressed to the Agents of the colony. It contained two proposals on the subject of white proletarian unemployment. Firstly, the author wrote, 'I would suggest that, after a reasonable time prefixed, all persons there should be obliged to have their attendance of whitemen and boys as in England. This would force the Negroes from the house to the field...' (1). Secondly, '... by enforcing the Act to prohibit Negroes from engaging in trades, employment would be thrown open to the poor white servant...' (2)

These ideas were under discussion from the 1670s, and, therefore, provided no new insight into the problem. One of the most constructive and progressive solutions, though equally idealistic, was proposed by the absentee planters in London in 1670. On 7 March, they wrote to the Assembly and offered proposals to create industrial employment for white wage workers. They pointed out that their proposals would not contradict the socio-economic forces which led to the freemen's displacement. The letter stated,

We are of the opinion that... the manufactures of France and Germany (used) in Barbados for the cloathing of Negroes and Christian Servants, that if a law were past that for the future these shall be... the manufactures of Barbados it will finde employment for many of your poor who continue now to goe off rather, because they know not how to subsist in Barbados. (3)

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1. Anonymous letter, 19 Nov. 1697 to Agents for Barbados, C.S.P.C. 1697-8, p.29.

2. Ibid.

3. Gentlemen Planters of London to Assembly, 7 Mar. 1670, C O.31/2, f.15.



In light of mercantile policy, which was expressed in the popular saying that 'not even a nail was to be produced in the colonies', this proposal remained only an idea. The Assembly in the same year tentatively discussed a bill to '... encourage the making and wearing...' of Barbadian manufactures, but after a backlash from England's merchant interests... was forced to state that the bill was more of a '... triall of skill than a serious engagement'(1). This programme was quickly abandoned.

There was, therefore, a general failure of the policies and proposals which were designed to entrench the wage proletariat in the slave society and economy. By the end of the seventeenth century, indentured servitude was '... a dying institution. No attempt on the part of the Assembly could save it from annihilation by the rise of slavery.'(2) Barbados contained in the eighteenth century a large number of '... poor white artificers...', most of whom were finding '...it difficult to get bread.'(3) In the words of the Archdeacon of Barbados, the Blacks have by

... their superior industry, driven the lower orders of whites from almost every trade requiring skill and continued exertion. I believe that not one in twenty of the working shoemakers in Barbados is a white man. The working carpenters, masons, tailors, smiths, etc., are for the most part men of colour; and this at a time when a large white population are in the lowest state of poverty and wretchedness....(4)

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1. Minutes of the Assembly, Nov. 1670, C O. 31/2, ff.19, 22.
  2. Molen, P., 'Population and Social Patterns in Barbados', p.288.
  3. Dickson, W., Letters on Slavery, p.26. (see Appendix 10 )
  4. Eliot, E., Christianity and Slavery in a Course of Lectures Preached at the Cathedral and Parish Church of St. Michael, Barbados (London, 1833), pp.225-6.



The subject of social mobility and property accumulation is central to a wider and more theoretical discussion ; that which concerns the myth or reality of early Anglo-American democracy and the development of the Americas as essentially a good ' poor man territory'. This polemic, therefore, must influence any discussion on early West Indian economic and social history. The point of departure here is, however, more specifically and empirically rooted. What were the life chances, in terms of social mobility and material accumulation, of the freemen in Barbadian economy and society during the seventeenth century? Interesting work has been produced on this topic for the English mainland colonies, but little on the early West Indies.(1)

Ideally, social mobility and property accumulation could be achieved through two related, though distinct avenues. They could be achieved by the purchase of land or other property which was the foundation of political and social status. Status mobility was also achieved through the acquisition of legal, military and general administrative offices. These offices placed the freeman in a position to acquire property by non-market channels, such as by marriage, gift and fraud.

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1. Menard, B., ' From Servant to Freeholder: Status mobility and Property Accumulation in Seventeenth Century Maryland ', W.M.Q., vol. 30 (Jan. 1973) , pp. 37-65.

Smith, A.E., ' The Indentured Servant and Land Speculation in Seventeenth Century Maryland ', A.H.R., vol. 39 (1933-4) , pp. 232-49.

The earliest general view on this theme came from Schomburgh who stated quite explicitly in 1848, that many Barbadian freemen '... through their good conduct and industry, raised themselves to become owners of freehold property and plantations.' (1) This generalisation, when analysed against the census data, wills, deeds and inventories of the seventeenth century, shows much truth, but it clouds the specificity of those achievements and the larger number of non-achievements. The intention here is to analyse the dynamic structural processes in which the freemen operated, and to illustrate how they influenced the nature of the freemen's achievements.

The Barbadian freemen did not attain social mobility by the acquisition of offices within government administration. Offices at the local government level, which freemen were able to obtain in the mainland colonies, were closed to them in Barbados. Such offices were monopolised by the freeholders (2) and the large planters. The Barbadian planter-class, like most seventeenth century elites, was neither democratic nor egalitarian. Their theory of social order emphasized that the poor should stay in their social position and do their best. The rigid implementation of this theory in Barbados placed the freemen at a distinct disadvantage in their competition for administrative offices.

Menard, in his work on Maryland, argued that the freemen served in minor official posts of authority in the community, for which they obtained some social status and recognition. They served

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1. Schomburgh, R.H., The History of Barbados, p.84.
  2. Freeholders were defined by the Barbadians as those people who held between twenty and forty acres of land.



the community as jurors, constables, sergeants in the militia, tax collectors, court clerks, church wardens, petty clerks and poor law officers. (1) In Barbados, unlike the mainland colonies, there was no shortage of administrators and officials, who were drawn from the ranks of the lower planter class. The entire system of office holding was rigidly fixed by law, written and unwritten, to operate against the freemen. For example, a planter was not eligible to be a field officer in the militia unless he held at least 100 acres of land, while an unwritten law disqualified him from service in the lower ranks of the officer corps.

Official posts, no matter how insignificant, would have earned the freeman some recognition and an advance in his social status. Petty posts which were considered below the dignity of the planters were given to the '... more substantial freeholders...' (2), who were generally not ex-servants. The freeholders were franchised (holding more than ten acres of land) and had to be treated with some respect by the planter-political elite of their respective parishes.

The freemen were also kept from attaining posts in the legal-judicial administrative machinery. They were not allowed to sit on Grand Juries, and freeholders could sit only on juries in the Courts of Common Pleas. The plantocracy's dominance of the legal system led Governor Dutton to exclaim that he had never, until he came to Barbados, seen a jury composed of such wealthy men. (3) Even the poor law officers were wealthy men. They were referred to as the 'Gentlemen Trustees of the Parish'. The other non-

1. Menard, B., 'From Servant to Freeholder', p.43.
2. Harlow, V.T., A History of Barbados, p.334.
3. Gov. Dutton to Sir L. Jenkins, 5 Sept. 1681, C.S.P.C., 1681-85, No. 218.



propertied professionals of the vestry were referred to as 'Mister', a sign of social recognition and status that was not applied to freemen. (1)

There were <sup>a</sup> few cases where freemen were able, through the civil institutions, to elevate themselves into the top echelon of society. One of these cases was the career of John Gordon who went to Barbados in 1680 as an indentured servant to the Curtey family of the St. Philip parish. His strong religious views apparently made him a 'good' servant, though he was frequently whipped for his refusal to carry out certain orders. At the termination of his indenture, he worked as an overseer and was able to accumulate £30 with which he obtained a testimonial from the Rector of the St. Philip parish church, and went to England to study theology. He returned to Barbados in 1698, and became the Parson of the St. Lucy parish church in 1700. (2)

The career of Henry Morgan was more remarkable, and in many ways it contributed to the general conception of West Indian society held by the labouring poor of England. It was a case of the acquisition of wealth and status through the 'illegitimate' activities of the frontier environment. Equemeling, himself a buccaneer, noted in his 'inside history' of West Indian buccaneering that the young Morgan was 'sold' as an indentured servant in Barbados during the late 1640s. After the termination of his indenture he was unable to find acceptable work, and joined with the buccaneers who frequented Barbados. (3) In 1674, he became

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1. Minutes of the St. John Vestry, ff.5-6. Bar. Arc.

2. Career of Rev. Gordon, 1680-1714, Davis Mss. box 7, no. 22.

3. Equemeling, J., The Buccaneers of America, 1685 (Lon., 1925), p. 119.

Colonel Henry Morgan, Lt.Gov.of Jamaica, senior member of Council and Commander-in-Chief of the military forces.(1)Such untypical careers of Barbadian freemen were used by emigration agents in England to establish a mythology that servitude in the West Indies was the basis of most 'rags to riches' experiences.

Unfortunately, the inadequacy of seventeenth century data prevent the ideal quantification of the material which relates to this subject. A partial approach,however, would be to construct four case studies which illustrate the typical socio-economic achievements of the average servant at different structural stages in the development of the economy and society, and to analyse the biographical data with reference to these studies.

Case One: William Withington was an indentured servant in the parish of St.James during the mid -1640s. Throughout the 1650s he was employed as a waged artisan,mainly on government contracts. He was responsible for most of the carpentry during the fortification of the colony under the administration of Governor Daniel Searle.(2) By 1674, after twenty years of work as a carpenter, he obtained a large dwelling house in Bridgetown and other property which were valued at 30,000 pounds of sugar.(3) He was elevated into the ranks of the freeholders, and was,therefore,able to vote in the assembly election and hold petty administrative office. In terms of the socio-economic <sup>skilled</sup> achievements of/freemen who started out in the pre-sugar era, Withington was successful and representative.

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1. Roberts,W.A., Sir Henry Morgan;Buccaneer and Governor(Lon.,1933), pp.28-30.
  2. Minutes of Council,1655-6,Lucas Mss. reel 1,ff.219,323.
  3. Deeds of Barbados,1670s, RB.3/9,ff.53,55.



Case Two: John Hill was a tailor from Ludford, County Hereford, who registered at Bristol for servitude in Barbados in January 1654. In 1660, at the termination of his indenture, he worked for wages in Bridgetown and was able to accumulate sufficient capital for the purchase of a small house in St. Michael, which was worth 5,000 pounds of sugar in 1665. In spite of his useful skills he was unable to elevate himself into the social ranks of the freeholders. He, nevertheless, was not poor by freeman's standards. Aubrey Land, in his study of Chesapeake, found that the majority of freemen there lived in Hill's condition, which was described as one of 'crude sufficiency'.(1)

Case Three: John Saunders emigrated from Bristol to Barbados as a servant in 1662. At the expiration of his servitude he worked for wages as a joiner. In 1684, after sixteen years of working as an artisan, he was described by the Governor in Council as a 'poore man' without property.(2) He lived from day to day in a subsistence crisis, and frequently had to be paid in advance for his work in order not to resort to the workhouse.(3)

Case Four: William Sinclair was a servant on a St. Thomas plantation in the early 1660s. He was a semi-skilled worker, and after his servitude he was employed as a common labourer and sometimes as a mason. By the mid-1670s, he was unable to find work in the colony and resorted to the St. John Vestry for poor relief. He was allocated 500 pounds of sugar annually on which to subsist by the poor law officer.(4) Sinclair represents

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1. Land, A., 'Northern Chesapeake', J.E.H., vol. 25 (1965), p. 642.

2. Minutes of Council, 1684, Lucas Mss. reel 2, f. 14.

3. Ibid.

4. Minutes of the St. John Vestry, 18 Feb. 1678, f. 43, Bar. Arc.



a case of downward social mobility and decapitalization, since a freeman had to have exhausted his freedom due of £10 in order to pass the means test which the poor law officers strictly applied.

These biographies show a trend of diminishing achievements over the century, the result of the rise of 'sugar and slavery' in the late 1640s. Unskilled common labourers rarely achieved any elevation in their social status or accumulated any marketable property, even in the pre-sugar era which was one of great opportunity for the skilled freemen. William Withington, like many other artisans, made good use of favourable conditions in this period. The failure of the colonists to produce a highly profitable staple kept land prices relatively low, and a large number of artisans purchased landed property up to fifty acres and became freeholders. For example, in 1642 Andrew Busey, carpenter, purchased thirty acres of land with standing property which gave him the political right to elect his parish Assemblymen and sit on the local poor law boards.(1)

During the pre-sugar era, commodity production was within the reach of many skilled freemen. In 1642, Ralph Wileson, carpenter, purchased from Capt. James Holding thirty acres of land which was located in the fertile St. George valley in order to engage himself in the production of cotton and indigo.(2) The following year, Robert Cox, carpenter, purchased from John Firrull, also a carpenter, fifty acres of land bordering the estate of William Hilliard for commodity production. The latter case is one of several which indicates not only artisan operations on the market in prime arable land, but also their dealings amongst themselves as a labour elite.(3)

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1. Deed of Andrew Busey, Oct. 1642, RB.3/1, f.285.

2. Deed of Ralph Wileson, Sept. 1642, RB.3/1, ff.144-5.

3. Deed of Robert Cox, May 1643, RB.3/1, f.424.

Some freemen used their steady incomes to tentatively venture onto the money market and engage in land speculation. John Lewis, carpenter, frequently made loans to the socially more prestigious planters. In 1644, Owen Williams, a substantial planter was indebted to Lewis to the value of 250 pounds of indigo. Williams was forced by Lewis to bind himself and his estate to the heir of the latter in case of non-payment.(1) In the 1640s, William Bradshaw, mason and joiner, was a land speculator. In 1644, he owned fifty acres in the St. George valley and made several land deals with the leading planters of the colony.(2) These artisans made a sound financial and economic contribution to the pre-sugar era by their roles on the land, labour and money markets.

Sugar production in the second half of the century greatly reduced the capital accumulation and social mobility possibilities of the skilled artisans. For the common labourer there was a further deterioration in their already poor condition. The high technology and large capital requirements of sugar production led to a process of land consolidation which, coupled with rapid inflation in the land values, transformed the colony into one which was directly suited only to the large capitalists.(3) The collapse of tobacco, cotton and indigo prices, in the late 1640s, to totally unprofitable levels forced many freemen to sell their small plantations to the large planters who were very keen to enter sugar production. This land consolidation process was aptly

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1. Deed of John Lewis, 1644, RB. 3/1, f. 363.

2. Deeds of Barbados, 1640s, RB. 3/1, ff. 395-6.

3. See Marx, K., Theories of Surplus Value (Moscow, 1968), vol. 2, p. 239.



described by Ligon as follows:

I beleive, when the small plantations in poor men's hands, of ten, twenty or thirty acres, which are too small to lay to that work (sugar production) be all bought up by great men, and put together into plantations of five, six or seven hundred acres, that two-thirds of the island will be fit for plantations of sugar, which will make it one of the richest spots of earth under the sun. (1)

This process escalated during the 1650s and Barbados emerged a decade later with the largest landless white population in the English Empire.

The freemen who experienced servitude during the sugar boom of the late 1640s and the 1650s did not fare anywhere near as well as their predecessors. They found land both too scarce and expensive. Land which sold for ten shillings per acre in the 1640s sold for £5 per acre in the early 1650s, a ten-fold increase in less than two decades. (2) Ligon, the contemporary analyst, stated that the 500 acre plantation of Major Hilliard, which was valued at £400 in the early 1640s, was sold in 1647 for £7,000. Furthermore, according to Ligon, '...all the land... found the like improvement.' (3) By the early 1660s, most of the arable land was valued at between £10 and £20 per acre, over twenty times their pre-sugar values. (4) These market prices

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1. Ligon, R., A True and Exact History of Barbados, p.86.

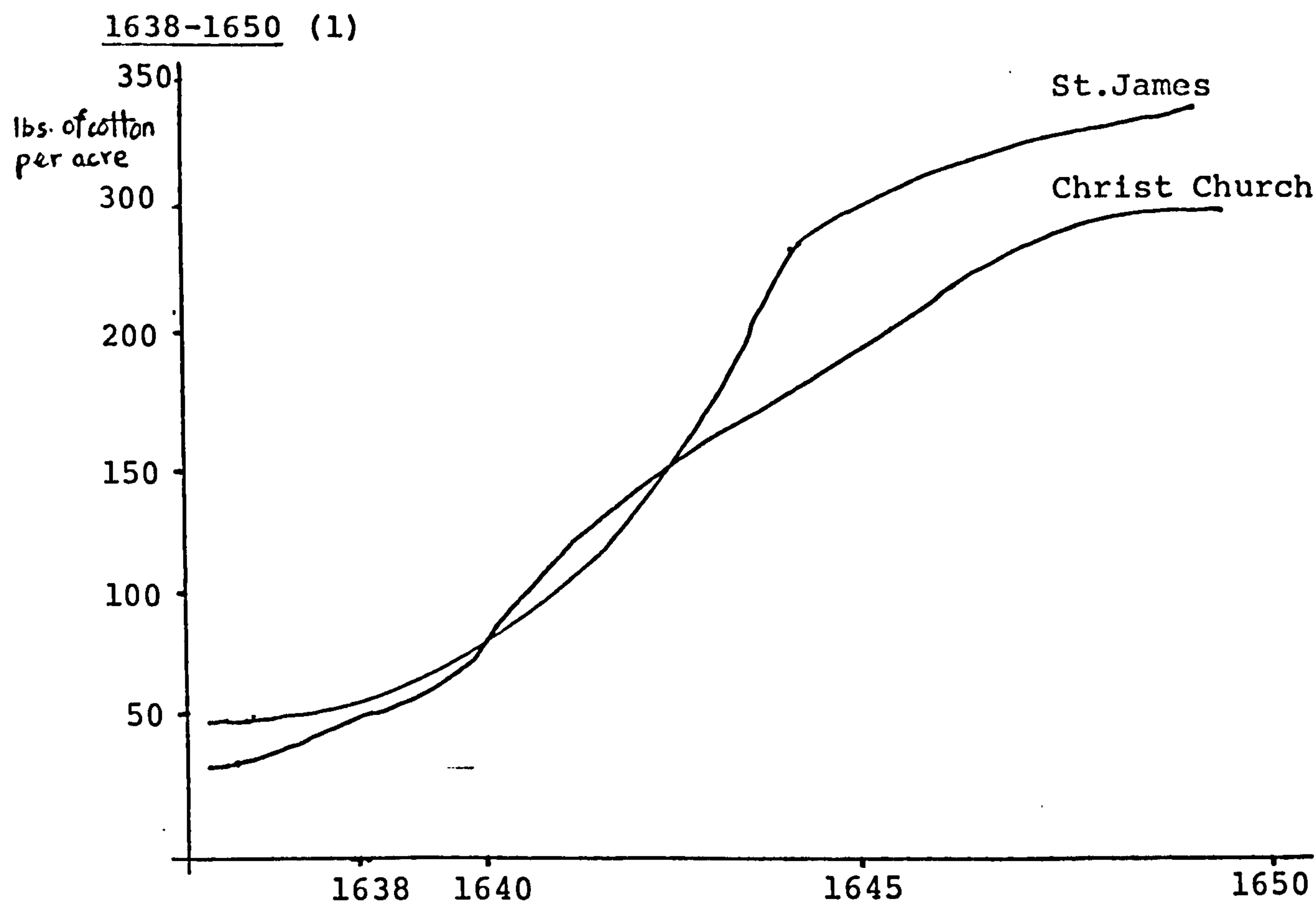
2. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.66.

Also see appendix 32.



eliminated the chances of artisans accumulating capital by wage labour for the purchase of small plantations.

Fig.14-Rising Land Values in two Parishes(St.James and Christ Church)



Many freemen who sold their small plantations during the sugar boom, in an effort to remain free from the sugar planters and the labour market, rented small plots of land in the 1650s. For example, William Taylor, artisan, sold his small estate at a very good price during the speculation boom of 1647-49, but was forced to re-indenture himself to Robert Gretton in 1650 for three years. He was able to regain some of his capital, and in 1655 rented a plot of eighteen acres from Thomas Etrell at a rate of £20 per annum. (2)

1. Inventories and deeds of Barbados, 1638-52, RB.3/2, ff.13,17,18-21,30-1,288,313,322-3,336-7.

2. Deed of Robert Gretton, 1650, RB.3/1, f.151.

During the 1650s, a significant tenantry system developed in Barbados, especially in the areas of low quality soils. Mount Clapham plantation, located in the St. Michael parish, was an example of this tenantry system. In 1654, 179½ of the 400 acres were leased to freemen as follows:

T.53- Land Tenantry System of Mount Clapham Plantation in 1654(1)

| <u>Size of lease(acres)</u> | <u>No. of tenants</u> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 0-5                         | 2                     |
| 5-8                         | 14                    |
| 8-12                        | 1                     |
| 12-15                       | 3                     |
| <u>15-18</u>                | <u>2</u>              |
| <u>179½</u>                 | <u>22</u>             |

The lease arrangements of a sample of seven tenants indicate the levels of rents and the lengths of possession. This can be tabulated as follows:

T. 54- Lease Conditions of Seven Mount Clapham Tenants, 1654(2)

| <u>Name</u>      | <u>Acres</u> | <u>Length of lease</u> | <u>Cost/year (£)</u> |
|------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Adam Rogers      | 6            | 6                      | 10                   |
| Richard Chambers | 5            | 7                      | 8                    |
| George Evans     | 5½           | 7                      | 11                   |
| Henry Caldwell   | 7            | 7                      | 15                   |
| Richard Assell   | 8            | 8                      | 20                   |
| William May      | 12           | 9                      | 25                   |
| William Taylor   | 18           | 8                      | 36                   |
|                  | <u>61½</u>   | <u>52</u>              | <u>125</u>           |

1. Lease agreements of Mount Clapham plantation, May 1654, RB.3/3, f.112

2. Ibid.

But the freemen found no long term security in the tenantry system. During the 'economy drive' of the late 1660s and 1670s, planters began to enclose their marginal acres of land and the tenantry system started to decline. The inventories for the Mount Clapham plantation in the 1670s show that its entire 400 acres were brought under unified sugar production, and that the tenures were terminated. These developments forced many freemen back onto a highly competitive labour market, and reversed appreciably their previously achieved positions in the economy and society. In many respects, the career of Robert Haynes shows how the forces of 'sugar and slavery' affected the freemen. At the termination of his indenture in 1652, Haynes worked as a carpenter, and purchased with a partner sixty acres of land in the St. John parish along with two servants and four slaves. During the turmoil of the 1650s, he sold his property, which was too small for sugar production. In the mid-1660s he worked on the fortification programme for low wages which were paid at irregular intervals. Meanwhile, he had lost his political and social rights and status as a freeholder.<sup>(1)</sup> He was one of many freemen who, like Hill (case two), was described as living a life of 'crude sufficiency' as a result of the sugar revolution.

During the 1670s, 'sugar and slavery' drove the majority of freemen down to a level of bare subsistency. Paradoxically, this general impoverishment coincided with the elevation of the servants as the labour elite on the plantations. The majority of freemen, like

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1. See Deeds of Barbados, RB. 3/1, ff. 55-8.



John Saunders (case three), were now being described as 'very poore men'. Indentured servitude in Barbados now offered the servant only an alternative place to live in poverty. The skilled freemen were driven into the backlands of St. Lucy and St. Philip where there were stretches of very poor/available land. In these regions, a proliferation of semi-peasant communities developed where the freemen were described and stereotyped by the planters and slaves as 'poor-white earthscratching scum'. These were the early formations of some of those hundreds of back-country 'poor white cultures' in early America.

Between 1670 and 1680, few freemen were able to achieve either social respectability or significant capital accumulation. For this period, the deed material reveals a significant drop in the freemen's participation on the land market. From the list of 2,656 servants who registered at Bristol for servitude in Barbados between 1654 and 1684, a sample of 2,580 can be taken from the period 1654-74 and correlated against the list of landed freemen in 1679/80 for eight out of the eleven parishes. The parishes of Christ Church, St. James, St. John, St. Thomas, St. George, St. Michael, St. Philip and St. Lucy are the most representative in terms of their socio-economic structure. In 1679/80, they contained 2,887 freemen (86.8% of the total), 78% of the island's acreage and 77.9% of the total servant population.

From the list of 2,580 servants only 70 (2.71%) appear as landed freemen in the 1679/80 census (1) They were only 3.52% of the total landholding population. (2) The geographical distribution

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1. Census of Barbados 1679/80. Bar. Arc. The list of Bristol servants are also given in J.B.M.H.S., vols. 14-19 (1946-52).
  2. Smith found that in seventeenth century Maryland only 4% of the servants became landholders. Smith, A.E., 'The Indentured Servant and Land Speculation', pp. 470-71.

of these seventy freemen was as follows:

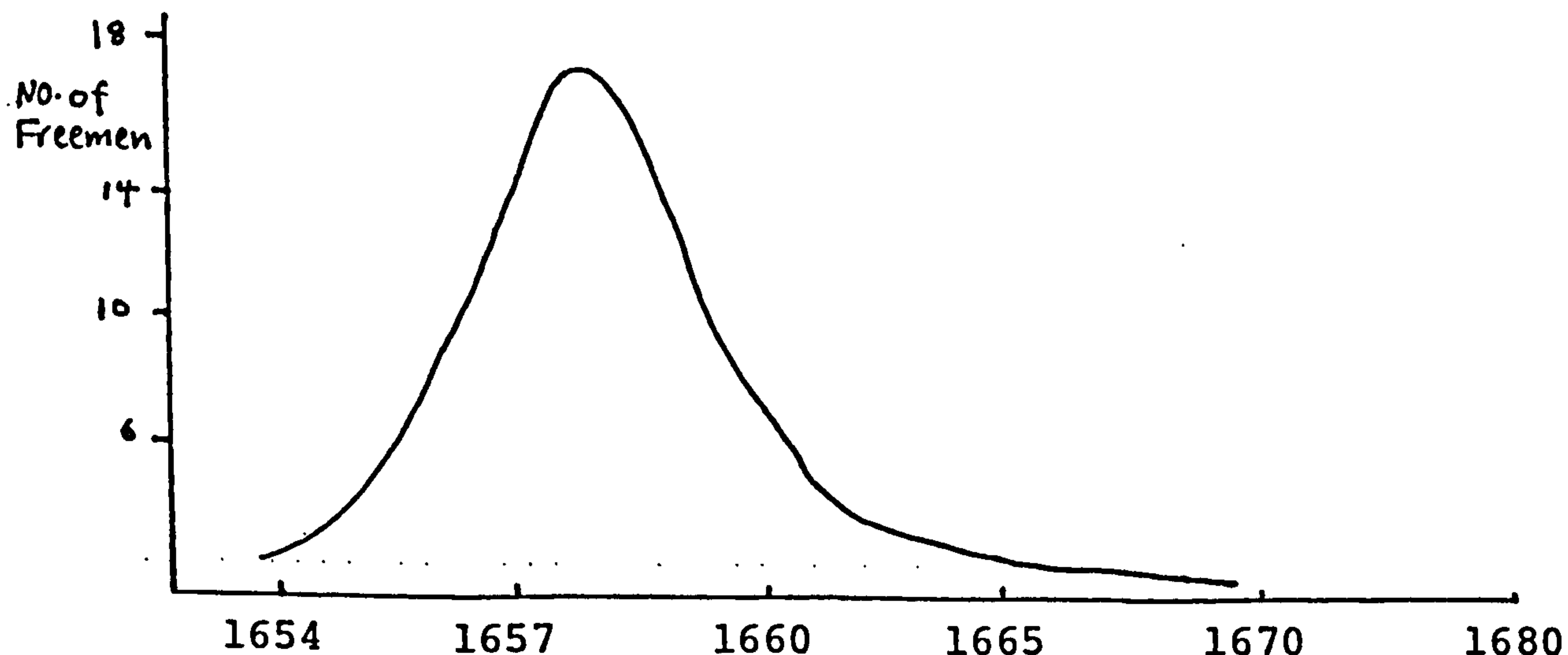
T.55 - Spatial Distribution of Seventy Freemen who Emigrated from Bristol between 1654-74 and held up to 10 Acres of Land in 1679/80. (1)

| <u>Parish</u> | <u>Total Freeman Population</u> | <u>No. from Sample</u> | <u>Total Landholders</u> |
|---------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Christ Church | 220                             | 13                     | 410                      |
| St. James     | 89                              | 6                      | 183                      |
| St. John      | 32                              | 2                      | 124                      |
| St. Thomas    | 72                              | 2                      | 192                      |
| St. George    | 29                              | 5                      | 122                      |
| St. Philip    | 214                             | 16                     | 407                      |
| St. Michael   | 104                             | 5                      | 109                      |
| St. Lucy      | 236                             | 21                     | 437                      |
|               | <u>1,001</u>                    | <u>70</u>              | <u>1,984</u>             |

Of the seventy ex-servants, there were only three females, and only fifteen males gave an occupation in their emigration forms. These occupations were as follows: one nailer, two labourers, two tailors, seven yeomen, one weaver, one shoemaker, and one smith.

The time of entry and the length of time it took these seventy freemen to acquire their property can be illustrated as follows,

Fig.15 - Time of Entry of the Seventy Freemen who Held Land in 1680.



The diagram shows that the vast majority of the landed freemen in 1680 arrived as servants in Barbados during the late 1650s and early 1660s. This was the period in which the servants and freemen monopolised the artisan and low level supervisory occupations.

The distribution of the seventy freemen shows a great deal about the nature of their property accumulation. Fifty of them (71%) held their land in the backlands of St. Philip and St. Lucy where land values were the lowest on the island. Some of them were able to acquire slaves over the years. They usually bought the 'refuse' which were sold at nominal prices. The total number of slaves owned by the freemen was as follows:

T.56- Slave holding of the Seventy Freemen in 1679/80.

| <u>Number of Slaves</u> | <u>Number of Owners</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 0                       | 34                      |
| 1                       | 11                      |
| 2                       | 5                       |
| 3                       | 4                       |
| 4                       | 6                       |
| 5                       | 3                       |
| 6                       | 4                       |
| 7                       | 1                       |
| 8                       | 1                       |
| 9                       | 0                       |
| 10                      | 1                       |
|                         | <hr/>                   |
|                         | 66                      |

Thirty-four of the seventy freemen held no slaves, while another eleven held only one slave each. These freemen held only 0.32% of the total slave population. The census tabulation for the St. James parish categorised eight of the eighty-nine freemen as 'very poore' and another twenty-six as 'poore'. The wills data



of this period are illustrative of the freemen's economic standing. Between 1675 and 1685, there were fifty five wills entered by freemen and only one contained the bequest of property.(1)

Some masters tried to prevent their ex-servants from slipping into abject poverty. For example, Philip Trowell, planter of Christ Church, gave to his five 'poor English servants', on the expiration of their indentures, six acres of good land and two slaves each so that they could subsist as freemen with decency in the parish.(2) But occasional goodwill was not significant in dealing with the freemen's condition. After the mid-1680s, the majority of freemen, like William Sinclair (Case Four), were categorised by the Vestries as 'very poore', and a large number were beggars and poor law recipients. A circuit judge described with alarm the daily increase in the number of wandering beggars in the colony, which was swelled by the termination of the servants' contracts.(3)

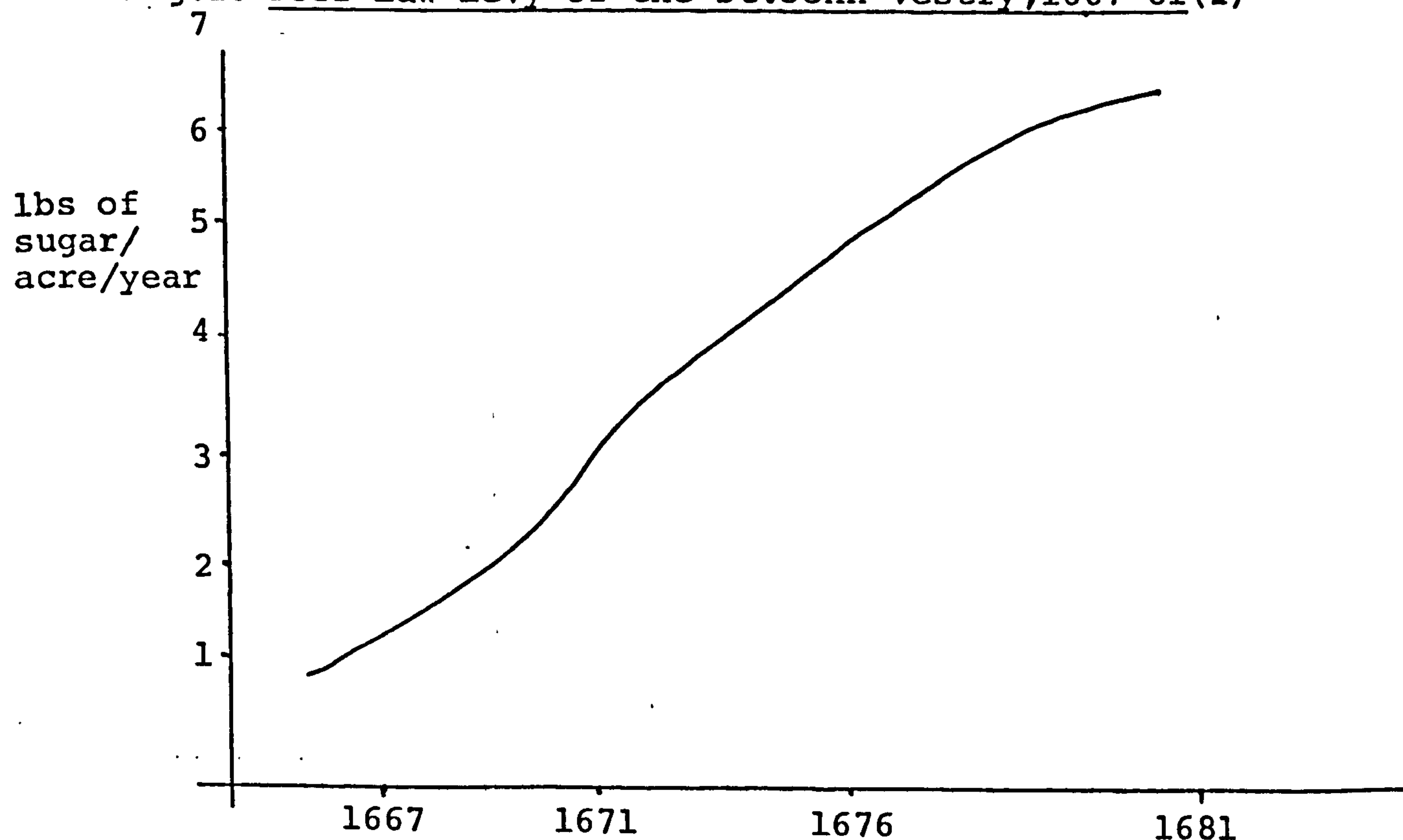
There was much debate in the Assembly over this growing number of beggars in the colony, and it was decided that a widespread Poor Relief Administration should be established. The apparatus which emerged was an accurate copy of the system which was developed by the Tudors, but was in advance of its contemporary counterpart in England.(4) The planters tackled this social problem with more rigour than any other issue which

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1. Wills of Barbados, 1675-85, RB. 6/44, ff.1-201.
  2. Will of Ronald Hotton, 24 April 1680, RB. 6/14, ff.82-84.
  3. Summary of the Barbados Grand Jury, 8 July 1683, CO. 1/30, No.50.
  4. Harlow, V.T., History of Barbados, p.331.

concerned freemen. Governor Atkins informed the Lords of Trade in 1677 that '... the poor are provided for so well not one will be seen asking for alms.'<sup>(1)</sup> Atkins on this issue is not to be taken seriously, other data point to widespread begging on the street corners and <sup>in</sup> public places.<sup>(2)</sup>

Planters continued to replace white labour with slave labour while giving funds to parish poor law boards for the freemen's relief; this was more economical from the planters' perspective. The vestries had to increase continually the poor relief rates in order to control the number of freemen paupers and beggars. The rise in the poor law rate for the parish of St. John between 1667-81 was as follows. The planters complained bitterly about the rapidly

Fig.16-Poor Law Levy of the St. John Vestry, 1667-81<sup>(3)</sup>



1. Gov. Atkins to the Lords of Trade, 31 Jan. 1677, C.S.P.C., 1677-80, no. 187.
2. Summary of the Barbados Grand Jury, 8 July 1683, CO.1/30, no. 50.
3. Minutes of the ST. John Vestry, 1649-82, ff. 5, 31, 59, Bar. Arc.

rising poor law rates. One embittered planter noted that '...many a one's estates have been exhausted and taken from them to make the payment...' (1) of these exorbitant rates. Much starvation and physical brutality was experienced by these freemen in this period. On October 14, 1647, the Coroner of the St. Michael Vestry was ordered to examine the bodies of 'seven poor people' who were said to have come to an untimely death. (2) No report was presented to the Vestry on the case, but there were references to starvation among the freemen in the Vestry. (3)

The transition from a relatively prosperous freeman class in the pre-sugar era, to a large scale impoverished unemployable lumpen-proletariat towards the end of the century must, therefore, be explained in terms of the structure and market relationships of the plantation and the planters' conception of the institution of servitude. The rise of 'sugar and Black slavery' was the first structural change to undermine the freemen's life chances. Subsequently, freemen found it difficult, psychologically and economically, to compete with Black labour. (4) The political domination of the colony by an oligarchy of planters, meant that they were able to implement their conception of indentured servitude as a transitional institution for the creation of a white proletariat. Between 1710 and 1715, only thirty six servants were imported into Barbados, and most of these came as special military tenants. (5)

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1. Anon., Memoirs of the First Settlement, p.11.
  2. 'Minutes of the St. Michael Vestry', Oct. 1674, J.B.M.H.S., Vol.16, No's. 1-2.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Keagy, T.J., 'The Poor Whites of Barbados', Revista de Historia de America, Vol.73-4 (1972), p.12.
  5. Census of Barbados, 1715. Bar.Arc.



Even as military tenants they were not secure. The famous West India Black regiments began to develop rapidly in Barbados during this period and started to undermine their only important remaining role in plantation society.

The insatiable thirst for land, the ownership of which was the basis of real security and the vehicle of social mobility, drove some freemen from Barbados into the scattered and distant parts of the English empire. Whereas, for the planters, emigration was eastward to the 'Sweet Ayre of England', for the freemen it was the expression of disillusionment and another round of further exploitation in another place.

Lord Carlisle had sponsored the emigration of the freemen as early as 1647. His proclamation of that year stated that, since there was no land available for freemen in Barbados, he was prepared to allocate land to them in the Leeward Islands, which were included in the proprietary grant.(1) The number of freemen who emigrated to Jamaica, the Leeward and Windward Islands and back to Britain had a significant effect upon the size of the servant class. But the majority of the freemen were too impoverished after the 1660s to be able to pay the costs involved in settling in another strange and insecure colony. Unable to survive a further round of servitude, mentally and physically, many settled for unemployment, poor law receipts and infrequent employment instead of emigration. Resettlement was a more viable solution to the problems of the small planters, freeholders and the well paid artisans who were able to accumulate enough capital to entrench themselves firmly in a new colony. Therefore, according to an observer in 1667, the majority of freemen who emigrated were '...tradesmen, worned out of their small settlements by greedy neighbours....'(2)

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1. See Appendix 1

2. Some observations on Barbados, 1667, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.529.

After the mid-century, the other English colonies, from New England in the North to St. Lucia in the South, launched campaigns to attract freemen labour and freeholders from Barbados. These individuals were seasoned to the frontier and were highly valued. Their frontier experience in Barbados, plus their knowledge of sugar plantation organisation made them attractive as 'ideal' labourers. Jamaica, the Leewards, New England, and to a lesser extent Virginia, were successful in attracting some of these freemen and freeholders.

It was noted in the mid-1660s, that Barbados had become '... a nursery for planting Jamaica, Surinam and other places...' through the exportation of the freemen and dispossessed small planters. Col. Modyford, a leading Barbadian planter, who shifted his business to Jamaica after the English conquest of 1655, was confident that Jamaica could develop a sugar industry without a single white man from England, for all the necessary white labour would be taken from Barbados.(1) Governor Windsor of Jamaica, taking Modyford's advice, mobilised many resources to create a sugar plantation economy in Jamaica modelled upon Barbados and with the use of Barbadian planters and freemen.(2)

The land conditions which Governor Windsor offered to Barbadian freemen in Jamaica were attractive. On 22 July 1662, he was able to pressurize Charles II to order the Barbadian Assembly to post advertisements at every parish church which proclaimed that Jamaica was offering thirty acres of land to all freemen who emigrated there, plus religious tolerance for the poor Irish

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1. Sir Thomas Lynch to Secretary Arlington, 7 June 1671, C.S.P.C. 1669-74, p.223.
  2. Sir Thomas Lynch to the Council of Plantations, 5 July 1672, C.S.P.C. 1669-74, p.386.



Catholics, and Quakers. Governor Windsor also offered freemen the choice to re-indenture themselves for another spell of years. The proclamation stated that '... all such as shall not be able to manage the said land and are desirous to entertayne themselves as servants for a yeare or more shall (receive) their wages that they shall agree upon... and their land set out notwithstanding.' (1)

The advertisement provided that any person who transported servants or freemen from Barbados was to receive thirty acres of land in freehold, and their servants and freemen thirty acres each after a specified period. (2) This was the introduction of a 'headright' system into the Caribbean for the first time, a system which was the basis of emigration and land distribution in the northern mainland colonies. Windsor's appeal to the freemen and small planters of Barbados met with substantial opposition from the leadership of Barbados. They conceived of Jamaica as another future rival on the sugar market, and were prepared to see the colony stagnate.

The statistical data on emigration are rather patchy and inconsistent. It is well known, however, that 3,300 freemen and servants left Barbados with the Hispaniola-Jamaica expeditions of 1654-55, and few returned. (3) Between 1655 and 1683, the white population of Barbados fell from about 23,000 to 19,000, while in the same period that of Jamaica rose from about 2,000 to over 7,000. (4) The Bristol sample reveals no boom in emigration from England to Jamaica in this period, so one can assume that a large

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1. Declaration of Lord Windsor, Gov. of Jamaica, 11 July 1662, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.96-7.
  2. Instructions for Lt. Gov. Thomas Lynch of Jamaica from Whitehall, 31 Dec. 1670, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, p.146.
  3. Some observations on the Island of Barbados, 1667, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.529.
  4. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, pp.87, 155.

proportion of the population increase of Jamaica was composed of freemen from Barbados.(1) In 1671, Col. Modyford recruited and took 150 to 200 freemen from Barbados to Jamaica, and the following year another ship arrived there with a load of servants and freemen from Barbados.(2) It was relatively simple to emigrate to Jamaica under the Windsor Programme, which included a free passage from Carlisle Bay. All the freeman had to do was enter his name at the Secretary's office twenty one days before sailing. The main attraction of the programme to freemen, was that it guaranteed them wage labour for a period before they took their land, if they found this more practical.

Schemes were also established to provide an outlet for the freemen in the settlement of the Windward Islands. The Willoughby brothers, concerned with the unemployment of freemen, planned for the development of the Windward colonies with the use of Barbadian white labour. This vision of Barbados as a metropolis within the region was very strong in this period. Gov. Francis Lord Willoughby saw this as the most effective way to maintain Barbadian economic hegemony in the region. He argued that falling prices and productivity of sugar, plus rising competition from the Leeward Islands could be offset by Barbadian control of the Windward Islands and Surinam by using Barbadian labour, capital and management. These colonies would subsequently function as peripheral economies of Barbados.

In 1663, Willoughby's plan was accepted by Charles II, who instructed him to

... grant not more than tenn acres for every x'tain

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1. See Appendices 27, 36, 16.

2. Sir Thomas Lynch to Sec. Arlington, 7 June 1671, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, pp.223, 422.



servant who shall within the space of 2 yeares be sett on such islands... But for the encouragement of such as shall plant on any desolate or Indian island you may grant any Quantity of land not exceeding 50 acres by the head... (1)

These instructions were immediately implemented by Lord Willoughby, and within that year he recruited 1,300 freemen and small planters for the settlement and development of the neighbouring island of St. Lucia.(2) The settlement perished, both from Carib aggression and the apparent 'sickliness of the island'.(3) This outcome was welcomed by a significant number of leading Barbadians.

The need to settle in a new and nearby colony persisted strongly amongst some freemen and small planters. In 1664, a colonisation scheme which was organised by Henry Walrond, took another 1,000 freemen and freewomen into St. Lucia. Again, the freemen were disillusioned when they found the French and the Caribs living under an agreement on the island; the French having convinced the Caribs that the English were their only enemies within the region.

A series of food crises in Barbados during the mid-1660s reduced many freemen to hunger and starvation.(4) One observer noted that many were forced to emigrate into enemy territory for survival. The French and Dutch accepted them because of their alleged opposition to the Barbadian planter class, and offered them liberty and freedom.(5) The main obstacle to the freemen's

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1. Gov. Willoughby to King, 8 Dec. 1663, C.O. 29/1, f.71.
  2. Some observations on the Island of Barbados, 1667, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.529.
  3. Some observations on the island of Barbados, 1667, C.O.29/3, f.92.
  4. Lord Willoughby to the King, 4 Nov. 1663, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p.167.
  5. Ibid.



emigration into the Windward Islands was the aggressive Carib communities. In December 1681, Gov.Dutton passed a resolution to assist Gov.Stapleton of the Leeward Islands in a '...thorough extirpation of those savages and cruel Indians of St.Lucia, St.Vincent and Dominica ...'(1), in order to assist Barbadian development of those Islands. But these regions did not develop in the seventeenth century to attract the freemen who, therefore, had to look elsewhere.

The English settlement in Surinam provided an outlet for Barbadian freemen in the late 1660s and the 1670s. The sugar industry which was transplanted there demanded white labourers who were well experienced, both as artisans and overseers. The English planters who were transported there by Lt.Col.Henry Willoughby in 1668 were prepared to offer them a wage of £200 per annum for their skills and experience, which fetched only £20-80 per annum in Barbados.(2) This was a great incentive, and an estimated 300 freemen emigrated to Surinam between 1668 and 1670.(3)

During the 1670s, the Dutch, who produced sugar alongside the English in Surinam, also made claims on Barbados, the nearest and cheapest market for white labour. It was reported in Barbados that the Dutch did not have the skills necessary for sugar manufacture, and needed British workers to manage their plantations.(4) These Dutchmen were recent arrivals from Holland and did not possess the expertise which their countrymen had developed in Brazil during the first half of the century. They recruited from Barbados '...the very ruggedest English freemen...'

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1. Gov.Dutton to Lords of Trade, Dec.1681, CO.29/3, f.116.

2. Mss.of Sec.Williamson on Sugar, 1674-77, C.S.P.C., 1675-6, p.154.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

at inconceivably high wages, (1) and by 1675 all the artisans and overseers in the colony were from Barbados. (2) But the colony was unhealthy, and the fate of the freemen became a scandal in Barbados. Of the 300 who arrived there in 1674, only forty were left in early 1675: the '...ill-climate and ill-usage having killed the rest.' (3) The survivors who refused to return to Barbados settled in Jamaica under an immigration scheme which was organised by one Major Bannister. (4)

One contemporary computed that between 1643 and 1662, a total of 9,700 freemen and freeholders emigrated from Barbados. (5) Their destinations, all within the Caribbean, were as follows:

T.57- Emigration of Freemen and Freeholders from Barbados  
1643-1662

| <u>Destinations</u>                            | Number       |
|--|--------------|
| Trinidad and Tobago                            | 600          |
| Surinam  | 2,400        |
| Martinique, Guadeloupe<br>Grenada, and Curacao | 1,600        |
| St. Lucia                                      | 1,300        |
| Guiana   | 800          |
| St. Kitts                                      | <u>3,000</u> |
|  | <u>9,700</u> |

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Lt. Gov. Lynch to Sec. William, 20 Nov. 1674, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, p. 624.

4. Ibid.

5. Some Observations on Barbados, 1667, C.S.P.C., 1661-68, p. 529.

There was very little emigration by Barbadian freemen outside of the Caribbean. The vast majority of the emigrants to the North American colonies were planters and other substantial property holders. There were no fantasies built around the life chances for freemen in these colonies. News of the extreme maltreatment of landless whites in Virginia and Carolina, and the religious fanaticism of the New Englanders, made the freemen reluctant to emigrate to these colonies. A list of 583 people who emigrated from Barbados in 1679 shows that only 20% were freemen and freeholders.(1)

But many of these colonies were not interested in the Barbadian freemen. South Carolina, for example, which developed the closest relations with Barbados in the second half of the century, did not encourage the immigration of freemen and others without capital. Whereas, the other Caribbean colonies wanted Barbadian labour, the mainland colonies of North America wanted its capitalists. After the 1670s, these colonies were well supplied with servants from Britain and wanted capital for their development. They were particularly interested in the Barbadian capitalists who were regarded as the most effective planters in the New World. Their skills in handling the largest sugar and slave trades were highly valued, and schemes were established to attract them to the mainland colonies.

In 1671, Lord Ashley, Governor of South Carolina, wrote to Col. Yeamans, his agent in Barbados, and stated that he was  
 ...glad to hear so many considerable men came from

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1. Census of Barbados, 1679/80, ff.225-294. Bar. Arc.



Barbados, for the Lords Proprietors find by dear experience that no others are able to make a plantation ...the rest serve only to fill up numbers and live upon us...I am not very found of more company unless they be substantial men....(1)

In the same year, Yeamans arrived with another contingent of fifty planters, all men with capital and high social status. He was later to use these planters as a personal political faction to launch a Barbadian take-over of South Carolina. By March of 1672, he was instated as Governor, the first of a long line of Barbadian planters who became governor of South Carolina.(2)

The following year, Sir Peter Colleton, another powerful Barbadian planter who was involved in the South Carolina connection, informed his friend, Governor Yeamans, that '...several men of substantial estate will engage from hence as soon as there is peace and shipping to be had.'(3) Once established in South Carolina, these Barbadians naturally turned to Africa for labour rather than Barbados or Europe, and the colony rapidly developed the largest slave population in North America in the seventeenth century.(4)

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1. Lord Ashley to Sir John Yeamans, 15 December, 1671, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, p.295.

2. Sirman, M., Colonial South Carolina; A Political History, 1663-1763 (North Carolina, 1966), pp.28-29. Chap. 2 deals with the rise of the Barbadians as a political elite.

3. Sir. Peter Colleton to John Locke, 28 May 1673, C.S.P.C., 1669-74, p.498.

4. Ver steeg, C., Southern Mosaic (Baton Rouge, 1977), pp.103-149.

A significant number of freemen, mainly officers who were sent to Barbados as political prisoners, were able to reach England after the termination of their ten year indentures, A large number were also freed by the Restoration Government in 1660. For example, on the 8 August 1661, the Treasurer of Southampton was ordered to pay John Davison, Elexander Clubb and Jo Carter '...the small quantity of sugar...' (1) which they brought from Barbados, they '...being three poor Scotsmen who were sold as slaves into Barbados by the late usurper Cromwell... and desirous of going to their country.' (2) In one consignment, Capt. Strange shipped sixteen ex-political prisoners from Barbados in 1667. (3) Between 1660 and 1667, over 700 of such freemen returned to England from Barbados. (4) The majority of these were freed by Charles II in 1663.

The emigration of freemen in large numbers after the 1660s had a disastrous effect upon the local militia, and placed the planters, who were in need of more overseers to police their places, in <sup>an</sup> uncomfortable position. To reduce the volume of this emigration the more progressive planters began, after 1670, to discuss various policies. This lobby in the Assembly was led, ironically, by the Colleton brothers who were the men behind the South Carolina emigration scheme. In February 1671, a bill was drawn up and submitted to the Assembly. The objectives of the

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1. Calendar of Treasury Books, 1660-67, vol.1, pp.273, 307, 356.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.413.

4. They were shipped at a costs of £1.4s. per head, and over £700 were spent on their shipment in this period. (pp.270-413, ibid.)



bill were to provide steady employment for the freemen outside that of sugar production. It was proposed

... that noe one allready possessed of twenty-five acres of land shall be capable of buying, renting, or recovering more unless by descent, and to forfeit all land purchased to the first man that hath not twenty -five acres that enters his action for itt in the Court of the precinct where the land lye....(1)

It was stressed that unless this policy was implemented '...the land of Barbados will fall into the hands of a few and (we) will be left for the want of interested men enough upon the place to defend it.' (2) The policy was not practical, for the Assembly was not prepared to place such legal restrictions upon the land market.

A second policy was planned by the lobby, the implementation of which represented an early form of sharecropping in the West Indies. Freemen were offered poor soils which were marginal to the plantations for their own use, and in return they were to offer their labour to the plantation on which they were tenants. (3) Some of them were lent capital in order to develop their tenanted land. This was another method which was devised to exploit the freemen in Barbados. One observer complained

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1. Gentlemen planters of London to Assembly, 17 Feb. 1671, CO. 31/2, f.35.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Nicholas Blake to Sec. Williamson, 12 Nov. 1669, C.S.P.C., 160 ~74, pp.44-45.



that by this plan the planters

... got the whole means of the poor labourers engaged to them, and yearly heaped interest upon interest and gnaw them to the bone, and that such exactors take 30% per annum and more.... (1)

This system was not very popular amongst the freemen and was abandoned in the early 1680s.

In 1697, an anonymous letter addressed to the Agent for Barbados proposed the following solution to the freemen's flight.

It would be well for the country to purchase 2,500 out of the 120,000 acres in the island, and dispose of them in lots of five acres. This would support 500 families, but looking to the prospect of their increase it might be advisable to purchase 5,000 acres, and a quit-rent might be taken to reimburse the country. (2)

It was stressed that in this way the unemployed proletariat would be transformed into a steady and reliable peasantry. This policy was rejected by the Assembly without much discussion. Barbados had proven itself to be the 'worst poor man country' in the English Empire. What developed from the freeman class in the eighteenth century were the impoverished 'Redlegs', (a peculiar class of 'poor whites', isolated from the mainstream of society and economy) who developed a socio-cultural pattern quite distinct from that of the dominant white community. (3) (4)

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1. Ibid.

2. Letter to Barbados' Agent, 19 Nov.1697, C.S.P.C., 1697-8,p.29.

3. Sheppard,J., The Redlegs of Barbados, Chap.2.

4. See Appendices , 9, 10, 11.

CONCLUSION

Indentured servants made a major contribution to the colonisation schemes and policies of the seventeenth century Governments and Proprietors, and also to the rapid rise of Barbados as the leading colony within the British Empire. Commodity production was made possible by the general use of indentured servants during the critical years of early settlement. The need to accumulate capital rapidly under adverse market conditions in the pre-sugar era led masters to impose extensive controls over their servants; the result was the development of a very harsh system of servitude, under which the servant was reduced to definite 'property relations'.

Indentured servants also made a critical contribution to the rapid development of the colony during the transition to 'sugar and slavery'. The planters employed them as field hands, artisans and overseers until they had accumulated enough capital to make the transition to sugar production based upon Black slavery during the 1660s. The great demand for servants led to the rise of a profitable trade in white labour from England, Ireland and Scotland. The trade was seen by the merchants not as a passenger service but as a commodity trade in labour. Referred to as the men who deal in the 'souls and lifes of men', these merchants laid the foundation on which the masters built a system of oppressive servitude.

The transition from white indentured labour to Black slave labour in the second half of the century was a gradual process which was determined by market forces. Until the early 1660s

the planters conceived of a marginal productivity difference between the two forms of labour in favour of the white indentured servants. During the mid 1660s the English were able to organise more effectively the African slave trade, and with a supply crisis in the servant trade, the sugar planters found it more economically rational to make the transition to slave labour. Economic crises over the next two decades forced planters to rationalise their productive systems, out of which emerged the artisan slaves, who by the end of the century had driven their white artisan counterparts from most skilled occupations on and off the plantations. By 1700 indentured servitude was a dying institution in the colony.

Those servants who survived servitude were articulated into the economy by the wage nexus. As the century advanced their chances of social mobility and capital accumulation rapidly diminished. Only the few master craftsmen were able to maintain a material standard which gave them 'social respect' and 'recognition'. The proliferation of 'poor white' or 'redleg' communities in the backland areas of the colony demonstrated that for many servants the system of indentured servitude had failed to fulfill their aspirations. Indentured servitude was not the paternalistic institution which servants were traditionally familiar with; it was a colonial system of harsh servitude which recognised the servant only as so many man-hours per year, and which offered little reward. These servants were, therefore, the first victims of <sup>the</sup> colonial capitalist system in Barbados.



APPENDIX 1.THE GOVERNORS OF BARBADOS, 1625-1710(Inclusive)

|         |                         |                   |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1625-28 | William Dean            |                   |
| 1628-29 | Charles Wolferstone     |                   |
| 1629-9  | John Powell             |                   |
| 1629-30 | Sir William Tufton      |                   |
| 1630-33 | Henry Hawley            |                   |
| 1633-4  | Richard Peers (dep.)    |                   |
| 1634-4  | Henry Hawley            |                   |
| 1634-6  | Richard Peers (dep.)    |                   |
| 1636-8  | William Hawley          |                   |
| 1638-9  | Henry Hawley            |                   |
| 1639-40 | Major Hunch             |                   |
| 1641-50 | Philip Bell             |                   |
| 1650-2  | Francis Lord Willoughby |                   |
| 1652-2  | Sir George Ayscue       |                   |
| 1652-60 | Daniel Searle           |                   |
| 1660-60 | Thomas Modyford         |                   |
| 1660-60 | Henry Walrond           |                   |
| 1660-3  | Francis Lord Willoughby |                   |
| 1663-6  | Henry Willoughby        |                   |
|         | Henry Hawley            | } Joint Governors |
|         | Samuel Barwick          |                   |
| 1667-8  | William Lord Willoughby |                   |
| 1668-9  | Christopher Codrington  |                   |
| 1669-70 | William Lord Willoughby |                   |
| 1670-2  | Christopher Codrington  |                   |
| 1672-3  | William Lord Willoughby |                   |
| 1673-4  | Sir Peter Colleton      |                   |
| 1674-80 | Sir Jonathan Atkins     |                   |
| 1680-83 | Richard Dutton          |                   |
| 1683-4  | Sir John Witham (dep.)  |                   |
| 1684-5  | Sir Richard Dutton      |                   |
| 1685-90 | Edwin Stede             |                   |
| 1690-4  | James Kendal            |                   |

APPENDIX 1. (continued...)

|           |                  |
|-----------|------------------|
| 1694-96   | Francis Russel   |
| 1696-98   | Francis Bond     |
| 1698-1701 | Ralph Grey       |
| 1701-3    | John Farmer      |
| 1703-6    | Belvil Granville |
| 1706-7    | William Sharpe   |
| 1707-10   | Milford Crowe    |

APPENDIX 2.COPY OF A LONDON INDENTURE CERTIFICATE (1718)<sup>1</sup>.

London

The 28 Day of April,  
ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND 18

Memorandum, that Richard Harrison off parish of Woolon, the  
County of Norwich, did by indenture bearing like date herewith  
agree to serve

James Porat of ST Martins by Fields in Middlesex  
or his assins 8 years in BARBADOES,

and did thereby declare (him)self to be then of the age of 16  
years a single person, and no covenant or contracted servant  
to any other person or persons. And the said master did thereby  
covenant at his cost to find (him) all necessary clothes, meat  
drink, washing and lodgings, as other servants in such cases  
are usually provided for and allowed.

witness

London'.....'  
signature of the Mayor's office.

the mark of  
Richard Harrison

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1. City of London Corporation, Record Office. Box of  
Indentures, 1718-22.



APPENDIX 3.FREEDOM DUES FOR SERVANTS IN VARIOUS COLONIES.(1)

|                   |        |  |
|-------------------|--------|--|
| <u>BARBADOS</u>   | 1630   | £10  |
|                   | 1647   | Land in the Leeward Islands  |
|                   | 1661   | 400lbs. of muscovado sugar   |
| <u>NEVIS</u>      | 1672   | £10 according to custom  |
|                   | 1675   | 800lbs. of sugar   |
|                   | 1681   | 400lbs. of sugar   |
|                   | 1701   | 400lbs. of sugar or £2.10s.  |
| <u>JAMAICA</u>    | 1661/2 | 30 acres of land (instruction to Gov. Lord Windsor)  |
|                   | 1661   | 400lbs. of sugar (Order of Council)  |
|                   | 1664   | £2 or 30 acres of land   |
|                   | 1681   | £2   |
| <u>MARYLAND</u>   | 1640   | 'suite of clothes, 1 pair of stockings and shoes; 2 hoes, 1 axe, 3 barrells of Corne 50 acres of land' |
|                   | 1699   | corn and land omitted, 1 gun included  |
| <u>NEW JERSEY</u> | 1682   | 7 bushels of corn, 2 suits of clothes, 2 hoes, 1 axe, and land   |
| <u>VIRGINIA</u>   | 1705   | 10 bushels of corn, £1.10s., 1 musket. Females - 15 bushels of corn and £2.                            |

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1. Harlow, V.T., Colonising Expeditions, p.44.

Smith, A.E., Colonists in Bondage, pp.238-240.

APPENDIX 4.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE EARL OF CARLISLE (PROPRIETOR)  
OFFERING BARBADIAN SERVANTS LAND IN THE LEEWARD  
ISLANDS, 22 NOVEMBER 1647. (1)

' Whereas divers people have been transported from the Kingdom of England to my island of Barbados in America, and have there remained a long time as servants, in great labour for the profits of other persons, upon whose accounts they were first consigned thither, expecting that their services according to the Covenants agreed upon at their entrance there to make some advantage to themselves by settling of plantations for their own use, but ... the land is now so taken up as there is not any to be had but at great prices, too high for the purchase of poor servants. In consideration, hereof ... I have thought fit to declare that each freeman who is unprovided of land, shall have a proportion of land allotted to him in my Islands of Nevis, Antigua, or any other island under my command....'

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1. This Proclamation is filed in Thomasson Tracts, 669;11,  
 (115), B.L.

APPENDIX 5.

REPORT OF THE ' Sworne appraisers who appraised  
all such Goods, chattel... now upon the  
plantation commonly known as Rendevous... in  
the possession of Capt. Lancelot Pace, July, 1640'.  
(1).

Servant chattels and their appraised value

| <u>Name</u>      | <u>Time</u><br>(yrs.) | <u>Un-expired</u><br>(mnth.) | <u>Value</u><br>(lbs. of cotton) |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Edward Bromfield | 1                     | 9                            | 200                              |
| Edmond Robinson  | 5                     | -                            | 700                              |
| Anany            | -                     | 9                            | 100                              |
| John More        | -                     | 11                           | 100                              |
| Margaret Grant   | 1                     | 6                            | 200                              |
| William Bach     | -                     | 11                           | 100                              |
| John Robinson    | -                     | 9                            | 80                               |
| Daniel Bolod     | -                     | 10                           | 90                               |
| Thomas May       | 5                     | -                            | 700                              |
| Thomas Ballens   | -                     | 3                            | 100                              |
| Elizabeth Moore  | 4                     | -                            | 700                              |
| Edward Spurloe   | 6                     | -                            | 700                              |
| Nicholas Kinge   | 1                     | 10                           | 250                              |
| Thomas Hellens   | -                     | 11                           | 100                              |
| Robert Davies    | 1                     | -                            | 100                              |
| John Taylor      | 3                     | 3                            | 700                              |

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1. Inventory of Capt. Pace's Plantation, July 1640. R.B.3/1,  
f.13. Bar.Arc.



APPENDIX 6.SUMMARY OF DEBATE OVER MAL-TREATMENT OF  
SERVANTS, 1688. (1).

'The council and assembly being now engaged on the laws respecting Christian Servants, all care will be taken to prevent over severe dealing with such servants by bad masters. Such bad dealing has not been common, and where it has happened has been redressed by the Governors upon complaints, and occasion required the servant has been compensated, or the master punished and the servant set free. But it will be impossible to keep the servants in due order and obedience such is required by their masters and by the safety of the island, unless there be severe laws to punish any insolence towards masters and any embezzlement or destruction of their goods... an-argument lately used by the Attorney General that masters ought not to correct servants so as to break the skin has given them so much encouragement that they were more refractory than ever, and provoke their masters and then dared them to strike or whip them...'

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1. Lt. Gov. Stede to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 30 August, 1688. C.S.P.C., 1685-88, pp.584-5.

APPENDIX 7.'WHITE SLAVES' IN BARBADOS. (1).

'For the first they are not above seaven hundred and sixty considerable Proprietors; and not above 8,000 effective men, of which twoe thirds are of noe interest or repu<sup>t</sup>ation, and of little innate Courage, being poorem<sup>e</sup>n, that are just permitted to live, and a very great part Irish, derided by the Negroes, and branded with the Epithite of white slaves. And indeed, except the proprietors, Merchants, some trademen and those few officers, with their dependents... the rest are only such that have not reason enough to discern theire abuses... I have for my particular satisfaction inspected many theire Plantations, and have seene 30; sometimes 40, Christians, English, Scotch and Irish at worke in the parching sun without shirt, shoe or stocking, while theire Negroes have bin at worke at theire respective trades, in a good condition.'

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1. Some observations on the Island of Barbados; 1667, C O.

1/21, No.170.

APPENDIX 8.EXPERIENCE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS 'SOLD INTO  
SLAVERY' IN BARBADOS BY OLIVER CROMWELL. (1).

'Being sadly arrived there on the May 7, 1656, the master of the ship sold... the generality of them to most inhuman and barbarous persons, for one thousand five hundred and fifty pound weight of sugar a-piece, more or less, according to their working faculties, as the goods and Chattels of Martin Noell and Major Thomas, aldermen of London, and Captain H. Hatsell of Plymouth; neither sparing the aged of seventy-six years old, nor divines, nor gentlemen, nor officers, nor any age or condition of men, but rendering all alike in this inseparable captivity, they now generally grinding at the mills and attending at the furnaces, or digging in this scorching island; having nought to feed on (notwithstanding their hard labour) but potatoe roots, nor to drink, but water... being bought and sold still from one planter to another, or attached as horses and beast for the debt of their masters, being whipped at the whipping-posts (as rogues), for their masters' pleasure, and sleeping in sites worse than hogs in England, and many other ways made miserable, beyond expression or Christian imagination.'

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1. Petition of Foyle and Rivers, in Stock, L.F., Proceedings and Debates, p.249.



APPENDIX 9.CONDITION OF BARBADIAN POOR WHITES IN THE 1820s -  
PART A. (1).

'Of all the classes of people who inhabit Bridgetown, the poor whites are the lowest and most degraded; residing in the meanest hovels, they pay no attention either to neatness in their dwellings or cleanliness in their persons; and they subsist too often, to their shame let it be spoken, on the kindness and charity of slaves. I have never seen a more sallow, dirty, ill looking and unhappy race, the men lazy, the women disgusting; and the children neglected: all without any notion of principle, morality, or religion; forming a melancholy picture of living misery; and a strong contrast with the general appearance of happiness depicted on the countenances of the free black and coloured people, of the same class.'

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1. Bayley, F., Four Years' Residence in the West Indies  
(Lon., 1830), p.62.

APPENDIX 10.CONDITION OF BARBADIAN POOR WHITES IN THE 1820s -  
PART B. (1).

' In consequence of the large white population in Barbados there exist a class of people which I did not meet with in any other of the islands. By the laws of the colony every estate is obliged to maintain a certain number of whites in proportion to its extent... the greatest part of them live in a state of complete idleness, and are usually ignorant and debauched to the last degree. They will often walk half over the island to demand alms, and if you question them about their mode of life and habits of daily labour, they stare in your face as if they were actually unable to comprehend the meaning of your discourse. The women who will work at all, find employment in washing and mending the clothes of the negroes, and it is notorious that in many cases whole families of these 'free whites' depend for their subsistence on the charity of the slaves. Yet they are as proud as Lucifer himself, and in virtue of their freckled ditchwater faces consider themselves on a level with every gentleman in the island.'

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1. Coleridge, H., Six Months in the West Indies (Lon., 1826), pp.294-5.

APPENDIX 11.FROM SERVANTS TO 'REDLEGS'. (1).

'... there are in Barbados... a certain number, of so called 'mean whites' - 'Redlegs' they call them. They are largely the failures of families who have now been in some cases over three Centuries in the island, and so far from getting black they get bloodless in appearance and the sun has given to those parts of the body exposed to it a colour which finds its expression in the local name of 'Redlegs'... It is a most pitiable thing to see them wandering about with some of the conceit of the white blood, but none of the energy of the European.'

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1. Evidence of Quintin Hogg before the West Indies Royal Commission, 1897, app.C. part 1. p.6. P.R.O.



APPENDIX 12.COMPOSITION OF PHILIP BELL'S ESTATE,  
1641-56. (1)

200 acres from the Proprietor (Governor's Allowance).

50 acres bought from Henry Rycroft

10 acres ' ' John Ashurst

10 acres ' ' Charles Hilliard

10 acres ' ' Ralph Mountreteren

15 acres ' ' John Richardson

100 acres ' ' Richard Peers

15 acres ' ' Henry Futter

20 acres ' ' William Stretchley

9 acres ' ' Simon Mason

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1. Deeds of Barbados R B. 3/3ff 307, 310, 311, 160, 587, 571,  
710.

R B. 3/5ff 58.

R B. 3/7f 413 Bar.Arc.

Philip Bell bequeathed this plantation to his nephews, Francis and Philip Bell in 1659. The two nephews sold the estate in 1674 for £10,500.

Source: Will of Philip Bell, 1659, Bar.Arc. R B. 6/14f 344

Deed of sale of the Bell estate, 1674, R B. 3/7f 514,  
516. Bar.Arc.

APPENDIX 13.BIRTH OF THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT IN BARBADOS,  
1650-3.

The Navigation Acts of 1650 and 1651 made illegal the trade with Scotland for indentured labour, and the trade with Dutch merchants. Both of these trading connections were seen by the planters of the island as vital to the economic health of the colony. As a result they emerged a powerful movement, demanding political independence from the mother country.

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'...They call themselves the representatives of the island, and believe, if suffered, they will in time become the sole power. State of feeling among the inhabitants; many, if they could have preserved their families and estates from ruin would never have complied with you, for their hearts are not with you. Some persons had a design to make this place a free state, and not run any fortune with England, either in peace or war; this I know to be <sup>a</sup>truth....' (1)

'...The inhabitants of Barbados... delight to have the same form of government as England, and... although it may seem immodest, that two representatives should be chosen by the island to sit and vote in the English Parliament.' (2)

The planters, '... unsatisfied with the Constitution of England would model this little limb of the Commonwealth into a free State ...' (3)

....appendix 13 continue

1. John Baynes to Council of State, 30 June 1652, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660,p.384.
2. Col. Thomas Modyford to John Bradshaw, 16 Feb. 1652, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660,p.373.
3. Gov. Daniel Searle to Council of State, 19 Sept. 1653, C.S.P.C., 1574-1660,p. 408.



APPENDIX 14.EXTRACT FROM THE 1715 CENSUS OF BARBADOS  
INDICATING MISCEGENATION. (1)

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Mary H.      | of the negro extract  |
| Elizabeth X. | a mulatto born of a white woman   |
| Sarah M.     | a mulatto   |
| Edward S.    | of ye Portugees extract   |
| Elizabeth J. | born of the mulatto extract   |
| Mary K.      | the daughter of a white woman and begotten by<br>the extract of a negro |
| John L.      | a mulatto born of a white woman   |
| Jane L.      | white wife of John L.   |
| Thomas L.    | son of John and Jane  |

The census takers did not indicate whether or not these white women were indentured servants, freewomen, or women with higher social status.

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1. Memorandum summarising the returns of a census taken in the island of Barbados in the year 1715. Prepared by E.B. Burley, Bar.Arc.

APPENDIX 15.

THE WILL OF PETER HANCOCK, PLANTER OF ST. PETER  
PARISH, CONCERNING THE EDUCATION OF BARBADIAN  
POOR WHITE CHILDREN. (1)

'I doe freely give bequeath and devise all that my mansion house wherein I now dwell... together with all the land thereunto belonging being one and twenty acres... for the founding and effecting of a free school for teaching and instructing of youths ye sons of poor parents in Grammar and ye knowledge of ye Latin tongue and for ye maintainance of the said poor scholars and their Masters... I desire that the children of poor persons borne in London may have perform and be first asmitted... I will also that the said Trustees and their successors do yearly... pay on ye 25th March... 5 shillings sterling to all ye Scholars of ye foundation... to wear ye coats of Gray seage...'

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1. Will of Peter Hancóck, entered 3 April 1679. R B. 6/4 f.28-9.

Also the will of Thomas Moss, entered 6 October 1676 also provided for the '...education of such poore children...' of the colony. R B. 6/13, April, 1679, f.352. Bar.Arc.

APPENDIX 16.ESTIMATED POPULATION OF THE ENGLISH SUGAR ISLANDS,  
1660-1700. (1)

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>BARBADOS</u> |              | <u>JAMAICA</u> |              | <u>LEEWARD IS.</u> |              |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
|             | <u>WHITE</u>    | <u>BLACK</u> | <u>WHITE</u>   | <u>BLACK</u> | <u>WHITE</u>       | <u>BLACK</u> |
| 1660        | 22,000          | 20,000       | 3,000          | 500          | 8,000              | 2,000        |
| 1670        | 20,000          | 30,000       | 7,000          | 7,000        | 8,000              | 3,000        |
| 1680        | 20,000          | 40,000       | 12,000         | 15,000       | 11,000             | 9,000        |
| 1690        | 18,000          | 50,000       | 10,000         | 30,000       | 10,000             | 15,000       |
| 1700        | 15,000          | 40,000       | 7,000          | 40,000       | 7,000              | 20,000       |

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1. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.312.



APPENDIX 17.

THE VALUE OF FOREIGN TRADE OF THE BRITISH COLONIES  
WITH ENGLAND, 1697-1699. (1)

| <u>COLONY</u>         | <u>DEC.1697-DEC.1698</u> |                    | <u>DEC.1698-DEC.1699</u> |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
|                       | <u>EXPORTS (£)</u>       | <u>IMPORTS (£)</u> | <u>EXPORTS (£)</u>       | <u>IMPORTS (£)</u> |
| Barbados              | 308,089                  | 146,849            | 273,947                  | 150,968            |
| Jamaica               | 189,566                  | 120,774            | 174,844                  | 136,690            |
| Carolina              | 9,265                    | 18,460             | 12,326                   | 11,399             |
| Virginia/<br>Maryland | 174,052                  | 310,133            | 198,115                  | 205,074            |
| New England           | 31,254                   | 93,475             | 26,660                   | 127,277            |
| Nevis/Antigua         | 107,651                  | 35,303             | 184,297                  | 46,912             |

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1. Council of Trade and Plantations to the House of Commons,  
5 February 1702, C.S.P.C., 1702, f.69.

APPENDIX 18. - ECONOMIC TRENDS AND STRUCTURE OF BARBADOS AND JAMAICA, 1673-1710. (1)

|                          | <u>1673</u>  | <u>1683</u> | <u>1684</u>  | <u>1703</u> | <u>1710</u>  |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
|                          | <u>B'dos</u> | <u>Jam.</u> | <u>B'dos</u> | <u>Jam.</u> | <u>B'dos</u> |
| <u>Population</u>        |              |             |              |             |              |
| White                    | 21,309       | 8,564       | 17,187       | 9,000       | 7,000        |
| Black                    | 33,184       | 9,504       | 46,602       | -           | 45,000       |
|                          |              |             |              |             | 41,970       |
| <u>Sugar Plantations</u> | -            | -           | -            | -           | -            |
|                          |              |             |              |             | 485          |
| <u>Sugar Exports</u>     |              |             |              |             |              |
| Tons                     | 6,950        | 670         | -            | 3,586       | 4,337        |
| Value (£000)             | 250          | -           | -            | -           | 180          |
|                          |              |             |              |             | 267          |
| <u>Total Exports</u>     |              |             |              |             |              |
| Value (£000)             | 350          | -           | -            | -           | 287          |
|                          |              |             |              |             | 477          |

1. Tabulated from - Sheridan, R., The Development of the Plantations to 1750 (Kingston, 1970),

pp.29, 41.

APPENDIX 19.SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE WHITE POPULATION OF  
BARBADOS IN 1715. (1)

| <u>PARISH</u> | <u>MEN</u>   | <u>WOMEN</u> | <u>BOYS</u>  | <u>GIRLS</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| St. Michael   | 1,054        | 1,366        | 838          | 850          | 4,108         |
| Christ Church | 562          | 555          | 401          | 396          | 1,914         |
| St. Philip    | 590          | 757          | 679          | 597          | 2,622         |
| St. John      | 258          | 241          | 183          | 161          | 843           |
| St. George    | 330          | 293          | 249          | 230          | 1,102         |
| St. Joseph    | 299          | 275          | 191          | 204          | 969           |
| St. Andrew    | 286.         | 221          | 208          | 188          | 903           |
| St. James     | 243          | 218          | 166          | 148          | 775           |
| St. Thomas    | 330          | 279          | 255          | 218          | 1,082         |
| St. Peter     | 367          | 419          | 339          | 327          | 1,452         |
| St. Lucy      | 322          | 354          | 319          | 253          | 1,248         |
|               | <u>4,641</u> | <u>4,978</u> | <u>3,828</u> | <u>3,571</u> | <u>17,018</u> |

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1. Memorandum summarising the Returns of a census taken in the island of Barbados in the year 1715. Prepared by E.B. Burley.  
Bar.Arc.



Appendix 20. - A list of inhabitants, men, women, and children, and how many fitt to bear arms as also the number of negroes and how many fitt to bear aermes... taken by the several church warden belong to the several parishes of this islands, Aug. 16, 1712, Barbados. (1)

| <u>Parish</u> | <u>No. of Plantations</u> | <u>white men</u> | <u>white women</u> | <u>white children</u> | <u>men fitt to bear arms</u> | <u>No. of slaves</u> | <u>Slaves fitt to bear arms</u> |
|---------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| St. Peter     | 52                        | 339              | 436                | 611                   | 339                          | 3,708                | 930                             |
| St. Lucy      | 156                       | 302              | 345                | 561                   | 296                          | 2,742                | 684                             |
| St. Phillip   | 268                       | 421              | 588                | 996                   | 421                          | 5,991                | 1,552                           |
| St. John      | 156                       | 276              | 231                | 352                   | 276                          | 3,813                | 1,094                           |
| St. Joseph    | 184                       | 274              | 229                | 419                   | 255                          | 2,418                | 806                             |
| St. Thomas    | 179                       | 261              | 253                | 446                   | 252                          | 3,524                | 983                             |
| St. Michael   | 155                       | 830              | 918                | 1,251                 | 779                          | 8,551                | 2,289                           |
| St. Andrew    | 42                        | 257              | 200                | 325                   | 249                          | 3,307                | 916                             |
| St. James     | 33                        | 262              | 96                 | 94                    | 262                          | 2,652                | 610                             |
| St. George    | 84                        | 315              | 233                | 407                   | 309                          | 5,264                | 1,542                           |
| <u>totals</u> | <u>1,309</u>              | <u>3,537</u>     | <u>3,529</u>       | <u>5,462</u>          | <u>3,438</u>                 | <u>41,970</u>        | <u>11,406</u>                   |

1. Memorandum summarizing the returns of a census taken in the Island of Barbados in the year 1715, Bar. Arc.

APPENDIX 21.ESTIMATED SLAVE IMPORTS INTO BARBADOS, 1640-1707. (1)

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>TOTAL IMPORTED</u> | <u>ANNUAL AVERAGE</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1640-44     | 6,500                 | 1,300                 |
| 1645-72     | 56,800                | 2,030                 |
| 1673-89     | 37,000                | 2,180                 |
| 1690-97     | 23,300                | 2,910                 |
| 1698-1707   | 36,400                | 3,640                 |

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1. Curtin, P., The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census (Lon., 1975), p.55.

APPENDIX 22.

POPULATION STRUCTURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF BRIDGETOWN  
 COMPARED WITH PORT ROYAL (JAMAICA), 1680. (1)

|                                   | <u>PORT ROYAL</u> | <u>BRIDGETOWN</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| White Population                  | 2,086             | 1,488             |
| Slave Population                  | 845               | 1,439             |
| Total Population                  | 2,931             | 2,927             |
| Households                        | 507               | 405               |
| Single Householders               | 58                | 94                |
| Mean Number of Whites per Family  | 4.11              | 3.68              |
| Mean Number of Slaves per Family  | 1.67              | 3.55              |
| Mean Number of Persons per Family | 5.78              | 7.23              |

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1. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.180.



APPENDIX 23.BURIALS AND CHRISTENINGS IN BARBADOS, 1679/80  
AND 1683. (1)

| <u>PARISH</u> | <u>NO. OF WHITE<br/>HOUSEHOLDERS</u> | <u>CHRISTENINGS</u> |             | <u>BURIALS</u> |              |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
|               |                                      | <u>1679/80</u>      | <u>1683</u> | <u>1679/80</u> | <u>1683</u>  |
| St. Peter     | 208                                  | 71                  | 32          | 146            | 124          |
| St. John      | 124                                  | 72                  | 12          | 28             | 40           |
| St. Andrew    | 109                                  | 18                  | 12          | 44             | 36           |
| St. George    | 122                                  | 36                  | 40          | 66             | 67           |
| St. Lucy      | 437                                  | 94                  | 60          | 72             | 105          |
| St. Joseph    | 88                                   | 20                  | 9           | 35             | 45           |
| St. James     | 183                                  | 23                  | 29          | 44             | 60           |
| St. Thomas    | 192                                  | 35                  | 16          | 34             | 65           |
| St. Michael   | 1,031                                | 107                 | 99          | 421            | 343          |
| Christ Church | 410                                  | 93                  | 52          | 42             | 51           |
| St. Philip    | 407                                  | 61                  | 46          | 126            | 90           |
|               | <u>3,311</u>                         | <u>630</u>          | <u>407</u>  | <u>1,058</u>   | <u>1,026</u> |

1. -Governor Atkins to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 1 April  
1680, C O. 29/3, f.2.

-An Account of His Majesty's Island of Barbados and Government  
thereof. 1683. Sloane Mss. 2441, B.L.

APPENDIX 24.

POPULATION STRUCTURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF BARBADOS  
1683. (1)

| <u>PARISH</u> | <u>FAMILIES/<br/>HOUSEHOLDS</u> | <u>SERVANTS</u>   | <u>SLAVES</u>      | <u>MEN ABLE<br/>TO BEAR<br/>ARMS</u> |
|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| St. Michael   | 915                             | 451               | 5,663              | 1,145                                |
| St. Thomas    | 275                             | 258               | 4,070              | 578                                  |
| Christ Church | 425                             | 365               | 5,605              | 583                                  |
| St. John      | 165                             | 191               | 3,710              | 433                                  |
| St. Lucy      | 462                             | 75                | 2,536              | 508                                  |
| St. Joseph    | 151                             | 90                | 3,460              | 357                                  |
| St. George —  | 200                             | 274               | 5,222              | 627                                  |
| St. Philip    | 510                             | 206               | 5,181              | 802                                  |
| St. James     | 204                             | 210               | 3,582              | 489                                  |
| St. Andrew    | 172                             | 109               | 3,374              | 421                                  |
| St. Peter     | 577                             | 212               | 4,199              | 818                                  |
|               | <hr/> 4,056 <hr/>               | <hr/> 2,301 <hr/> | <hr/> 46,602 <hr/> | <hr/> 6,761 <hr/>                    |

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1. An Account of Barbados 1683... Sloane Mss. 2441, B.L.

APPENDIX 25.ESTIMATES OF BARBADOS POPULATION, 1655-1712. (1)

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>WHITE POP.</u> | <u>BLACK POP.</u> | <u>MEN ABLE TO<br/>ARMS</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1655        | 23,000            | 20,000            |                             |
| 1673        | 21,309            | 33,184            | 9,274                       |
| 1676        | 21,725            | 32,473            | 10,000                      |
| 1684        | 19,568            | 46,602            | 6,761                       |
| 1712        | 12,528            | 41,970            | 3,438                       |

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1. Harlow, V.T., History of Barbados, p.338.

Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.87.

Sloane Mss. 2441, ff.1-22. B.L.

Sir Peter Colleton to Council for Trade, 28 May 1673, C.S.P.C.,  
1669-74, No.1101.

Gov. Atkins to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 1 April 1679/80,  
C O. 29/2, f.2.



APPENDIX 26.THE EMIGRATION OF INDENTURED SERVANTS FROM LONDON  
1720-1732. (1)

| <u>DESTINATION</u>        | <u>NUMBER</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Jamaica                   | 1,146         |
| Maryland                  | 918           |
| Maryland or Virginia      | 44            |
| Virginia                  | 223           |
| Barbados                  | 31            |
| Pennsylvania              | 423           |
| Carolina, North and South | 27            |
| New England               | 32            |
| Antigua                   | 165           |
| St. Lucia                 | 24            |
| Nevis                     | 22            |
| Uncertain                 | 202           |
|                           | <hr/>         |
|                           | 3,257         |
|                           | <hr/>         |

1. Tabulated from - 'A register of Names and Surnames of those persons who have Voluntarily Contracted and bound themselves to go beyond the seas into His Majesty's Colony's and Plantations in America...'

City of London Corporation Archives.

APPENDIX 27.EXPANSION OF JAMAICA'S POPULATION, 1661-73. (1)

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>WHITE MEN</u> | <u>WHITE<br/>WOMEN</u> | <u>WHITE<br/>CHILDREN</u> | <u>BLACKS</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1661        | 2,458            | 454                    | 44                        | 514           | 3,470         |
| 1662        | 2,600            | 645                    | 408                       | 552           | 4,205         |
| 1673        | 4,050            | 2,006                  | 1,712                     | 9,504         | 17,272        |

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1. Account of the militia and inhabitants of Barbados, 1661,  
C.S.P.C., 1661-68, No.204.

Journal of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, 1663-1824 Vol.1.,  
(Jamaica, 1811-1829), pp.20-40.

APPENDIX 28.THE POPULATION OF THE LEEWARD ISLANDS, 1678. (1)

|                       | <u>NEVIS</u> | <u>ANTIGUA</u> | <u>ST. KITTS</u> | <u>MONTSERRAT</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <u>WHITE MEN</u>      |              |                |                  |                   |               |
| English               | 1,050        | 800            | 370              | 346               | 2,566         |
| Irish                 | 450          | 360            | 187              | 769               | 1,766         |
| Others                | 34           | 76             | 138              | 33                | 281           |
| <u>WHITE WOMEN</u>    |              |                |                  |                   |               |
| English               | 700          | 400            | 409              | 175               | 1,684         |
| Irish                 | 120          | 130            | -                | 410               | 660           |
| Others                | 8            | 14             | 130              | 6                 | 158           |
| <u>WHITE CHILDREN</u> |              |                |                  |                   |               |
| English               | 920          | 400            | 543              | 240               | 2,103         |
| Irish                 | 230          | 120            | -                | 690               | 1,040         |
| Others                | 9            | 8              | 120              | 13                | 150           |
| <u>TOTAL WHITES</u>   | <u>3,521</u> | <u>2,308</u>   | <u>1,897</u>     | <u>2,682</u>      | <u>10,408</u> |
| <u>BLACK MEN</u>      |              |                |                  |                   |               |
|                       | 1,422        | 805            | 550              | 400               | 3,177         |
| <u>BLACK WOMEN</u>    |              |                |                  |                   |               |
|                       | 1,321        | 868            | 500              | 300               | 2,989         |
| <u>BLACK CHILDREN</u> |              |                |                  |                   |               |
|                       | 1,100        | 499            | 386              | 292               | 2,283         |
| <u>TOTAL BLACKS</u>   | <u>3,849</u> | <u>2,172</u>   | <u>1,436</u>     | <u>992</u>        | <u>8,449</u>  |

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1. Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.127.



APPENDIX 29.EMIGRANTS FROM LONDON TO AMERICA, 1635. (1)

| <u>COLONY</u>  | <u>NO. OF SHIPS</u> | <u>NO. OF PASSENGERS</u> | <u>%</u> |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Barbados       | 8                   | 985                      | 20.1     |
| St. Kitts      | 5                   | 423                      | 8.6      |
| Bermuda        | 2                   | 220                      | 4.5      |
| Providence Is. | 1                   | 72                       | 1.5      |
| Virginia       | 20                  | 2,013                    | 34.7     |
| New England    | 17                  | 1,177                    | 24.1     |
| <u>TOTALS</u>  | <u>53</u>           | <u>4,890</u>             |          |

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1. Data printed in - Hotten, J.C., The Original List, pp.33-146.

APPENDIX 30.ESTIMATED SUGAR IMPORTS TO ENGLAND (IN TONS),  
1651-1700. (1)

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>BARBADOS</u> | <u>JAMAICA</u> | <u>LEEWARD IS.</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 1651        | 3,750           | -              | -                  |               |
| 1663        | 7,176           | -              | 1,000              | 8,176         |
| 1669        | 9,525           | 500            | 1,679              | 11,704        |
| 1678        | -               | 2,259          | 1,505 (Nevis)      |               |
| 1683        | 10,000          | 4,902          | 3,300              | 18,202        |
| 1698        | 15,587          | 6,004          | 5,060              | 26,651        |
| 1699        | 9,140           | 5,276          | 8,015              | 22,431        |
| 1700        | 12,170          | 4,474          | 6,812              | 23,456        |

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1. Adapted from - Dunn, R., Sugar and Slaves, p.203.

APPENDIX 31.LAND HELD BY THE MOST EMINENT PLANTERS OF BARBADOS,  
1673. (1)

| <u>ACRES</u> | <u>NUMBER OF PROPRIETORS</u> |       |
|--------------|------------------------------|-------|
| 200-299      | 15                           |       |
| 300-399      | 24                           |       |
| 400-499      | 14                           |       |
| 500-599      | 10                           |       |
| 600-699      | 6                            |       |
| 700-799      | 1                            |       |
| 800-899      | 2                            |       |
| 900-999      | 1                            |       |
| 1,000-1,001  | 1                            |       |
|              | <hr/>                        |       |
|              | 74                           | TOTAL |
|              | <hr/>                        |       |

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1. Sir Peter Colleton to Council for Trade, 28 May 1673,  
C.S.P.C., 1669-74, pp.495-97.



APPENDIX 32.ESTIMATED WEALTH OF BARBADOS IN 1731. (1)

|                                      |             |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 106,000 Acres of Land at £20/Acre    | £ 2,120,000 |
| 65,000 Negroes at £30 per head       | 1,950,000   |
| Sugar Mills, Buidings, Equipment     | 1,110,000   |
| 25,00 head of Cattle at £10 per head | 200,000     |
| 6,000 Horses at £20 per head         | 120,000     |
|                                      | <hr/>       |
| TOTAL                                | £ 5,500,000 |
|                                      | <hr/>       |

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1. Bennett, J., Two letters and several Calculations on the Sugar Colonies and Trade (Lon., 1738) p.19.

APPENDIX 33.ANNUAL AVERAGE PRICE OF MUSCOVADO SUGAR IN LONDON,  
1674-1700. (1)

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>PRICE PER CWT.</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1674        | 23s 6d                |
| 1676        | 23s 0d                |
| 1678        | 23s 0d                |
| 1680        | 22s 3d                |
| 1682        | 17s 3d                |
| 1684        | 19s 0d                |
| 1686        | 16s 9d                |
| 1688        | 25s 0d                |
| 1690        | 32s 0d                |
| 1692        | 29s 3d                |
| 1694        | 43s 0d                |
| 1696        | 54s 9d                |
| 1698        | 25s 3d                |
| 1700        | 38s 9d                |

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1. Sheridan, R., Sugar and Slavery, p.496, app.V.

APPENDIX 34.THE BRITISH SUGAR COLONIES: METHOD OF ACQUISITION  
AND LAND AREA. (1)

| <u>COLONY</u> | <u>HOW ACQUIRED</u> | <u>YEAR</u> | <u>AREA IN SQ. MILES</u> |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| St. Kitts     | Settled             | 1623        | 68                       |
| Barbados      | "                   | 1627        | 166                      |
| Nevis         | "                   | 1628        | 36                       |
| Antigua       | "                   | 1632        | 108                      |
| Montserrat    | '                   | 1632        | 39                       |
| Jamaica       | Conquered           | 1655        | 4,411                    |
| Dominica      | "                   | 1761        | 305                      |
| Grenada       | "                   | 1762        | 120                      |
| St. Vincent   | "                   | 1762        | 133                      |
| Tobago        | "                   | 1762        | 116                      |
|               |                     |             | 5,502                    |
|               |                     | TOTAL       | 5,502                    |



APPENDIX 35.

THE NETHERLAND PRICES OF SUGAR, COTTON, AND INDIGO  
1628-48. (1) (In Guilders per Dutch pound)

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>SUGAR</u> | <u>COTTON</u> | <u>INDIGO</u> |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1628        | 0.44         | 0.60          | 3.90          |
| 1630        | 0.57         | 0.53          | 3.72          |
| 1632        | 0.54         | 0.50          | 3.45          |
| 1634        | 0.50         | 0.48          | 3.75          |
| 1636        | 0.52         | 0.50          | 3.83          |
| 1638        | 0.54         | 0.38          | 4.43          |
| 1640        | 0.49         | 0.34          | 8.10          |
| 1642        | 0.34         | 0.29          | 5.25          |
| 1645        | 0.39         | 0.56          | 3.15          |
| 1646        | 0.57         | 0.61          | 2.78          |
| 1648        | 0.43         | 0.28          | 2.31          |

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1. Posthumous, N., Inquiry into the History of Prices in Holland,  
 Vol.1. (Leiden, 1946), pp.119, 281, 415-6.

APPENDIX 36.EMIGRATION OF SERVANTS FROM BRISTOL, 1654-86. (1)

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>BARBADOS</u> | <u>VIRGINIA</u> | <u>NEVIS</u> | <u>NEW ENGLAND</u> | <u>JAMAICA</u> | <u>MARYLAND</u> | <u>TOTALS</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1654        | 16              | 40              | 1            | -                  | -              | -               | 57            |
| 1655        | 154             | 115             | 2            | -                  | -              | -               | 269           |
| 1656        | 194             | 136             | -            | -                  | -              | -               | 336           |
| 1657        | 357             | 79              | 2            | 1                  | -              | -               | 617           |
| 1658        | 273             | 172             | 27           | 6                  | -              | -               | 771           |
| 1659        | 415             | 254             | 11           | -                  | -              | 1               | 786           |
| 1660        | 277             | 167             | 72           | -                  | -              | 4               | 592           |
| 1661        | 117             | 334             | 233          | -                  | -              | -               | 715           |
| 1662        | 105             | 510             | 179          | 27                 | 13             | 4               | 842           |
| 1663        | 61              | 157             | 130          | 28                 | -              | 4               | 399           |
| 1664        | 62              | 120             | 54           | 11                 | -              | -               | 258           |
| 1665        | 24              | 241             | 29           | 1                  | 1              | 2               | 308           |
| 1666        | 70              | 255             | 2            | 3                  | -              | 4               | 334           |
| 1667        | 106             | 221             | 22           | 1                  | -              | -               | 350           |
| 1668        | 83              | 280             | 18           | 9                  | -              | 2               | 392           |
| 1669        | 43              | 199             | 72           | 11                 | 7              | -               | 333           |
| 1670        | 45              | 158             | 75           | 9                  | 10             | 14              | 329           |
| 1671        | 41              | 147             | 63           | 8                  | 14             | 4               | 285           |
| 1672        | 10              | 192             | 20           | -                  | 7              | 16              | 254           |
| 1673        | 12              | 63              | 9            | -                  | 2              | 5               | 92            |
| 1674        | 46              | 186             | 108          | 13                 | -              | 6               | 365           |
| 1675        | 22              | 283             | 48           | 12                 | 10             | 9               | 393           |
| 1676        | 27              | 158             | 9            | -                  | 9              | 13              | 223           |
| 1677        | 22              | 120             | 10           | 2                  | 32             | 9               | 201           |
| 1678        | 12              | 133             | 16           | 7                  | -              | 5               | 178           |
| 1679        | 15              | 37              | 21           | 8                  | 6              | -               | 93            |
| 1680        | 6               | 45              | 5            | -                  | 7              | 16              | 79            |
| 1684        | 33              | 24              | 4            | 1                  | 49             | 9               | 131           |
| 1685        | 17              | 47              | 5            | 1                  | 299            | 10              | 388           |
| 1686        | 17              | 1               | -            | 3                  | 2              | -               | 24            |
|             | <u>2,678</u>    | <u>4,874</u>    | <u>1,247</u> | <u>162</u>         | <u>468</u>     | <u>137</u>      | <u>10,394</u> |

APPENDIX 36. Continued...

1. 'Tolzey Book', City of Bristol Archives, printed in -  
Harding, N.D., ed., Bristol and America: A Record of the  
First Settlers in the Colonies of North  
America, 1654-1685 (Bristol, N.D.)



APPENDIX 37.

ANGLO-AMERICAN TOBACCO PRICES, 1624-1650. (1)  
(In Pence per lb.)

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>PRICE</u> |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1624        | 36, 24       |
| 1625        | 12, 36       |
| 1628        | 9            |
| 1630        | 2            |
| 1632        | 6            |
| 1634        | 1, 6, 4-6    |
| 1636        | 2-3          |
| 1638        | 4-5          |
| 1640        | 1, 1-5       |
| 1642        | 1            |
| 1645        | 1-2          |
| 1646        | 1-2          |
| 1649        | 3            |
| 1650        | 3            |

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1. Morgan, E.S., 'The First American Boom' p.177.

C.S.P.D., 1628-29, Vol.3. p.411.

Batie, R.C., 'Why Sugar ?' p.29.

Beer, G.L., The Origins of the British Colonial System, 1578-1660 (Mass., 1959), pp.93-4.

Gray, L.C., History of Agriculture, Vol.1. p.260.

APPENDIX 38.THE WILL OF RONALD HOTTEN, 24 JULY 1680. (1)

I give to my four negroes named Jugg, Gamba, Gaskin, and Tom to have sufficient provisions and cloaths allowed them until they shall be all free and to remain in their houses where they now live and upon their freedom to have four acres of land....'

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Acts and Minutes of Barbados Assembly,  
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Barbados Colonial Entry Books

Correspondence of Governors, Councils and  
Assemblies to Boards of Trade, and the  
Lords of Trade and Plantations  
1627-1720----- C O.29/1 - 15  
1689-1720----- C O.28/1 - 12

Misc. Entries of Governors, Councils and  
Assemblies in Seventeenth Century----- C O.1/1 - 30

Mss. Laws of Jamaica, 1662-1674----- C O.139/1

Mss. Laws of the Leeward Islands,  
1644-1673----- C O.154/1

High Court of Admiralty Papers----- Bundle 30/636

Correspondence of Governors, Assemblies,  
and Councils of the Leeward Islands to  
Whitehall, 1670-1720----- C O.153/1

Census of the Leeward Islands, 1678----- C O.1/42, 193-  
243

Report of Gov. Stapleton on the condition  
of the Leeward Islands, Nov. 1676----- C O.153/2, 139-  
190

Minutes of the General Assemblies of the  
Leeward Islands----- C O.1/50, C.O.155/1

Census of Jamaica, Port Royal, May 1680----- C O.1/45, f97-109

Account of Negroes shipped and sold in Barbados  
by the Royal Africa Company, 1680-88----- C O.318/2 - 11

Papers of the Ryal Africa Company, Treasury  
Series----- T. 70/57, 12



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Wills of Barbados, 1648-1720 R B. 6 Series

Census of Barbados 1679-80

Census of Barbados 1715

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Baptism and Burials data for Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Elsewhere in Barbados

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|--------------|---|
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| Davis Mss.   | 1865, C9 (68)   |
| Sloane Mss.  | 2902, 2441, 3662, 1519  |
| Add. Mss.    | 33845   |
| "            | 12410   |
| "            | 11411 (containing the correspondence of Mr. Povey, a leading West India merchant 1655-1661) |
| "            | 28089   |
| Stowe Mss.   | 324   |

Other Mss.

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Helyar Mss. Somerset Records Office, Taunton.

Davis Mss. Royal Commonwealth Society.

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