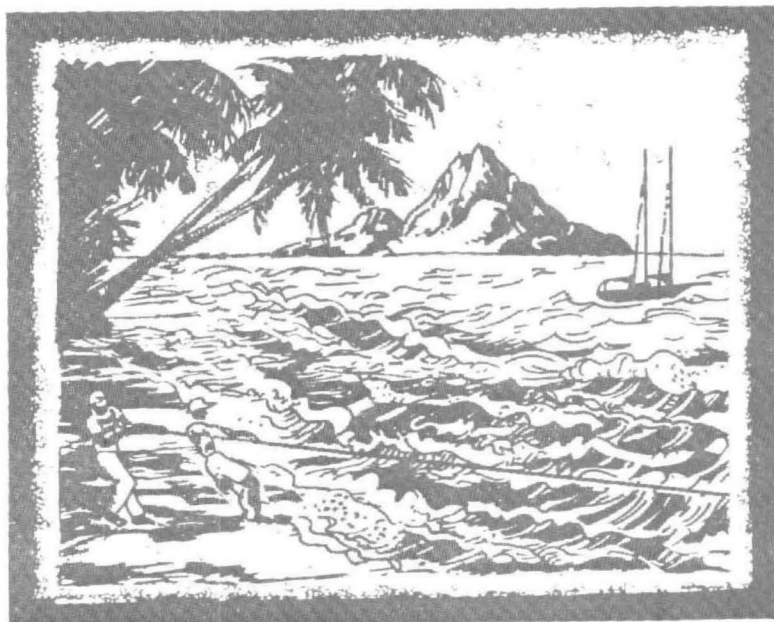# Islands of the Commonwealth Caribbean

a regional study

Islands of the Commonweath Caribbean
a regional study

On the cover: Fishermen drawing in their nets

First Edition, First Printing, 1989.

Headquarters, Department of the Army
DA Pam 550-33

Foreword

This volume is one in a continuing series of books now being prepared by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress under the Country Studies—Area Handbook Program. The last page of this book lists the other published studies.

Most books in the series deal with a particular foreign country, describing and analyzing its political, economic, social, and national security systems and institutions, and examining the interrelationships of those systems and the ways they are shaped by cultural factors. Each study is written by a multidisciplinary team of social scientists. The authors seek to provide a basic understanding of the observed society, striving for a dynamic rather than a static portrayal. Particular attention is devoted to the people who make up the society, their origins, dominant beliefs and values, their common interests and the issues on which they are divided, the nature and extent of their involvement with national institutions, and their attitudes toward each other and toward their social system and political order.

The books represent the analysis of the authors and should not be construed as an expression of an official United States government position, policy, or decision. The authors have sought to adhere to accepted standards of scholarly objectivity. Corrections, additions, and suggestions for changes from readers will be welcomed for use in future editions.

Louis R. Mortimer
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Acknowledgments

Timothy L. Merrill, and Marjorie F. Thomas wrote the geography sections in chapters 2 through 6. Timothy L. Merrill also supplied the authors with data on telecommunications and transportation. Glennon J. Harrison assisted in the development of an outline for the book and performed initial research on Jamaica's economy and society.

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Preface

This study is an attempt to treat in a compact and objective manner the dominant social, political, economic, and military aspects of the contemporary islands of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Sources of information included scholarly books, journals, and monographs; official reports of governments and international organizations; numerous periodicals; and interviews with individuals having special competence in Caribbean affairs. Chapter bibliographies appear at the end of the book; brief comments on sources recommended for further reading appear at the end of each chapter or country section. Measurements are given in the metric system; a conversion table is provided to assist readers unfamiliar with metric measurements (see table 1, Appendix A). A glossary is also included.
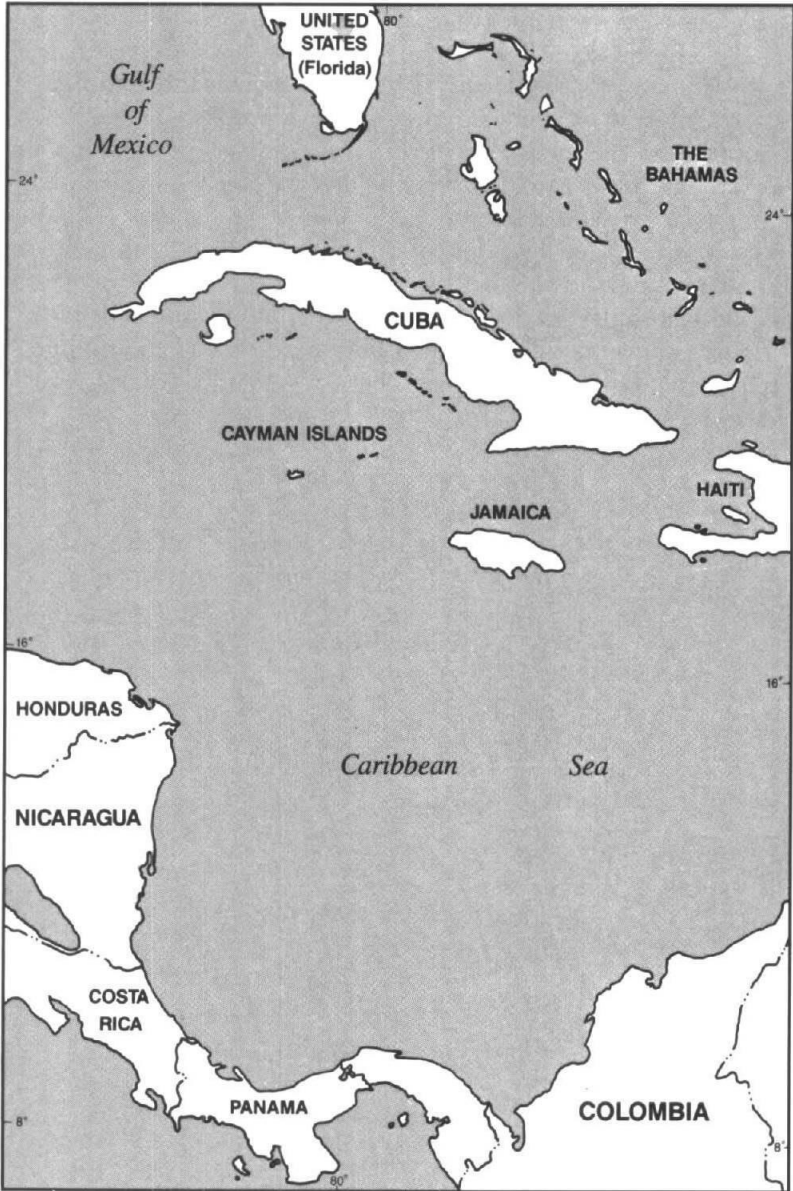
Figure 1. The Caribbean, 1987
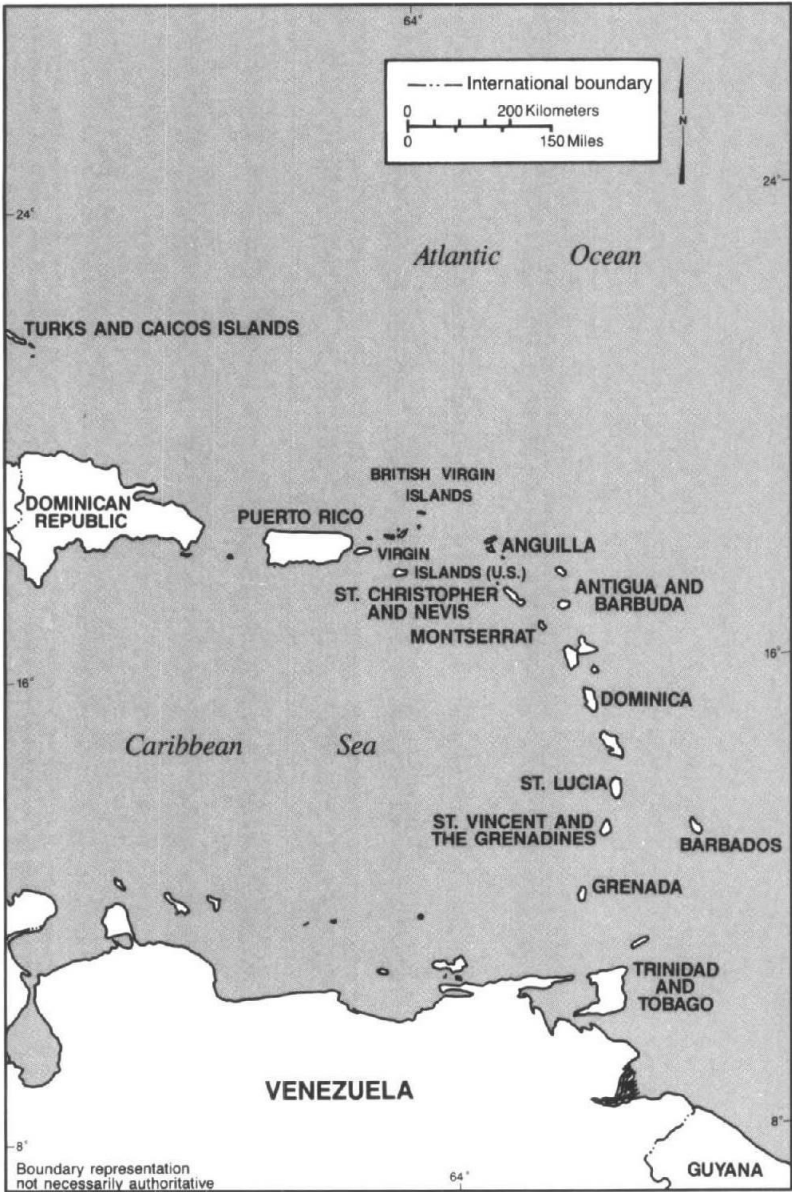
Introduction

THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN is the term applied to the English-speaking islands in the Carribbean and the mainland nations of Belize (formerly British Honduras) and Guyana (formerly British Guiana) that once constituted the Caribbean portion of the British Empire. This volume examines only the islands of the Commonwealth Caribbean, which are Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, the Windward Islands (Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada), Barbados, the Leeward Islands (Antigua and Barbuda, St. Christopher [hereafter, St. Kitts] and Nevis, the British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, and Montserrat), and the so-called Northern Islands (the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands).

To the casual observer, these islands might appear to be too disparate to allow for a common discussion. Consider, for instance, the differences in population, size, income, ethnic composition, and political status among the various islands. Anguilla's 7,000 residents live on an island totaling 91 square kilometers, whereas Jamaica has a population of 2.3 million and a territory of nearly 11,000 square kilometers. The per capita gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary) of the Cayman Islands is nearly fourteen times as large as that of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Trinidad and Tobago's population is evenly divided between blacks and East Indians, a pattern quite different from that on the other islands, on which blacks constitute an overwhelming majority. Although most of the islands are independent nations, five (the British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Montserrat, the Cayman Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands) remain British dependencies.

These and other differences, however, should not obscure the extensive ties that bind the islands of the Commonwealth Caribbean. For instance, the islands' populations clearly regard themselves as distinct from their Latin American neighbors and identify more closely with the British Commonwealth of Nations than with Latin America (see Appendix B). All of the Commonwealth Caribbean islands except Grenada supported Britain's actions during the 1982 South Atlantic War in the Falkland/Malvinas Islands, in sharp contrast to the strong Latin American defense of the Argentine position.

This perceived distinctiveness emerged from the islands' shared historical experiences. Their transformation during the seventeenth century from a tobacco- to a sugar-based economy permanently

changed life on the islands, as a plantation society employing African slave labor replaced the previous society of small landholders (see The Sugar Revolutions and Slavery, ch. 1). By the early nineteenth century, blacks constituted at least 80 percent of the population in all but one of the British Caribbean islands. The exception was Trinidad, which had begun bringing in large numbers of slaves only in the 1780s and 1790s. When the British abolished slavery in the Caribbean in the 1830s, Trinidadian planters imported indentured labor from India to work the sugarcane fields. Despite their numerical minority, whites continued to control political and economic affairs throughout the islands. Indeed, the all-white House of Assembly in Jamaica abolished itself in 1865 rather than share power with blacks. This abrogation of local assemblies and establishment of crown colony government (see Glossary) was the norm in the British Caribbean in the late 1800s and impeded the development of political parties and organizations.

Demands for political reform quickened after World War I with the appearance of a nascent middle class and the rise of trade unions. In the mid-1930s, the islands became engulfed by riots spawned by the region's difficult economic conditions (see Labor Organizations, ch. 1). The riots demonstrated the bankruptcy of the old sugar plantation system and sounded the death knell for colonial government. Beginning in the 1940s, the British allowed increasing levels of self-government and encouraged the emergence of moderate black political leaders. As a prelude to political independence for the region, the British established a federation in 1958 consisting of ten island groupings. The West Indies Federation succumbed, however, to the parochial concerns of the two largest members—Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago—both of which declared independence in 1962. Between 1966 and 1983, eight additional independent nations were carved out of the British Caribbean.

These ten island nations are located in a strategically significant area. Merchant or naval shipping from United States ports in the Gulf of Mexico—including resupply of North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces in wartime—cross narrow Caribbean passages that constitute ''choke points.'' The Caribbean Basin also links United States naval forces operating in the North Atlantic and South Atlantic areas and provides an important source of many raw materials imported by the United States (see Current Strategic Considerations, ch. 7).

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the United States asserted its interest in the Caribbean by frequently intervening in the affairs of the Hispanic islands. It did not involve

itself, however, in the British colonies, a difference that may explain the relatively harmonious state of relations between the United States and the Commonwealth Caribbean islands when compared with the often contentious tone evident in United States-Latin American interactions. During World War II, and especially after 1960, the United States began to assume Britain's security and defense responsibilities for the Commonwealth Caribbean. Nonetheless, Britain continued to provide police training and remained an important trading partner with the region.

The political systems of the Commonwealth Caribbean nations paradoxically are both stable and fragile. All have inherited strong democratic traditions and parliamentary systems of government formed on the Westminster model. Political succession generally has been handled peacefully and democratically. For example, Barbados' Parliament deftly coped with the deaths in office of prime ministers J.M.G.M. "Tom" Adams in 1985 and Errol Barrow in 1987. At the same time, however, the multi-island character of many of these nations makes them particularly susceptible to fragmentation. The British had hoped to lessen the vulnerability of the smaller islands by making them part of larger, more viable states. This policy often was resented deeply by the unions' smaller partners, who charged that the larger islands were neglecting them. The most contentious case involved one of the former members of the West Indies Federation, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla. In 1967 Anguillans evicted the Kittitian police force from the island and shortly thereafter declared independence. Despite the landing of British troops on the island two years later, Anguilla continued to resist union with St. Kitts and Nevis. Ultimately, the British bowed to Anguillan sentiments and administered the island as a separate dependency. Separatist attitudes also predominated in Nevis; the situation there was resolved, however, by granting Nevisians extensive local autonomy and a guaranteed constitutional right of secession.

The fragility of these systems also has been underscored in the 1980s by a reliance on violence for political ends. Grenada, Dominica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines offered the most dramatic examples (see Regional Security Threats, 1970–81, ch. 7). Over a four-year span, Grenada experienced the overthrow of a democratically elected but corrupt administration, the establishment of the self-styled People's Revolutionary Government (PRG), the bloody collapse of the PRG and its replacement by the hard-line Revolutionary Military Council, and the intervention of United States troops and defense and police forces from six Commonwealth Caribbean nations (Jamaica, Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica,

St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines). In 1981 the Dominican government foiled a coup attempt involving a former prime minister, the country's defense force, the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, mercenaries, and underworld elements from the United States. Several months later, members of the then-disbanded defense force attacked Dominica's police headquarters and prison in an effort to free the coup participants. In 1979 Rastafarians (see Glossary) seized the airport, police station, and revenue office on Union Island in the Grenadines.

Most of the island governments were quite unprepared to deal with political violence; indeed, only five—Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago—have defense forces, the largest of which has only a little over 2,000 members. In response, the governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines signed a regional security accord that allowed for the coordination of defense efforts and the establishment of paramilitary units drawn from the islands' police forces. Nonetheless, Commonwealth Caribbean leaders generally opposed creating a regional army and contended that such a force might eventually threaten democracy in the region (see A Regional Security System; Controversial Security Issues, ch. 7).

Drug trafficking represents an additional threat to the islands' political systems. The Caribbean has become increasingly important as a transit point for the transshipment of narcotics from Latin America to the United States. Narcotics traffickers have offered payoffs to Caribbean officials to ensure safe passage of their product through the region. Numerous examples abound of officials prepared to enter into such arrangements. In 1985 a Miami jury convicted Chief Minister Norman Saunders of the Turks and Caicos Islands of traveling to the United States to engage in narcotics transactions. A year later, a Trinidadian and Tobagonian government report implicated cabinet members, customs officials, policemen, and bank executives in a conspiracy to ship cocaine to the United States. Bahamian prime minister Lynden O. Pindling frequently has been accused of personally profiting from drug transactions, charges that he vehemently denied. The most recent accusation came in January 1988, when a prosecution witness in the Jacksonville, Florida, trial of Colombian cocaine trafficker Carlos Lehder Rivas claimed that Lehder paid Pindling US$88,000 per month to protect the Colombian's drug operations.

Yet the greatest challenges facing the Commonwealth Caribbean in the 1980s were not political but economic. The once-dominant sugar industry was beset by inefficient production, falling yields,

a steady erosion of world prices, and a substantial reduction in United States import quotas. The unemployment level on most of the islands hovered at around 20 percent, a figure that would have been much higher were it not for continued Caribbean emigration to Britain, the United States, and Canada. Ironically, however, because the islands' education systems failed to train workers for a technologically complex economy, many skilled and professional positions went unfilled. In addition, the islands were incapable of producing most capital goods required for economic growth and development; imports of such goods helped generate balance of payments deficits and increasing levels of external indebtedness.

In the early 1980s, regional leaders hoped that President Ronald Reagan's administration's Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) would produce a substantial rise in exports to the United States, thus alleviating economic problems (see Appendix D). The most important part of the CBI—the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA) of 1983—allowed eligible Caribbean nations duty-free access to the United States for most exports until 1995. The CBERA, however, excluded some of the region's most important exports, such as textiles, apparel, footwear, and sugar. Although nontraditional exports from the Caribbean to the United States increased during the first five years of the CBI, Caribbean governments expressed disappointment with the program's overall results. Legislation introduced in the United States Congress in 1987 called for an extension of the CBI until 2007, an expansion of products included under the duty-free access provision, and a restoration of sugar quotas to 1984 levels. Although the status of the bill remained uncertain in mid-1988, few analysts anticipated changes in sugar import quotas.

Despite the generally troubling economic picture, the tourist sector demonstrated considerable vitality in the 1980s. Commonwealth Caribbean nations successfully marketed the region's beauty, climate, and beaches to a receptive North American and West European audience. As a result, many of the nations achieved dramatic increases in tourist arrivals and net earnings from tourism. For example, the number of foreign visitors to the Bahamas climbed from 1.7 million in 1982 to 3 million in 1986. The British Virgin Islands recorded 161,625 visitors in 1984, an increase of 91,338 as compared with 1976. Jamaica doubled its earnings over the 1980–86 period to stand at US$437 million in 1986. At the same time, however, the sector became quite susceptible to occasional slumps in the United States economy. Two months after the October 1987 stock market crash on Wall Street, tourist arrivals in Jamaica declined by 10 percent compared with the previous year.

In an effort to minimize their overall economic vulnerability, the independent nations of the Commonwealth Caribbean and the British crown colony of Montserrat established the Caribbean Community and Common Market (Caricom—see Appendix C) in 1973. Caricom had a number of goals, the most important of which were economic integration through the creation of a regional common market, diversification and specialization of production, and functional cooperation.

The organization's greatest success was in the area of functional cooperation; by the late 1980s, almost two dozen regional institutions had been created, including the University of the West Indies, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Caribbean Meteorological Council, the West Indies Shipping Corporation (WISCO), and the Caribbean Marketing Enterprise. Not all members of Caricom felt that they shared equitably in the services provided by these institutions, however. In 1987, for example, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Belize withdrew from WISCO, claiming that the corporation had provided them with few benefits.

Despite success in functional cooperation, Caricom has an uneven track record in achieving economic integration and diversification and specialization. Although members registered substantial increases in intraregional trade during the 1973–81 period, much duplication of production occurred. Over the next five years, intraregional trade declined by more than 50 percent, the result in part of the adoption of protectionist measures by the region's largest consumer, Trinidad and Tobago. In 1987 the cause of regional integration was revived somewhat by Trinidad and Tobago's decision to repeal the provisions in question and by the Caricom members' joint pledge to remove all barriers to intraregional trade by the end of the third quarter of 1988. Even if this commitment is honored, however, depressed demand in the region will inhibit exports.

The most extensive level of cooperation has occurred among seven small islands and island groupings of the Eastern Caribbean (see Glossary). The seven—Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines—have a long history of integration that includes a common market, shared currency, and joint supreme court. In 1981 they formed the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS—see Glossary) as a Caricom associate institution to provide for enhanced economic, foreign policy, and defense cooperation. In May 1987 OECS leaders announced an agreement in principle to form one nation and called for referenda to be held on each island to approve or reject the proposed union. The original

plan actually envisaged two separate votes: the first, scheduled for mid-1988, to determine whether unification was desired, and a subsequent ballot the following year to specify the kind of government of the new state. If approved, the union would be established in late 1989 or early 1990.

The fate of the proposed OECS political union remained uncertain as of May 1988. Although Antigua and Barbuda's prime minister Vere Cornwall Bird, Sr., announced his opposition to the plan in July 1987, the other six heads of government continued to support unification. Nonetheless, these leaders resisted demands from ten opposition parties to provide specific details of the proposed venture prior to the first vote. This resistance perhaps stemmed from the leaders' perception that most islanders favored unification in some form; indeed, even the opposition parties—under the banner of the Standing Committee of Popular Democratic Parties of the Eastern Caribbean (SCOPE)—felt compelled to endorse the idea of union. Still, SCOPE and others raised many issues that needed to be resolved. How much political authority would the six states retain under an OECS government? Would the states be granted equal representation in one of the houses of an OECS parliament? Would civil service employees be subject to transfer anywhere in the new state? Would a uniform wage structure be enacted for these employees? Would Nevisians continue to have local autonomy and a right of secession? Would Montserratians support independence? Thus, a positive vote in the first referenda might lead to contentious debates in the Eastern Caribbean in 1989.

Dynamic political activity was also in evidence in early 1988 in the Turks and Caicos Islands and Trinidad and Tobago. In March 1988 the People's Democratic Movement (PDM) crushed the Progressive National Party (PNP) in parliamentary elections in the Turks and Caicos, winning eleven of thirteen seats; PDM leader Oswald Skippings became the islands' chief minister. The elections were the first held in the Turks and Caicos since the British imposed direct British rule on the territory in July 1986 (see British Dependencies: The Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands, Government and Politics, ch. 6). That action was taken after a Royal Commission of Inquiry found the chief minister and PNP head, Nathaniel "Bops" Francis, guilty of unconstitutional behavior and ministerial malpractices. Interestingly, the commission also determined that then-PDM deputy leader Skippings was unfit for public office.

The continued decline in 1987 of the economy in Trinidad and Tobago placed considerable strains on the ruling National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR). Against a backdrop of sharp reductions

in the GDP and in public expenditures, Prime Minister A.N.R. Robinson openly feuded with the former leaders of the East Indian-based United Labour Front, one of four political parties that had merged to create the NAR—the others being the Democratic Action Congress (DAC), the Organization for National Reconstruction (ONR), and Tapia House (see Political Dynamics, ch. 3). In November 1987 Robinson fired the minister of works, John Humphrey, for criticizing the government's economic performance. In response, Humphrey accused the prime minister of failing to consult with cabinet members. In January 1988, external affairs minister and the NAR deputy leader Basdeo Panday, public utilities minister Kelvin Ramnath, and junior finance minister Trevor Sudama participated in a meeting of over 100 NAR dissidents seeking Robinson's ouster; the prime minister dismissed the three from his cabinet the following month. Although each side accused the other of trying to divide the nation between blacks and East Indians, neither called for the breakup of NAR. All of the sacked ministers remained as NAR members of the House of Representatives; Panday also resumed his duties as president of the All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factory Workers Trade Union.

Thus, the Commonwealth Caribbean islands offer a study in contrast, and sometimes conflict, within their individual boundaries and among themselves. A region gifted by abundant natural beauty and a pleasant climate, it looks to North America to generate increasing tourist dollars. Yet the islands also seek to maintain their independence from North American and West European dominance. Beset by internal bickering, the region nevertheless has seen economic interdependency blossom among some of its parts. Although distinct from Latin America, it suffers from some of the same ills, including the infiltration of the drug trade into its politics. It is a region that could be on the brink of true cooperation or on the path of further disunity.

May 26, 1988

*   *   *

Significant developments occurred in a number of Commonwealth Caribbean islands in the months following completion of research and writing of this book. Jamaica experienced a devastating hurricane and also held a general election that resulted in a change in government. Voters also cast their ballots in general elections in three other island groupings: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda,

and St. Kitts and Nevis. Finally, Trinidad and Tobago was beset by continued economic problems and a fragmentation of its ruling party.

On September 12, 1988, Hurricane Gilbert roared through Jamaica with winds gusting at up to 280 kilometers per hour, thus qualifying it as the strongest storm ever recorded in the Western Hemisphere. The hurricane, described by Prime Minister Edward Seaga as the worst disaster in Jamaica's modern history, resulted in the deaths of over 30 people and the displacement of 20 percent of the population. Analysts estimated damage to the economy at US$1.3 billion. Agriculture was particularly hard hit; for example, the hurricane destroyed virtually all of the country's banana plantations.

As the nation grappled with the impact of Hurricane Gilbert, Jamaica's most famous politicians—Seaga and Michael Manley—prepared to face the voters in the first contested general election since 1980. Both Seaga and Manley carried heavy baggage into the electoral campaign. Although credited with attracting foreign aid and investment and strengthening tourism, Seaga was also attacked for slashing government spending on education, health, and housing. Many analysts contended that the quality of life for Jamaica's poor majority had declined during Seaga's eight years in office. In addition, polls indicated that Jamaicans generally viewed Seaga as an aloof leader. Manley, in turn, had to defend his own controversial record of leadership. As prime minister during the 1970s, Manley abrogated agreements with international aluminum companies, feuded with the International Monetary Fund (IMF—see Glossary), promoted a "new international economic order," and developed close relations with Cuba (see Role of Government; Foreign Relations, ch. 2). Critics asserted that the election of Manley would chill Jamaica's strong relations with the United States.

Responding to these criticisms, Manley sought during the campaign to present himself as a moderate leader who had learned much from the celebrated battles of the 1970s. Manley stressed the importance of close relations with the United States, pledged cooperation with foreign investors and the Jamaican business community, and promised to continue payments on the nation's estimated US$4-billion debt. By the close of the campaign, Manley had assuaged fears that he was too radical to lead Jamaica into the 1990s. On February 9, 1989, Manley's People's National Party scored a landslide victory, claiming almost 57 percent of the popular vote and 44 of the 60 seats in the House of Representatives. After assuming the prime ministership, Manley indicated that he would give top priority to an expansion of education and social services.

However, with almost half of all foreign exchange earnings committed to debt servicing, many analysts contended that Jamaica lacked the resources to fund an ambitious social agenda.

In contrast to Jamaica, incumbents won elections in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, and St. Kitts and Nevis. Emile Gumbs retained his post as Anguilla's chief minister, although he needed the support of an independent candidate. Gumbs's Anguilla National Alliance captured three of the seven seats in the House of Assembly elections of February 27, 1989. The Anguilla United Party won two seats and the Anguilla Democratic Party, one. Gumbs's control of the government was assured, however, by the election of independent candidate Osbourne Fleming to the remaining House seat. Fleming, who served as finance and education minister in the previous government, again supported Gumbs's bid for the chief ministership. On March 9, 1989, voters in Antigua and Barbuda gave an overwhelming victory to Prime Minister Bird and his Antigua Labour Party (ALP). The ALP captured fifteen of the sixteen House of Representatives seats contested in Antigua; the remaining seat went to the United National Democratic Party. The Barbuda People's Movement claimed the seventeenth House seat, which is reserved for the residents of Barbuda. On March 21, 1989, Prime Minister Kennedy Simmonds led his People's Action Movement (PAM) to victory in the St. Kitts and Nevis National Assembly elections. PAM won six of the eight seats contested in St. Kitts, the remainder going to the Labour Party. PAM's coalition partner, the Nevis Reformation Party, claimed two of the three Assembly seats from Nevis. A new party, Concerned Citizens Movement, won the other Nevis seat.

Although general elections in Trinidad and Tobago were not expected until late 1991, the nation's economic woes helped erode support for the Robinson government. In July 1988, the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago announced the exhaustion of its international reserves—a stunning development for a nation whose reserves totalled US$3.3 billion in 1981. Faced with the need to finance an estimated US$1.8-billion foreign debt, Robinson submitted a request to the IMF in November 1988 for a 14-month Standby Arrangement totaling US$547 million. In exchange for assistance, Robinson pledged to reduce public spending from 7 percent to 4 percent of GDP, to trim the size of the public sector workforce by 15 percent over the next 2 years, to seek a delay in a court-ordered cost of living allowance (COLA), to enact a total liberalization of imports by 1990, and to eliminate price controls on all products except those deemed critical to low-income residents.

One month after the January 1989 IMF approval of the Standby Arrangement, Robinson received legislative support for a 10-percent pay cut for public employees and a 2-year suspension of the COLA payments.

The economic crisis proved too large a stumbling block for continued unity within the NAR. In September 1988, the NAR National Council expelled Panday, Ramnath, and Sudama from the party after the three established their own movement—the Caucus of Love, Unity, and Brotherhood (more commonly known as Club '88)—and persisted in their criticisms of government policies. Following the expulsions, Tapia House withdrew from the NAR, leaving the ruling party with only the former members of the DAC and the ONR. In early 1989, Panday announced that Club '88 supporters would meet on April 30, 1989, to create a new political party, the United National Congress. Trinidadians and Tobagonians anticipated a bitter political struggle over the next two years.

April 10, 1989   Dennis M. Hanratty

Chapter 1. Regional Overview

Arawak carving of a dog's head from a conch shell

THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN ISLANDS have a distinctive history. Permanently influenced by the experiences of colonialism and slavery, the Caribbean has produced a collection of societies that are markedly different in population composition from those in any other region of the world.

Lying on the sparsely settled periphery of an irregularly populated continent, the region was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Thereafter, it became the springboard for the European invasion and domination of the Americas, a transformation that historian D.W. Meinig has aptly described as the "radical reshaping of America." Beginning with the Spanish and Portuguese and continuing with the arrival more than a century later of other Europeans, the indigenous peoples of the Americas experienced a series of upheavals. The European intrusion abruptly interrupted the pattern of their historical development and linked them inextricably with the world beyond the Atlantic Ocean. It also severely altered their physical environment, introducing both new foods and new epidemic diseases. As a result, the native Indian populations rapidly declined and virtually disappeared from the Caribbean, although they bequeathed to the region a distinct cultural heritage that is still seen and felt.

During the sixteenth century, the Caribbean region was significant to the Spanish Empire. In the seventeenth century, the English, Dutch, and French established colonies. By the eighteenth century, the region contained colonies that were vitally important for all of the European powers because the colonies generated great wealth from the production and sale of sugar and other tropical staples.

The early English colonies, peopled and controlled by white settlers, were initially microcosms of English society, in which small yeomen farmed economies based mainly on tobacco and cotton. A major transformation occurred, however, with the establishment of the sugar plantation system. To meet the system's enormous manpower requirements, vast numbers of black African slaves were imported throughout the eighteenth century, thereby reshaping the region's demographic, social, and cultural profile. Although the white populations maintained their social and political preeminence, they became a numerical minority in all of the islands. Following the abolition of slavery in the 1830s, the colonies turned to imported indentured labor from India, China, and the East Indies,

further diversifying the region's culture and society. The result of all these immigrations is a remarkable cultural heterogeneity in contemporary Caribbean society.

The abolition of slavery was also a watershed in Caribbean history in that it initiated the long, slow process of enfranchisement and political control by the nonwhite majorities in the islands. The early colonies enjoyed a relatively great amount of autonomy through the operations of their local representative assemblies. Later, however, to ease administration and to facilitate control of increasingly assertive colonial representative bodies, the British adopted a system of direct administration known as crown colony government (see Glossary), in which British-appointed governors wielded nearly autocratic power. The history of the colonies from then until 1962, when the first colonies became independent, is marked by the rise of popular movements and labor organizations and the emergence of a generation of politicians who assumed positions of leadership when the colonial system in the British Caribbean eventually was dismantled.

Despite shared historical and cultural experiences and geographic, demographic, and economic similarities, the Caribbean islands of the former British Empire remain diverse, and attempts at political federation and economic integration both prior to and following independence have foundered. Thus, the region today is characterized by a proliferation of ministates, all with strong democratic traditions and political systems cast in the Westminster parliamentary mold, but all also with forceful individual identities and interests.

Geographic Setting

The Commonwealth Caribbean islands make up a large subcomponent of the hundreds of islands in the Caribbean Sea, forming a wide arc between Florida in the north and Venezuela in the south, as well as a barrier between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean (see fig. 1). Varying considerably in size, the islands, which are the isolated upper parts of a submerged chain of volcanic mountains, are scattered over thousands of square kilometers of sea. The entire region lies well within the northern tropics.

The three principal geological formations found throughout the Caribbean are igneous and metamorphic rocks, limestone hills or karst, and coastal, sedimentary plains of varying depths, resulting in three prevailing kinds of topography, found either separately or in combination. The first consists of high (over 1,200 meters), rugged, sharply dissected mountains—such as the Blue Mountains in eastern Jamaica, the Morne Diablotin in central Dominica,

4

Mount Soufrière in St. Vincent, and the Northern Range in Trinidad—covered with dense, evergreen rain forests and cut by swiftly flowing rivers. The second kind of topography consists of very hilly countryside, such as the high plateau of central Jamaica, or the terrain on the islands of Antigua and Barbados. There, the hills seldom rise above 600 meters and are more gently sloped than the high mountains, but karst areas are still rugged. The third kind of topography consists of the coastal plains skirting the hills and mountains; their greatest extensions are usually on the southern or western sides of the mountains. Active volcanoes exist in Dominica, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia, and there are crater lakes formed by older activity in Grenada. All the islands have rugged coastlines with innumerable inlets fringed by white or dark sands (depending on the rock substratum) of varying texture. The beaches of Negril in Jamaica and Grand Anse in Grenada have fine-textured white sands that extend for nearly eleven kilometers each.

The Caribbean climate is tropical, moderated to a certain extent by the prevailing northeast trade winds. Individual climatic conditions are strongly dependent on elevation. At sea level there is little variation in temperature, regardless of the time of the day or the season of the year. Temperatures range between 24°C and 32°C. In Kingston, Jamaica, the mean temperature is 26°C, whereas in Mandeville, at a little over 600 meters high in the Carpenters Mountains of Manchester Parish, temperatures have been recorded as low as 10°C. Daylight hours tend to be shorter during summer and slightly longer during winter than in the higher latitudes. Rather than the four seasons, the conventional division is between the long rainy season from May through October and the dry season, corresponding to winter in the Northern Hemisphere.

Even during the rainy period, however, the precipitation range fluctuates greatly. Windward sides of islands with mountains receive a great deal of rain, whereas leeward sides can have very dry conditions. Flat islands receive slightly less rainfall, but the pattern is more consistent. For example, the Blue Mountains of eastern Jamaica record around 558 centimeters of rainfall per year, whereas Kingston, on the southeastern coast, receives only 399 centimeters. Bridgetown, the capital of Barbados, has an average annual rainfall of 127 centimeters, whereas Bathsheba on the central east coast receives 254 centimeters—despite the fact that Bathsheba is only about 27 kilometers away by road. Recording stations in the Northern Range in Trinidad measure some 302 centimeters of rainfall per year, while at Piarco International Airport on the Caroni Plain the measurement is only 140 centimeters. Most of the rainfall occurs in short heavy outbursts during daylight hours. In Jamaica about

80 percent of the rainfall occurs during the day. The period of heaviest rainfall usually occurs after the sun has passed directly overhead, which in the Caribbean islands would be sometime around the middle of May and again in early August. The rainy season also coincides with the disastrous summer hurricane season, although Barbados, too far east, and Trinidad and Tobago, too far south, seldom experience hurricanes.

Hurricanes are a constant feature of most of the Caribbean, and have a "season" of their own lasting from June to November. Hurricanes develop over the ocean, usually in the Eastern Caribbean (see Glossary) during the summer months when the sea surface temperature is high (over 27°C) and the air pressure falls below 950 millibars. These conditions create an "eye" about 20 kilometers wide, around which a steep pressure gradient forms that generates wind speeds of 110 to 280 kilometers per hour. The diameter of hurricanes can extend as far as 500 to 800 kilometers and produce extremely heavy rainfalls as well as considerable destruction of property. The recent history of the Caribbean echoes with the names of destructive hurricanes: Janet (1955), Donna (1960), Hattie (1961), Flora (1963), Beulah (1967), Celia and Dorothy (1970), Eloise (1975), David (1979), and Allen (1980).

The natural resources of the Commonwealth Caribbean islands are extremely limited. Jamaica has extensive deposits of bauxite (see Glossary), some of which is mined and processed locally into alumina (see Glossary); the United States is the largest market for the bauxite and alumina. In addition, Jamaica has large quantities of gypsum. Trinidad and Tobago has petroleum, pitch, and natural gas. Small, noncommercially viable deposits of manganese, lead, copper, and zinc are found throughout most of the islands. Nevertheless, most of the territories possess nothing more valuable than beautiful beaches, marvelously variegated seas, and a pleasant climate conducive to the promotion of international tourism.

Industrialization varies from territory to territory, but agriculture is generally declining on all the islands. The sugar industry, once the mainstay of the Caribbean economies, has faltered. Although the labor force employed in sugar production (and in agriculture in general) still forms the major sector of the employed labor force in Barbados and Jamaica, the contribution that sugar makes to the gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary) has steadily dropped. Barbados has kept its sugar industry going, but it has steadily reduced dependence on sugar exports and diversified its economy. For example, in 1946 Barbados had 52 sugar factories producing nearly 100,000 tons of sugar and employing more

than 25,000 persons during the season. Although production had increased by 1980, the number of factories had declined to 8, and the number employed was slightly less than 9,000. Furthermore, the proportion of GDP contributed by sugar and sugar products had declined from 37.8 percent to 10.9 percent over the same period.

Since the 1950s, light manufacturing, mining, and processing of foods and other commodities have been used to bolster employment and increase the local economies. Although these sectors have been important contributors to the GDP of the individual states, in no case does this contribution exceed 20 percent of the total. Moreover, industrialization has provided neither sufficient jobs nor sufficient wealth for the state to offset the decline in agricultural production and labor absorption.

The Commonwealth Caribbean islands, like the rest of the region (except Cuba), find themselves in a difficult trading situation with the United States. On the one hand, the United States accounts for between 20 and 50 percent of all imports and exports in the region. On the other hand, the Commonwealth Caribbean states account for less than 1 percent of all United States imports and exports and less than 5 percent of the more than US$38 billion of overseas private investment in the Western Hemisphere. But the interest in the Commonwealth Caribbean islands cannot be measured in economic terms only. The Caribbean is clearly within the United States sphere of interest for political and strategic considerations that defy economic valuation.

Historical and Cultural Setting

The Pre-European Population

Before the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492, most of the Caribbean was peopled by three groups of inhabitants: the Ciboney (or Guanahuatebey), the Arawaks (or Tainos), and the Caribs. The cultural distinctions among the three groups are not great; the single greatest differentiating factor appears to be their respective dates of arrival in the region. The Ciboney seem to have arrived first and were found in parts of Cuba and the Bahamas. They also seem to have had the most elementary forms of social organization. The most numerous groups were the Arawaks, who resided in most of the Greater Antilles—Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola (the island containing Haiti and the Dominican Republic), and Puerto Rico. The Lesser Antilles was the home of the Caribs. Barbados and a number of smaller islands were not permanently inhabited.

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Estimates of the size of the pre-Hispanic population of the Americas vary considerably. Both Columbus and Father Bartolomé de Las Casas (who wrote the first history of the Spanish conquest and treatment of the Indians) produced estimates that appear to defy credibility. Las Casas thought the population of the Caribbean might have been in the vicinity of several million, and by virtue of his having lived in both Hispaniola and Cuba where he held *encomiendas,* or the right to tribute from the Indians, he is as close as we get to an eye-witness account. Las Casas had a penchant for hyperbole, and it is doubtful that he could have produced reliable estimates for areas where he did not travel.

Nevertheless, some more recent scholars have tended to agree with Las Casas, estimating as many as 4 million inhabitants for the island of Hispaniola alone in 1492. Although the dispute continues, a consensus seems to be developing for far lower figures than previously accepted.

An indigenous population of less than a million for all of the Caribbean would still be a relatively dense population, given the technology and resources of the region in the late fifteenth century. Probably one-half of these inhabitants would have been on the large island of Hispaniola, about 50,000 in Cuba, and far fewer than that in Jamaica. Puerto Rico, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Trinidad all had fairly concentrated, if not large, populations.

The pre-European populations of the territories that later formed the Commonwealth Caribbean belonged to the groups designated as Caribs and Arawaks. Both were tropical forest people, who probably originated in the vast expanse of forests of the northern regions of South America and were related linguistically and ethnically to such present-day tropical forest peoples as the Chibcha, the Warao, the Yanomamo, the Caracas, the Caquetío, and the Jirajara—in short, the peoples found anywhere from Panama to Brazil.

The Arawaks lived in theocratic kingdoms and had a hierarchically arranged pantheon of gods, called *zemis,* and village chiefs, or caciques. The *zemis* were represented by icons of wood, stone, bones, and human remains. Arawaks believed that being in the good graces of their *zemis* protected them from disease, hurricanes, or disaster in war. They therefore served cassava (manioc) bread as well as beverages and tobacco to their *zemis* as propitiatory offerings.

The size of the community and the number of *zemis* he owned were directly related to the chief's importance. Chiefs lived in rectangular huts called *bohios,* while the other members of the community lived in round thatched huts called *caneyes.* The construction

A carbet *(local social gathering place)*
on a Carib reserve, northeastern Dominica
Courtesy Jonathan French

of both kinds of buildings was the same: wooden frames, topped by straw, with earthen floor, and scant interior furnishing. But the buildings were strong enough to resist hurricanes.

From the European perspective, the wealth of the indigenous Indians was modest indeed. While Columbus and his successors sought gold and other trading commodities of value on the European market, the native Antilleans were not interested in trade and used gold only ornamentally. Their personal possessions consisted of wooden stools with four legs and carved backs, hammocks made of cotton cloth or string for sleeping, clay and wooden bowls for mixing and serving food, calabashes or gourds for drinking water and bailing out boats, and their most prized possessions, large dugout canoes for transportation, fishing, and water sports. One such canoe found in Jamaica could transport about seventy-five persons.

The Indians painted their bodies in bright colors, and some wore small ornaments of gold and shells in their noses, around their necks, or hanging from their ears. Body painting was also employed to intimidate opponents in warfare.

Arawak villagers produced about two crops per year of manioc, maize, potatoes, peanuts, peppers, beans, and arrowroot. Cultivation was by the slash-and-burn method common throughout

Middle America, and the cultivated area was abandoned after the harvest. The Indians worked the soil with sticks, called *coas,* and built earthen mounds in which they planted their crops. They may also have used fertilizers of ash, composted material, and feces to boost productivity. There is even evidence of simple irrigation in parts of southwestern Hispaniola.

Hunting and fishing were major activities. Arawaks hunted ducks, geese, parrots, iguanas, small rodents, and giant tree sloths. Parrots and a species of mute dog were domesticated. Most fishing, done by hand along the coast and in rivers, was for mollusks, lobsters, and turtles. Bigger fish were caught with baskets, spears, hooks, and nets. In some cases, fish were caught by attaching the hooks of sharpened sticks to remoras, small sucking fish that fastened themselves to larger sea creatures, such as sharks and turtles.

Food was prepared by baking on stones or barbecuing over an open fire, using peppers, herbs, and spices lavishly to both flavor and preserve the food. In some places, beer was brewed from maize. The descriptions of the first Europeans indicated that the food supply was sufficient and that in general the inhabitants were well fed—until the increased demand of the new immigrants and the dislocation created by their imported animals created famine.

The Caribs of the Lesser Antilles were a highly mobile group; they possessed canoes similar to those of the Arawaks, but they employed them for more warlike pursuits. Their social organization appeared to be simpler than that of the Arawaks. They had no elaborate ceremonial courts like those of the Arawaks, but their small, wooden, frame houses surrounding a central fireplace might have served as ceremonial centers. Many of their cultural artifacts—especially those recovered in Trinidad—resemble those of the Arawaks. This might be explained in part by the Carib practice of capturing Arawak women as brides, who then could have socialized the children along Arawak lines.

The social and political organization of Carib society reflected both their military inclination and their mobile status. Villages were small, often consisting of members of an extended family. The leader of the village, most often the head of the family, supervised the food-gathering activities, principally fishing, done by the men, and the cultivation activities, done by the women. In addition, the leader settled internal disputes and led raids against neighboring groups. The purpose of these raids was to obtain wives for the younger males of the village.

Warfare was an important activity for Carib males, and before the arrival of the Spanish they had a justified reputation as the most feared warriors of the Caribbean. Using bows, poisoned arrows,

javelins, and clubs, the Caribs attacked in long canoes, capturing Arawak women and, according to Arawak informants, ritualistically cooking and eating some of the male captives. There are, however, no records of Caribs eating humans after the advent of the Europeans, thus casting doubts on the Arawak tales.

When the Spanish arrived in the Caribbean at the end of the fifteenth century, the Caribs and Arawaks, like all other frontier peoples, were undergoing mutual adaptations. The generally more peaceful Arawaks were becoming more adept at fighting; and, away from the contested frontier, the Caribs, such as those in Trinidad, were spending more time on agriculture than warfare.

The Caribs and the Arawaks were progressively wiped out by the aftereffects of the conquest, the peaceful Arawaks suffering the greater catastrophe. The concentrated populations on Hispaniola, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica declined rapidly, victims of enslavement, social dislocation, and epidemics of diseases brought by the Europeans and the African slaves. The smaller, more scattered populations of the Eastern Caribbean survived much better. In the seventeenth century, the Caribs resisted European settlements on Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent, destroying the first English colony on St. Lucia in 1605 and thwarting the second attempt in 1638, thus delaying the effective occupation of Dominica and St. Vincent until the middle of the eighteenth century. Some Caribs resisted assimilation or acculturation by the Europeans, and a few of their descendants still live on a reservation in Dominica. Both the Caribs and the Arawaks left indelible influences on the language, diet, and way of life of the twentieth-century people who live in the region. Caribbean food crops, such as peanuts, cashew nuts, potatoes, tomatoes, pineapples, pumpkins, manioc, and maize, have spread around the world. The Indians' habit of smoking tobacco has become widespread, and tobacco has become an important commercial commodity. Arawak and Carib words have permeated the languages of the region, words such as agouti, avocado, barbecue, *bohio,* buccaneer, *calpulli* (an urban zone), *caney,* cannibal, canoe, cassava, cay, *conuco* (a cultivated area), *guagua* (a bus or truck), *guajiro* (a peasant), guava, hammock, hurricane, iguana, maize, manatee, and *zemi.*

The Impact of the Conquest

The Europeans who invaded and conquered the Caribbean destroyed the internally cohesive world of the native peoples and subordinated the region and the peoples to the events of a wider world in which their fortunes were linked with those of Africa, Europe, and the Americas. The Caribbean peoples were devastated

by new epidemic diseases, such as measles, smallpox, malaria, and dysentery, introduced by the Europeans and the Africans imported as slaves. Their social and political organizations were restructured in the name of Christianity. Their simple lives were regimented by slavery and the demands of profit-oriented, commerce-minded Europeans. Above all, they were slowly inundated culturally and demographically by the stream of new immigrants in the years immediately after the conquest.

The European Settlements

European settlements in the Caribbean began with Christopher Columbus. Carrying an elaborate feudal commission that made him perpetual governor of all lands discovered and gave him a percentage of all trade conducted, Columbus set sail in September 1492, determined to find a faster, shorter way than overland to China and Japan. He planned to set up a trading-post empire, modeled after the successful Portuguese venture along the West African coast. His aim was to establish direct commercial relations with the producers of spices and other luxuries of the fabled East, thereby cutting out the Arab middlemen who had monopolized trade since capturing Constantinople in 1453. He also planned to link up with the lost Christians of Abyssinia, who were reputed to have large quantities of gold—a commodity in great demand in Europe. Finally, as a good Christian, Columbus wanted to spread Christianity to new peoples. Columbus, of course, did not find the East. Nevertheless, he called the peoples he met ''Indians'' and, because he had sailed west, referred to the region he found as the ''West Indies.''

However, dreams of a trading-post empire collapsed in the face of the realities of Caribbean life. The Indians, although initially hospitable in most cases, simply did not have gold and trade commodities for the European market.

In all, Columbus made four voyages of exploration between 1492 and 1502, failing to find great quantities of gold, Christians, or the courts of the fabled khans described by Marco Polo. After 1499 small amounts of gold were discovered on Hispaniola, but by that time local challenges to Columbus's governorship were mounting, and his demonstrated lack of administrative skills made matters worse. Even more disappointing, he returned to Spain in 1502 to find that his extensive feudal authority in the New World was rapidly being taken away by his monarchs.

Columbus inadvertently started a small settlement on the north coast of Hispaniola when his flagship, the *Santa María*, wrecked off the Môle St. Nicolas on his first voyage. When he returned a year

*Statue of Columbus,
Nassau, The Bahamas
Courtesy Inter-American
Development Bank*
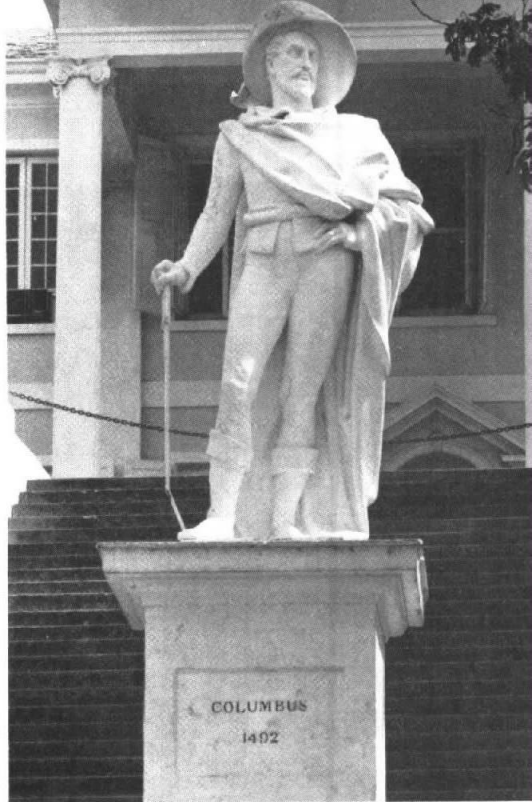
later, no trace of the settlement appeared—and the former welcome and hospitality of the Indians had changed to suspicion and fear.

The first proper European settlement in the Caribbean began when Nicolás de Ovando, a faithful soldier from western Spain, settled about 2,500 Spanish colonists in eastern Hispaniola in 1502. Unlike Columbus's earlier settlements, this group was an organized cross section of Spanish society brought with the intention of developing the West Indies economically and expanding Spanish political, religious, and administrative influence. In its religious and military motivation, it continued the *reconquista* (reconquest), which had expelled the Moors from Granada and the rest of southern Spain.

From this base in Santo Domingo, as the new colony was called, the Spanish quickly fanned out throughout the Caribbean and onto the mainland. Jamaica was settled in 1509 and Trinidad the following year. By 1511 Spanish explorers had established themselves as far as Florida. However, in the Eastern Caribbean, the Caribs resisted the penetration of the Europeans until well into the seventeenth century and succumbed only in the eighteenth century.

After the Spanish conquest of Mexico in 1519 and the subsequent discovery of gold there, interest in working the gold deposits of the islands decreased. Moreover, by that time the Indian population of the Caribbean had dwindled considerably, creating a

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scarcity of workers for the mines and pearl fisheries. In 1518 the first African slaves, called ladinos because they had lived in Spain and spoke the Castilian language, were introduced to the Caribbean to help mitigate the labor shortage.

The Spanish administrative structure that prevailed for the 131 years of Spanish monopoly in the Caribbean was simple. At the imperial level were two central agencies, the House of Trade, which licensed all ships sailing to or returning from the West Indies and supervised commerce, and the Council of the Indies, which attended to imperial legislation. At the local level in the Caribbean were the governors, appointed by the monarchs of Castile, who supervised local municipal councils. The governors were regulated by *audiencias* (appellate courts). A parallel structure regulated the religious organizations. Despite the theoretical hierarchy and clear divisions of authority, in practice each agency reported directly to the monarch. As set out in the original instructions to Ovando in 1502, the Spanish New World was to be orthodox and unified under the Roman Catholic religion and Castilian and Spanish in culture and nationality. Moors, Jews, recent converts to Roman Catholicism, Protestants, and Gypsies were legally excluded from sailing to the West Indies, although this exclusiveness could not be maintained and was frequently violated.

By the early seventeenth century, Spain's European enemies, no longer disunited and internally weak, were beginning to breach the perimeters of Spain's American empire. The French and the English established trading forts along the St. Lawrence and Hudson rivers in North America. These were followed by permanent settlements in Virginia and Massachusetts.

Between 1595 and 1620, the English, French, and Dutch made many unsuccessful attempts to settle along the Guiana coastlands of South America. The Dutch finally prevailed and established one permanent colony along the Essequibo River in 1616 and another, in 1624, along the neighboring Berbice River. As in North America, the initial loss of life in the colonies was discouragingly high. In 1623 the English gave up in the Guianas and created a colony on St. Christopher (hereafter, St. Kitts) in the Leeward Islands; the French followed suit in 1624. At that time, St. Kitts was occupied only by Caribs. Because the Spanish were deeply involved in the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) in Europe, conditions were propitious for colonial exploits in what until then had been reluctantly conceded to be a Spanish domain.

In 1621 the Dutch began to move aggressively against Spanish territory in the Americas—including Brazil, temporarily under Spanish control between 1580 and 1640. They joined the English

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in settling St. Croix in the Leeward Islands in 1625 and then seized the minuscule, unoccupied Leeward Islands of Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten (part of the divided island of St. Martin/Sint Maarten), and Saba and also the island of Curaçao off the Venezuelan coast. The Dutch thereby expanded their former holdings in the Guianas, as well as those at Araya and Cumaná on the Venezuelan coast.

The English and the French also moved rapidly to take advantage of Spanish weakness in the Americas and overcommitment in Europe. In 1625 the English settled Barbados and tried an unsuccessful settlement on Tobago. They took possession of Nevis in 1628 and Antigua and Montserrat in 1632. They established a colony on St. Lucia in 1605, but it was destroyed by the Caribs; they tried again in 1638 to establish a colony but were again unsuccessful. The French, under the auspices of the French West Indian Company, chartered by Cardinal Richelieu in 1635, successfully settled Martinique and Guadeloupe, laying the base for later expansion to St. Barthélemy, St. Martin, Grenada, St. Lucia, and western Hispaniola, which was formally ceded by Spain in 1697 in the Treaty of Ryswick (signed between France and the alliance of Spain, the Netherlands, and England and ending the War of the Grand Alliance). Meanwhile, an expedition sent out by Oliver Cromwell under Admiral William Penn (the father of the founder of Pennsylvania) and General Robert Venables in 1655 seized Jamaica, the first territory captured from the Spanish. (Trinidad, the only other British colony taken from the Spanish, fell in 1797 and was ceded in 1802.) At that time, Jamaica had a population of about 3,000, equally divided between Spaniards and their slaves—the Indian population having been eliminated. Although Jamaica was a disappointing consolation for the failure to capture either of the major colonies of Hispaniola or Cuba, the island was retained in the Treaty of Madrid in 1670, thereby more than doubling the land area for potential British colonization in the Caribbean. By 1750 Jamaica was the most important of Britain's Caribbean colonies, having eclipsed Barbados in economic significance.

The first colonists in the Caribbean were trying to recreate their metropolitan European societies in the region. In this respect, the goals and the worldview of the early colonists in the Caribbean did not vary significantly from those of the colonists on the North American mainland. "The Caribbee planters," wrote the historian Richard S. Dunn, "began as peasant farmers not unlike the peasant farmers of Wigston Magna, Leicestershire, or Sudbury, Massachusetts. They cultivated the same staple crop—tobacco—as their cousins in Virginia and Maryland. They brought to the tropics

the English common law, English political institutions, the English parish [local administrative unit], and the English church.'' These institutions survived for a very long time, but the social context in which they were introduced was altered by time and circumstances. Attempts to recreate microcosms of Europe were slowly abandoned in favor of a series of plantation societies using slave labor to produce large quantities of tropical staples for the European market. In the process of this transformation, complicated by war and trade, much was changed in the Caribbean.

The Colonial Period

The mid-seventeenth-century development of a sugar plantation society based on slave labor was an important watershed in Caribbean history. Introduced by the Dutch when they were expelled from Brazil in 1640, the sugar plantation system arrived at an opportune time for the fledgling non-Spanish colonists with their precarious economies. The English yeoman farming economy based mainly on cultivation of tobacco was facing a severe crisis. Caribbean tobacco could compete neither in quality nor in quantity with that produced in the mid-Atlantic colonies. Because tobacco farming had been the basis of the economy, its end threatened the economic viability of the islands. As a result, the colonies were losing population to the mainland. Economic salvation came from what has been called in historical literature the Caribbean ''sugar revolutions,'' a series of interrelated changes that altered the entire agriculture, demography, society, and culture of the Caribbean, thereby transforming the political and economic importance of the region.

In terms of agriculture, the islands changed from small farms producing cash crops of tobacco and cotton with the labor of a few servants and slaves—often indistinguishable—to large plantations requiring vast expanses of land and enormous capital outlays to create sugarcane fields and factories. Sugar, which had become increasingly popular on the European market throughout the seventeenth century, provided an efficacious balance between bulk and value—a relationship of great importance in the days of relatively small sailing ships and distant sea voyages. Hence, the conversion to sugar transformed the landholding pattern of the islands.

The case of Barbados illustrates the point. In 1640 this island of 430 square kilometers had about 10,000 settlers, predominantly white; 764 of them owned 4 or more hectares of land, and virtually every white was a landholder. By 1680, when the sugar revolutions were underway, the wealthiest 175 planters owned 54 percent of the land and an equal proportion of the servants and slaves. More important, Barbados had a population of about 38,000
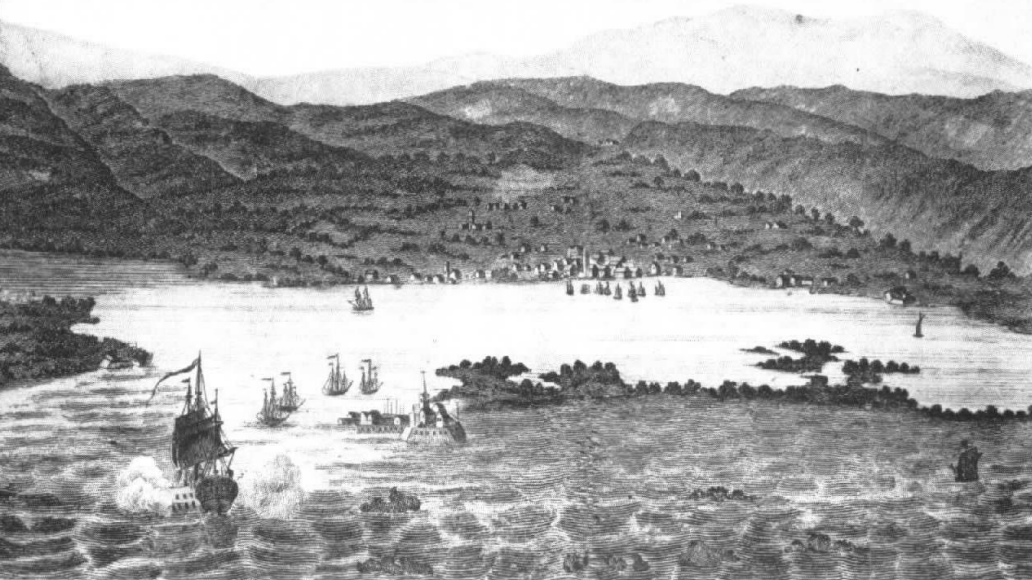
African slaves and more than 2,000 English servants who owned
no land. Fortunes, however, depended on access to land and slaves.
For example, Thomas Rous, who arrived in Barbados in 1638,
had a farm of 24 hectares in 1645. By 1680 the Rous family owned
3 sugar works, 266 hectares of land, and 310 slaves and were
counted among the great planters of the island.

The Sugar Revolutions and Slavery

The sugar revolutions were both cause and consequence of the
demographic revolution. Sugar production required a greater labor
supply than was available through the importation of European
servants and irregularly supplied African slaves. At first the Dutch
supplied the slaves, as well as the credit, capital, technological ex-
pertise, and marketing arrangements. After the restoration of the
English monarchy following the Commonwealth (1649–60), the king
and other members of the royal family invested in the Company
of Royal Adventurers, chartered in 1663, to pursue the lucrative
African slave trade. That company was succeeded by the Royal
Africa Company in 1672, but the supply still failed to meet the
demand, and all kinds of private traders entered the transatlantic
commerce.

Between 1518 and 1870, the transatlantic slave trade supplied
the greatest proportion of the Caribbean population. As sugarcane

cultivation increased and spread from island to island—and to the neighboring mainland as well—more Africans were brought to replace those who had died under the rigorous demands of labor on the plantations, in the sugar factories, and in the mines. Acquiring and transporting Africans to the New World became a big and extremely lucrative business. From a modest trickle in the early sixteenth century, the trade increased to an annual import rate of about 2,000 in 1600, 13,000 in 1700, and 55,000 in 1810. Between 1811 and 1830, about 32,000 slaves per year were imported. As with all trade, the operation fluctuated widely, affected by regular market factors of supply and demand as well as by the irregular and often unexpected interruptions of international war.

The year 1810 marked the apogee of the system. About 60 percent of all the Africans who arrived as slaves in the New World came between 1700 and 1810, the period during which Jamaica, Barbados, and the Leeward Islands peaked as sugar producers. Antislavery societies sprang up in Britain and France, using the secular, rationalist arguments of the Enlightenment—the intellectual movement centered in France in the eighteenth century—to challenge the moral and legal basis for slavery. A significant moral victory was achieved when the British chief justice, Lord Mansfield, ruled in 1772 that slavery was illegal in Britain, thereby freeing about 15,000 slaves who had accompanied their masters there— and abruptly terminating the practice of black slaves' ostentatiously escorting their masters about the empire. In the British Parliament, antislavery voices grew stronger until eventually a bill to abolish the slave trade passed both houses in 1807. The British, being the major carriers of slaves and having abolished the trade themselves, energetically set about discouraging other states from continuing. The abolition of the slave trade was a blow from which the slave system in the Caribbean could not recover.

Sugar and slavery gave to the region a predominantly African population. Approximately 17 percent of the 10 million African slaves brought to the Americas came to the British Caribbean. Although the white populations maintained their superior social positions, they became a numerical minority in all the islands. In the early nineteenth century, whites constituted less than 5 percent of the total population of Jamaica, Grenada, Nevis, St. Vincent, and Tobago and less than 10 percent of the population of Anguilla, Montserrat, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, and the Virgin Islands. Only in the Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad was more than 10 percent of the total population white. By sharp contrast, Trinidad was the only colony in the British Caribbean to have less than 80 percent of its population enslaved.

This demographic revolution had important social consequences. Rather than being a relatively homogeneous ethnic group divided into categories based on economic criteria, Caribbean society had complex overlapping divisions of class and caste. The three basic divisions were free white persons, free nonwhite persons, and slaves.

Whites were divided along status lines based on wealth. In the British colonies these were called "principal whites" and "poor whites." In reality they formed three ranks. The upper subdivision of the principal whites, forming an elite, were families who owned slaves and successful plantations. Some of their names became important in the history of one or more of the islands, names such as Guy, Modyford, Drax, Sutton, Price, Bannington, Needham, Tharp, and Beckford in Jamaica; Drax, Hallet, Littleton, Codrington, and Middleton in Barbados; and Warner, Winthrop, Pinney, and Jeaffreson in the Leeward Islands. The lower subdivision of the principal whites consisted of merchants, officials, and such professionals as doctors and clergymen, who were just a shade below the big planters.

At the bottom of the white ranks came the so-called "poor whites," often given such pejorative names as "red legs" in Barbados or "walking buckras" in Jamaica. This group included small independent farmers, servants, day laborers, and all the service individuals from policemen to smiths, as well as the various hangers-on required by the curious "Deficiency Laws." These were laws designed to retain a minimum number of whites on each plantation to safeguard against slave revolts. A Jamaica law of 1703 stipulated that there must be one white person for each ten slaves up to the first twenty slaves and one for each twenty slaves thereafter as well as one white person for the first sixty head of cattle and one for each one hundred head after the first sixty head. The law was modified in 1720, raising the ratios and lowering the fines for noncompliance, but the planters seemed more prepared to pay the fines for noncompliance than to recruit and maintain white servants, so the law degenerated into another simple revenue measure for the state. This was true throughout the British Caribbean islands during the eighteenth century.

Regardless of rank, skin color gave each person of European descent a privileged position within plantation society. The importance of race and color was a significant variation from the norms of typical European society and accentuated the divergence between the society "at home" and that overseas.

Each slave society in the colonies had an intermediate group, called the "free persons of color," an ambiguous position. Governor Francis Seaforth of Barbados colorfully expressed this

dilemma in 1802: "There is, however, a third description of people from whom I am more suspicious of evil than from either the whites or the slaves: these are the Black and Coloured people who are not slaves, and yet whom I cannot bring myself to call free. I think *unappropriated people* would be a more proper denomination for them, for though not the property of other individuals they do not enjoy the shadow of any civil right." This group originated in the miscegenation of European masters and their African slaves. By the nineteenth century, the group could be divided into blacks who had gained their freedom or were the descendants of slaves, and the mixed, or mulatto, descendants of the associations between Europeans and non-Europeans. By the time of Britain's abolition of slavery in the 1830s, the heterogeneous free nonwhite population represented about 10 percent of the population of Jamaica, 12 percent of the population of Barbados, and about 20 percent of the population of Trinidad. A number of these free nonwhites had been free for generations, if not centuries, and had carved a niche in the local societies as successful merchants, planters, professionals, and slave owners.

Throughout the British Caribbean the free nonwhites manifested a number of common traits. They were predominantly female, largely urban, and clearly differentiated from the slaves both by law and by custom. Although adult females outnumbered males, the free nonwhite population tended to be the most sexually balanced overall and was the only group that consistently reproduced itself in the British colonies during the era of the slave trade. Moreover, with the exception of Trinidad, where, as Bridget Brereton indicates, just as many free nonwhites lived in the rural parishes as in the towns of Port-of-Spain, San Fernando, and St. Joseph, the free nonwhites were strongly urban. After 1809 about 61 percent of all the free nonwhites in Barbados lived in the parish of St. Michael in the capital city, Bridgetown. More free nonwhites lived in Kingston, Jamaica, than in all the other parishes combined.

The free nonwhite population faced competition from both ends of the spectrum. At the lower end of the economic scale they had to compete with jobbing slaves, who were often working arduously to get enough money to purchase their freedom and so join the free group. At the upper end they competed with the artisan, commercial, and semiskilled service sector of the lower orders of whites. The whites often used their political power—or in some cases their access to political power in Britain—to circumscribe the free nonwhites as much as possible. Throughout the Caribbean it was common to find laws distinguishing comportment, dress, and residence; denying nonwhites the right to practice certain professions; or

"Sunday Morning in Town," Port-of-Spain, Trinidad
Courtesy Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

limiting the material legacy of individual free nonwhites. But at the time of the abolition of slavery, nonwhites were aggressively challenging the political hegemony of the whites, and their successes were very important in the subsequent development of British Caribbean society.

The Post-Emancipation Societies

The second great watershed in Caribbean history resulted from the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth century. In the British Caribbean this came between 1834, when a law was passed by the British Parliament to abolish slavery throughout the empire, and 1838, when the apprenticeship system collapsed prematurely. The apprenticeship system was designed to ease the transition from slavery to freedom by forcing the ex-slaves to remain on their plantations for a period of six years. Its main purpose was to prevent the immediate large-scale abandonment of estates by the workers, although, with cruel irony, it was the masters and not the slaves who were awarded compensation for the loss of their "property." The system proved too cumbersome to administer and was prematurely terminated in 1838.

Abolition of slavery was difficult for the colonies, which had to adjust to having a majority of new citizens who could not be denied the civil rights already grudgingly extended to the few. Extending

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those civil rights, then as now, was neither easily nor gracefully achieved because the political systems had existed for centuries as the narrow instruments of the small, white, landed elite—largely absentee—whose members were threatened by the removal of their special trade preferences. Above all, there were economic difficulties. Sugar prices were falling, and West Indian producers were facing severe competition not only from other producers in the British Empire (such as India, South Africa, and Australia) and non-imperial cane sugar producers (such as Cuba and Brazil) but also from beet sugar producers in Europe and the United States. Falling prices coincided with rising labor costs, complicated by the urgent need to regard the ex-slaves as wage laborers able and willing to bargain for their pay.

To mitigate labor difficulties, the local assemblies were encouraged to import nominally free laborers from India, China, and Africa under contracts of indenture. Apart from the condition that they had a legally defined term of service and were guaranteed a set wage, the Asian indentured laborers were treated like the African slaves they partially replaced in the fields and factories. Between 1838 and 1917, nearly 500,000 East Indians (from British India) came to work on the British West Indian sugar plantations, the majority going to the new sugar producers with fertile lands. Trinidad imported 145,000; Jamaica, 21,500; Grenada, 2,570; St. Vincent, 1,820; and St. Lucia, 1,550. Between 1853 and 1879, British Guiana imported more than 14,000 Chinese workers, a few of them going to some of the other colonies. Between 1841 and 1867, about 32,000 indentured Africans arrived in the British West Indies, the greater number going to Jamaica and British Guiana. Because the families of important British politicians, such as Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, owned sugar estates in British Guiana, that colony, directly administered by the crown, assumed great importance in the Caribbean.

Indentured labor did not resolve the problems of the plantations and the local governments in the Caribbean during the nineteenth century, but it enabled the sugar plantations to weather the difficulties of the transition from slave labor. The new immigrants further pluralized the culture, the economy, and the society. The East Indians introduced rice and boosted the local production of cacao (the bean from which cocoa is derived) and ground provisions (tubers, fruits, and vegetables). Although some East Indians eventually converted to Christianity and intermarried with other ethnic groups, the majority remained faithful to their original Hindu and Muslim beliefs, adding temples and mosques to the religious architecture of the territories. The Chinese moved into local

commerce, and, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the corner Chinese grocery store and the Chinese restaurant had become commonplace in all the colonies.

Emancipation of the slaves provided the catalyst for the rise of an energetic, dynamic peasantry throughout the Caribbean. A large proportion of the ex-slaves settled in free villages, often forming cooperatives to buy bankrupt or abandoned sugar estates. Where they lacked the capital, they simply squatted on vacant lands and continued the cultivation of many of the food crops that the planters and the colonial government had exported during the days of slavery.

The villages, although largely independent, provided a potential labor pool that could be attracted to the plantations. The growth of these free villages immediately after the emancipation of the slaves was astonishing. In Jamaica black freeholders increased from 2,014 in 1838 to more than 7,800 in 1840 and more than 50,000 in 1859. In Barbados, where land was scarcer and prices higher, freeholders having fewer than 2 hectares each increased from 1,110 in 1844 to 3,537 in 1859. In St. Vincent about 8,209 persons built their own homes and purchased and brought under cultivation over 5,000 hectares between 1838 and 1857. In Antigua 67 free villages with 5,187 houses and 15,644 inhabitants were established between 1833 and 1858. The free villages produced new crops, such as coconuts, rice, bananas, arrowroot, honey, and beeswax, as well as the familiar plantation crops of sugarcane, tobacco, coffee, cacao, limes, and ground provisions.

Political Traditions

The political traditions of the Commonwealth Caribbean islands reflect the diverse ways in which they were brought into the British Empire and administered, as well as the dominant political views in London at the time of their incorporation. Some of these traditions can still be observed in the operation of contemporary politics in the region. Three patterns emerged: one for colonies settled or acquired before the eighteenth century; another for colonies taken during the Seven Years' War (1756–63) and ceded by France in 1763; and a third for colonies conquered in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and ceded by France in the early nineteenth century.

The first group—Barbados, the Bahamas, the Leeward Islands, and Jamaica—developed during the early attempts to found colonies. Like the mainland North American colonies (and Bermuda), these territories had representative assemblies based on the bicameral system of the mother country. Each colony had a

governor who represented the monarch, an appointed upper house, and an elected lower house. The electoral franchise, however, was extremely restricted, being vested in a few wealthy male property holders. Power was divided between the governor, who executed the laws, and the assembly, which made them. However, the assembly retained the right to pass all money bills—including the pay for the governor—and so used this right to obstruct legislation or simply to control new officials.

These older colonies also had an effective system of local government based on parish vestries. The vestries were elected annually by the freeholders and met frequently to levy local revenues for the maintenance of the poor, the support of the clergy, the construction of roads, and other local business, such as the licensing of teachers.

A second pattern of local government developed in Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, the Grenadines, and Tobago. All were ceded by France to Britain under the Treaty of Paris of 1763, although France succeeded in temporarily recapturing them in the late 1770s or early 1780s. Like the older British territories in the Caribbean, these "ceded islands" also had assemblies. However, the small size of the free landholding population in these islands vitiated the functions of the assemblies and precluded development of a viable system of local government such as had developed in Jamaica and Barbados.

The British governed the last Caribbean possessions ceded by the French—Trinidad and St. Lucia—in a radically different manner from the two patterns just discussed. Employing a system known as crown colony government (see Glossary), the British ruled directly through appointed officials rather than elected representatives. Royal governors were vested with virtually autocratic powers. At the same time, the British retained the previous Spanish, French, and Dutch forms of government, gradually altering them through time. No sustained attempt was made to foster local government in these newer colonies, although the leading cities—Port-of-Spain in Trinidad and Castries in St. Lucia—had municipal councils. Perhaps as a result, a strong grass-roots democracy failed to develop early in the latter territories.

The British decision to administer Trinidad and St. Lucia as crown colonies resulted from a number of complex factors. First, the British, cognizant of the difficulty that they had had with the various local planters' assemblies, were not anxious to create legislative bodies on two more islands. Beyond that, the acquisition of Trinidad presented the British with several new challenges. First, the free nonwhite population on the island outnumbered the white

residents. The British were unwilling to extend voting rights to a nonwhite majority but also felt that free nonwhites would not accept an electoral system only open to whites. Second, French and Spanish planters on the island outnumbered those from Britain. Even if a way could be found to restrict the vote to whites, ''foreigners'' would dominate the assembly. Finally, with the British abolition of the slave trade in 1808, the British wanted to prevent illegal arrivals of new slaves into Trinidad. Enforcement of the new law could be handled more easily through direct control.

Colonial acquisition and administration were not neatly and easily accomplished. Tobago changed imperial masters more than a dozen times before finally being reacquired by Britain in 1802. It experienced many forms of administration before being confirmed as a ward of Trinidad in 1898. The Bahamas, irregularly colonized by the British beginning in 1649, had a representative assembly in 1728 but eventually settled into a dull routine as a minor crown colony until the granting of complete internal self-government in January 1964. The Cayman Islands, erratically settled by the British, were administered by the Bahamas until 1848. After a short period of legislative government (1848–63), they reverted to the administration of Jamaica until 1962, when they became a crown colony. In 1871 the British grouped St. Kitts, Nevis, Barbuda, Anguilla, Antigua, Montserrat, the British Virgin Islands, and Dominica into the Leeward Islands Federation. Throughout the nineteenth century, the British attempted to govern St. Lucia, St. Vincent, the Grenadines, Grenada, and Barbados under a single Windward Islands administration. Although this entity nominally existed until 1958, it was largely ineffective.

Emancipation of the slaves placed great strains on the representation system. Designed originally for colonies of British settlers, the assemblies no longer represented the majority of citizens but merely a small minority of the oligarchy. Sometimes these oligarchies were too small to provide the necessary administrative apparatus, which explains the shifting nature of colonial government in some of the smaller islands and the constant quest of the British government to reduce administrative costs. The power of the purse, once astutely wielded by the planter class, declined along with the value of the export economy, denying to the assemblies their former intimidating power over governors. The British government had always been uneasy about the colonial representative assemblies, especially given the increasing number of non-Europeans in the population. In Jamaica, just before the collapse of the system in 1865, the assembly had 49 members representing 28 constituencies

elected by 1,457 voters. Only 1,903 registered voters existed in a population of 400,000—nearly half of whom were adult males.

In Jamaica the Morant Bay Rebellion of October 1865 brought about the end of the old representative assemblies. The ''rebellion'' was really a protest of rural black peasants in the southeastern parish of St. Thomas. The conflict had unmistakable racial and religious overtones, pitting George William Gordon and Paul Bogle, who were black Baptists, against the *custos* (senior vestryman), a German immigrant named Baron Maximilian von Ketelholdt; the rector of the established church, the Reverend S.H. Cooke; and the governor of the island, Edward John Eyre, a hostile incompetent with limited intelligence but long service in minor colonial posts. The original demonstrators were protesting what they believed to be unjust arrests at the courthouse in Morant Bay when, failing to obey an order to disperse, they were fired on by the militia, and seven protesters were killed. The crowd then rioted, burning the courthouse and killing fourteen vestrymen, one of whom was black. Bogle and Gordon, arrested in Kingston, were tried by court-martial in Morant Bay and hanged. (In 1965 the Jamaican government—an independent and representative entity—declared the two to be its first ''national heroes.'') Altogether, Governor Eyre ordered nearly 500 peasants executed, 600 brutally flogged, and 1,000 houses burned by the troops and by the Maroons, descendants of former runaway slaves with whom the government had a legal treaty. In December 1865 the House of Assembly abolished itself, making way for crown colony government. The act was the final gesture of the old planter oligarchy, symbolizing that it did not wish to share political power in a democratic way with the new groups.

Crown colony rule was soon established in other colonies. In the constitutional reorganization of the late nineteenth century, only Barbados managed to retain its representative assembly. Jamaica and the Windward Islands joined Trinidad as colonies fully administered by the crown, while the Leeward Islands experimented with a federal system. With periodic adjustments, crown colony government endured until the middle of the twentieth century. Despite its paternalistic rhetoric, and many practical reforms in the social, educational, and economic arenas, it retarded political development in the West Indies by consistently denying the legitimacy of political organizations while elevating the opinions of selected individuals. By so doing, it narrowed rather than broadened the social base of political power.

The limited political opportunities offered by service in the various municipal councils and parish vestries emphasized the inadequacies of the system of appointed councils in which social

considerations overrode merit as the primary basis for selection. Appointed members had no political constituency—the basis on which they were chosen—and therefore no responsibility to the majority of the people. Because there were no elected assemblies to represent the islands' interests, opposition to the crown colony system of government came more often from the local level alone.

Social and Economic Developments, 1800-1960

Education

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, there were three systems of education throughout the British Caribbean. These consisted of education abroad on private initiative; education in the islands in exclusive schools designed for local whites lacking the resources for a foreign education; and education for the academically able free nonwhites.

The wealthy planters generally sent their children abroad, mainly to Britain, but a surprisingly large number went to study in British North America. As early as 1720, Judah Morris, a Jew born in Jamaica, was a lecturer in Hebrew at Harvard College. Alexander Hamilton, born in Nevis in 1755, attended King's College (present-day Columbia University), where his political tracts attracted the attention of George Washington. Other students attended such colleges as the College of William and Mary in Virginia and the College of Philadelphia.

Less wealthy whites attended local schools founded by charitable bequests in the eighteenth century. Such schools included Codrington College and Harrison College in Barbados and Wolmer's, Rusea's, Beckford and Smith's, and Manning's schools in Jamaica.

Slaves and their offspring were given little more than religious instruction. Indeed, in 1797 a law in Barbados made it illegal to teach reading and writing to slaves. In the early nineteenth century, the endowment from the Mico Trust—originally established in 1670 to redeem Christian slaves in the Barbary States of North Africa—opened a series of schools for blacks and free nonwhite pupils throughout the Caribbean and three teacher-training colleges—Mico in Antigua and Jamaica and Codrington in Barbados.

After 1870 there was a minirevolution in public education throughout the Caribbean. This coincided with the establishment of free compulsory public elementary education in Britain and in individual states of the United States. A system of free public primary education and limited secondary education became

generally available in every territory, and an organized system of teacher training and examinations was established.

Nevertheless, the main thrust of public education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not come from the local government but rather from the religious community. Competing Protestant groups—the Anglicans, the Baptists, the Moravians, the Wesleyans, and the Presbyterians—and the Jesuits operated a vast system of elementary and secondary schools. At the end of the nineteenth century, the churches monopolized elementary education in Jamaica and Barbados and ran a majority of the primary schools in Trinidad, Grenada, and Antigua. The most outstanding secondary schools—St. George's College, Kingston College, Jamaica College, Calabar High School, and York Castle High School in Jamaica; Harrison College, Codrington College, Lodge School, and Queen's College in Barbados; and Queen's College, St. Mary's College, and Naparima College in Trinidad and Tobago—as well as the principal grammar schools in the Bahamas, Antigua, St. Kitts, and Grenada owe their origins to the religious denominations. Each territory had a board of education, which supervised both government and religious schools. Government assistance slowly increased until by the middle of the twentieth century the state eventually gained control over all forms of education. Although far from perfect—most colonies still spent more on prisons than on schools—public education fired the ambitions of the urban poor.

Based on the British system—even to the use of British textbooks and examinations—the colonial Caribbean education system was never modified to local circumstances. Nevertheless, it created a cadre of leaders throughout the region whose strong sense of local identity and acute knowledge of British political institutions served the region well in the twentieth century.

Precursors of Independence

Education produced two groups in the British West Indies. The first identified closely with the British system—especially with the Fabian Society of radical thinkers within the British Labour Party—and sought political reforms through conventional parliamentary channels. The most ardent representatives of this group were individuals in the local legislatures, such as Sandy Cox and J.A.G. Smith in Jamaica, T. Albert Marryshow in Grenada, and Andrew Arthur Cipriani in Trinidad and Tobago. Although they did not depend on the masses for political support (because the masses did not yet have the vote), they knew how to draw the masses into political action. They joined the municipal and parish

councils in urging a reduction in the privileges of the old planter classes and greater local representation in local affairs. They also advocated legal recognition of the fledgling trade union movement in the Caribbean.

The second group, inspired by the idea of a spiritual return to Africa, was more populist and more independent than the first group. From this group came individuals such as John J. Thomas (an articulate socio-linguist), Claude MacKay, H.S. Williams (founder of the Pan-African Association in London in 1897), George Padmore (the gray eminence of Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah), Richard B. Moore, W.A. Domingo, and Marcus Mosiah Garvey, founder of the United Negro Improvement Association in Jamaica (1914) and Harlem (1916). Thomas, Williams, and Padmore came from Trinidad; MacKay, Garvey, and Domingo, from Jamaica; and Moore, from Barbados.

In addition to these organizers, there were a number of individuals from all the colonies who had served abroad in World War I in the West India Regiment of the British Army. Some of these individuals were of African birth. After the war they were given land and pensions in several West Indian territories, where they formed the nucleus of an early pan-Caribbean movement. Their war experiences left them critical of the British government and British society, and they tended to agitate for political reforms to bring self-government to the Caribbean colonies.

The political agitation of these groups laid the groundwork for the generation of politicians who later helped dismantle colonialism in the British Caribbean: Norman W. Manley and William Alexander Bustamante in Jamaica; Robert Bradshaw in St. Kitts and Nevis; Vere Cornwall Bird, Sr., in Antigua and Barbuda; Eric Matthew Gairy in Grenada; Grantley Adams in Barbados; and Tubal Uriah Butler, Albert Gomes, and Eric Williams in Trinidad and Tobago.

The political agitation that periodically enveloped the British Caribbean had roots in its dismal economic situation. The colonial government had placed its faith in sugar and large plantations, but sugar was not doing well economically. Increased productivity in Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad could not mask the problems of unstable prices and difficult marketing conditions. Unemployment was rife. Wages on sugar estates were one-quarter to one-half of those paid on Cuban sugar estates during the same period. Many of the smaller islands had abandoned sugar production altogether. Not surprisingly, large numbers of West Indians emigrated for economic reasons to Venezuela, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Cuba, Mexico, and the United States. When economic opportunities abroad ended with the Great Depression, the discontent of the returning migrants and frustrated laborers erupted into violence throughout the region in the late 1930s.

Political Independence
Changes in the Social Base of Political Power

Although the riots of the late 1930s brought swift political changes, the conditions that precipitated the explosion had been building slowly for more than half a century. The long period of direct and modified crown colony government after the Morant Bay disturbances produced two political patterns throughout the British Caribbean. The first, to which allusion has already been made, was based on strong executive power in the hands of a governor. Whereas this undoubtedly made administration easier for governors, it had negative effects on the social basis of political power and political development. As Carl Campbell so eloquently put it, ''[Crown colony government] sought constantly to increase the area of government and decrease the area of politics.'' He was, of course, describing the situation in Trinidad in the middle of the nineteenth century, but his portrayal would have been apt for any British colony at the beginning of the twentieth century. Colonial governors were not inhibited by the threat of vetoes of their decisions by the legislatures nor by the kind of obstructionism that had

characterized the legislatures before 1865. Colonial governors were responsible only to the secretary of state for the colonies in London. By appointing to the legislature members whose views were compatible with the goals of empire, the governors reduced the range of experience and advice available to them. They were not interested in local opinion and local advice. If they had been, they would not have stifled public opinion by consistently discouraging political organizations and insisting that only individuals could express their views.

Not surprisingly, the dominant views of the local governments were those of the planter classes, especially the older, more established planter classes. Nevertheless, by the end of the nineteenth century, the planter class not only was divided but also was being challenged by the popular classes. This challenge created a series of recurring political crises among the governors, the legislatures, and the Colonial Office in London, leading to some modest reforms in the system in the early twentieth century.

After emancipation, dissolution of the old caste structure of the Caribbean slave society, which was based on the confusing divisions of race, occupation, and status, gave rise to a new, more complex class society. Class divisions within the declining castes generated new groups and produced new tensions. For example, the planter class, which had never been homogeneous, became even more variegated.

In the nineteenth century, a new petit bourgeois class emerged, consisting of merchants, successful estate owners without the ancestry and traditions of the older landed class, members of the professions, and an expanding managerial sector. This class was far more heterogeneous than the class it was gradually displacing in economic and political affairs. In Jamaica a very large number of Jews were given the franchise and participated actively in politics. Remarkably, Jews obtained equality in Jamaica and sat in the House of Assembly long before they secured such privileges in Britain. In Barbados a small number of free nonwhites and Jews moved up, but the resilience of the planter aristocracy inhibited the opening of opportunities found elsewhere. In Trinidad the white elites included those of English, French, Scottish, and Spanish descent, and the religious division along Catholic and Protestant lines was as great as along political and social lines. Although governors might prefer the older planter families, especially those of English ancestry, the new reality was inescapable, and gradually the appointments to high political office reflected the social arrival of these new individuals. They tended to be politically conservative, but theirs was a less rigid conservatism than had prevailed for centuries in the Caribbean.

Although the small, predominantly planter and merchant elites retained political control until the 1940s, increasing social and political democratization of the Caribbean societies occurred. This democratization derived from four sources: economic diversification, which opened up economic opportunities; the expanded education system, which produced a new professional class; the dynamic expansion of organized religion; and the rise of labor unions. Although not of equal weight, all these forces contributed to the formation of the strong tradition of democratic government that has characterized the British Caribbean during the twentieth century.

Between 1880 and 1937, expanded economic opportunities helped create a new, broader based middle class throughout the British Caribbean. Much of this middle class was non-European—formerly from the free nonwhite community of the days of slavery, reinforced by the East Indians and other new immigrant groups of the late nineteenth century. Thus, the black and colored middle class in the Caribbean has antecedents going as far back as the white class. The nonwhite middle class expanded significantly during the post-slavery period.

The lower ranks of the civil service had always provided an opening for nonwhite talent because in a typical colony not enough Europeans could be found to fill all vacancies. On some of the more populated islands, such as Jamaica, nonwhites from these islands could staff all low-level civil service slots. However, other islands, such as Trinidad, had labor shortages, thus requiring them to staff their civil service with nonwhites from other parts of the British Caribbean. For example, the police force of Trinidad was composed mainly of immigrants from Barbados, although the senior officers were always European. Bridget Brereton points out that in 1892 only 47 of 506 policemen in Trinidad were local (7.8 percent), compared with 292 from Barbados (57.7 percent) and 137 from the other islands (27 percent).

New exports, such as rice, bananas, limes, cacao, nutmeg, and arrowroot, provided the means for a few people to join the middle economic classes and for their offspring to rise even higher. Rice cultivation, although primarily a peasant activity in Trinidad, also helped propel a number of its black, East Indian, and Chinese producers into the ranks of the middle class. Wealth, of course, was not enough to endow middle-class status, but it often facilitated the upward social mobility of the sons of peasants, who with the requisite education could aspire to middle-class status.

Education was the great social elevator of the British Caribbean masses. Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, public

education expanded rapidly. A primary-level education that was combined with some knowledge of Spanish was useful in commercial concerns because most of the British Caribbean states conducted much of their commerce with neighboring Spanish-speaking countries. A secondary-level education was helpful in getting into the lower ranks of the bureaucracy and essential for entering the professions. A system of scholarships enabled lower class children with ability to move into secondary schools and into the professions. The number was never large, but the stream was constant, and the competition for scholarships was fierce. Studying for these scholarships was more than an individual effort—it was a family enterprise. Moreover, by the early decades of the twentieth century, this process of academic selection and rigorous preparation for the British examinations—uniform for both British and local students—was controlled by predominantly black schoolteachers, the foundation of the emerging "certificated masses."

As Guyanese political activist and historian Walter Rodney wrote, "The rise of the middle class can only be effectively chronicled and analyzed in relationship to the schools . . . The position of headmaster of a primary school must be viewed as constituting the cornerstone of the black and brown middle class." Eric Williams, a distinguished product of the system, wrote, "If there was a difference between the English public school and its Trinidadian imitation, it was this, that the Trinidad school provided a more thorough preparation for the university than the average English school, partly because the students stayed to the age of twenty rather than eighteen and took a higher examination, partly also because it was not even the cream of the crop, but the top individual from Trinidad who found himself competing with a large number of English students of varying ability." The fact that village primary-school headmasters were also lay preachers and intellectual and quasi-legal arbiters of the community increased their importance both socially and politically.

The churches became important in molding the intellect and the political sophistication of the masses beginning in the nineteenth century. In the 1980s, churches continued to play an important role in the Caribbean. Even more interesting, the churches have managed to be both politically revolutionary and conservative, avant-garde and reactionary, depending both on the issues involved and on the denomination.

Whereas the mainstream churches—mainly Anglican and Roman Catholic—accompanied the expansion of imperialism with the expressed desire of converting "the heathens," their close identity with the established order was a severe handicap to their

effective incorporation of the lower orders of society. They were especially ineffective with the Hindus and Muslims from India. As a result, what early religious conversion took place was most effectively accomplished by the so-called nonconformist groups— Baptists, Methodists, Moravians, Presbyterians, and Quakers. These essentially evangelical sects originated in the metropolitan countries and had a mass, or working-class, urban clientele in mind. Their strongest converts were among the poorer classes. In the Caribbean they were faced with a rather anomalous situation: the hostility or indifference of the planters and the established churches and no real working class as in metropolitan countries. They had either to work among the slaves and free nonwhites or to change their clientele. They chose the former course and so came into direct conflict with the local elites. Nonconformist missionaries, white and nonwhite, were some of the unsung heroes in the struggle for the disintegration of the Caribbean slave systems.

The nonconformist churches enjoyed phenomenal success among the nonwhites until the late nineteenth century, but they paid a price. Their practice and their preaching became syncretized with the rival Afro-Caribbean religions, such as Kumina and Myal. When social practice blocked the upward mobility of nonwhite members within the hierarchy of the churches, they flocked to form their own congregations, much as occurred in the United States. Some of these congregations moved into a succession of charismatic religions beginning with the rise of Pocomania in the 1880s, Bedwardism in the early twentieth century, and Rastafarianism (see Glossary) in the 1930s. All of these religions espoused trances, public confessions, dreams, spirit possession, and exotic dancing. The churches provided experience in mass mobilization and grass-roots organization. More important, they provided the psychological support for the black masses and gave them comfort and a self-confidence rare among those of their color, class, and condition. Politicians such as Marcus Garvey successfully tapped this popular religious tradition for support.

Labor Organizations

Political experience emerged directly from the difficult growth of labor organizations throughout the Caribbean. Trade unionization derived from the plethora of mutual aid and benevolent societies that existed from the period of slavery among the Afro-Caribbean population. Not having the vote or a representative in power, the lower classes used these societies for their mutual social and economic assistance. To obtain political leverage, the working and employed classes had only two recourses: the general strike and the riot.
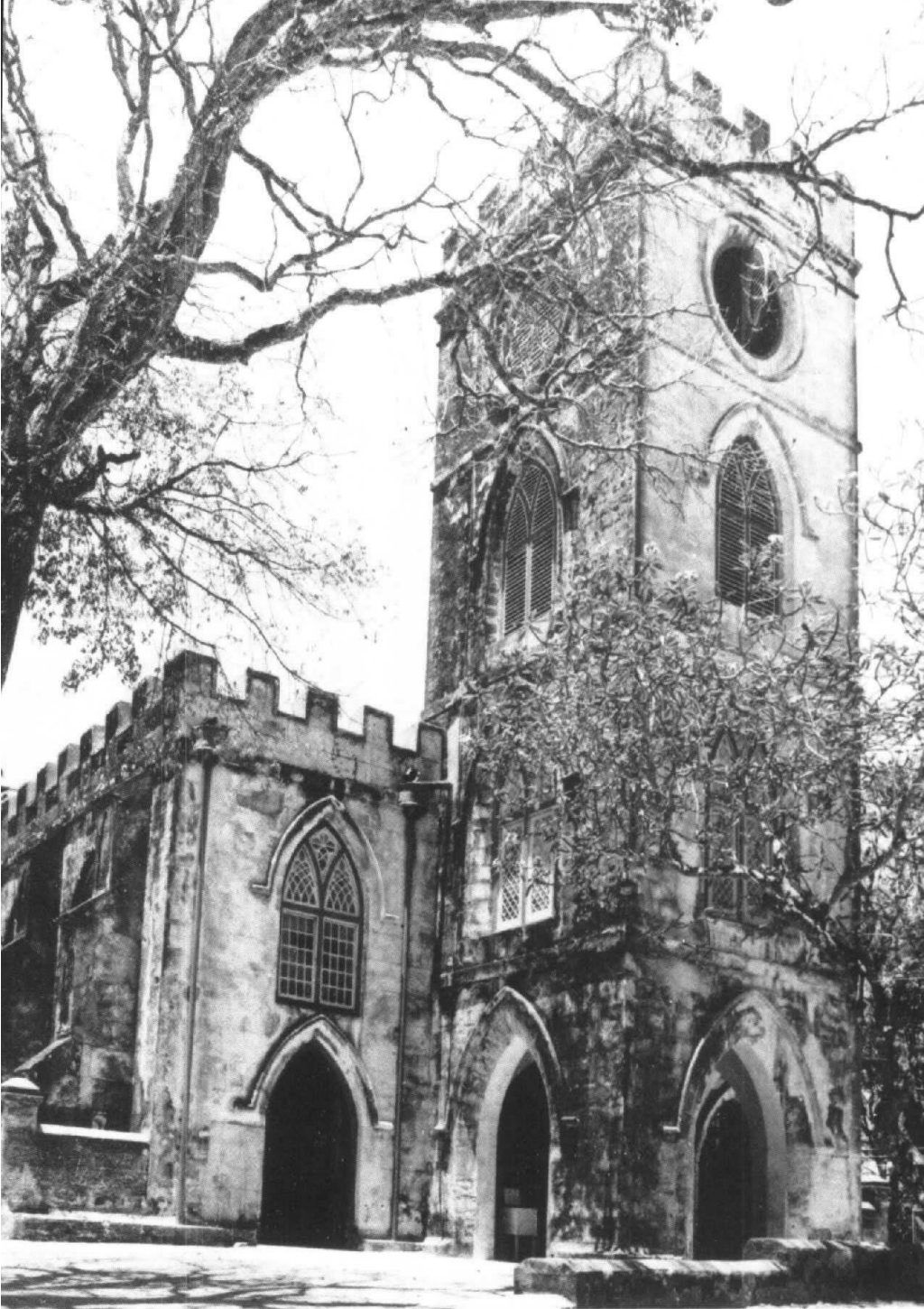
St. John's Parish Church, Barbados, established 1649
Courtesy Barbados Board of Tourism

From time to time some of these strikes were widespread enough to bring the plight of the masses to the attention of the Colonial Office and forced significant changes in the constitutional order. Such was the case with the so-called Water Riots of Trinidad in 1903, which began as middle-class dissatisfaction over the colonial government's attempt to install water meters and reduce waste. The municipal Ratepayers Association, a solidly middle-class organization, appealed to the working and unemployed classes of the city of Port-of-Spain. An excited mob assembled outside the Legislative Council building, resulting in an altercation in which sixteen people were killed and forty-three injured by reckless police shooting, and the Legislative Council building was burned to the ground. After the usual official inquiry, the Colonial Office gradually agreed to the insistent demands of a number of middle- and working-class organizations for the restoration of an elected city council, which was put in place between 1914 and 1918.

Another such riot occurred in Demerara, British Guiana, in 1905. Starting as a localized dispute over wages by some stevedores in Georgetown, it quickly spread to sugarcane field-workers, factory workers, domestics, bakers, and porters, engulfing an ever widening area beyond the city limits. The causes of the disturbance were essentially economic, and the workers—as opposed to their middle-class sympathizers—lacked any organizational structure. Nevertheless, the governor of the colony called out the military forces to put down the disturbances, causing seven deaths and a score of serious injuries. Although the riots failed to achieve their economic goals, for a few days they brought together a great number of the middle and lower classes. The coincidence of these riots throughout the British Caribbean created an impression in Britain that the political administration of the colonies required greater attention— an impression reinforced with each commission report issued thereafter.

Between 1880 and 1920, the British Caribbean witnessed a proliferation of organizations, despite the authorities' marked coolness to them. A number represented middle-class workers, such as teachers, banana growers, coconut growers, cacao farmers, sugarcane farmers, rice farmers, lime growers, and arrowroot growers. Sometimes, as in the case of the Ratepayers Association in Trinidad, they had overtly middle-class political aspirations: a widening of the political franchise to allow more of their members access to political office. However, more and more workers were forming unions and agitating for improvements in their wages and working conditions. Furthermore, as in the case of the 1905 riots, the two sets of organizations (middle-class and working-class) worked in

concert—although the martyrs to the cause were singularly from the working and unemployed classes. One reason that the two sets of organizations could work together was their common belief that political reform of the unjust and anachronistic colonial adminis-trative system was the major element needed to achieve their diver-gent goals. They realized that historically the governors had worked with a small and unrepresentative segment of the old planter class serving their narrow economic ends. To the middle classes and the workers—and to a certain extent the masses of urban unem-ployed—social and economic justice would be possible only if they secured control of the political machinery, and there were only two ways to gain that control: through persuasion or through force.

To a great degree, this conviction still exists among the popula-tions of the Caribbean. It was given further authenticity when the British Labour Party, especially the Fabian wing of the party, ex-pressed sympathy with this view. But the Fabians did more. They actively sought to guide these fledgling political associations along a path of "responsible reform," thereby hoping to avert revolu-tionary changes. After World War I, the Fabians grew more influential—as did the British Labour Party—in British politics. The experience of both the Boer War and World War I strength-ened the anti-imperialists within Britain and weakened Britain's faith in its ability to rule far-flung colonies of diverse peoples. There was even less enthusiasm for colonial domination when the adminis-trative costs exceeded the economic returns. The result of this am-bivalence about empire was a sincere attempt to rule constitutionally and openly. British critics of colonial rule expressed their opinions freely, and even the government reports produced annually on each colony detailed shortcomings of bureaucrats and policies. Neverthe-less, talking about West Indian problems was not the same as doing something about them, and by the 1930s, it was clear that British colonial policy was intellectually bankrupt.

Throughout the 1920s and the 1930s, British labor unions had sought to guide and encourage the formation of West Indian af-filiates. As a result, unionization was common throughout the region, and many of the unions were formally or informally affiliated with the British Trades Union Congress. However, Fabian tutelage and reformist policies appeared to have failed when workers broke out in spontaneous demonstrations throughout the region, begin-ning in St. Kitts in 1935 and culminating with Jamaica (and Brit-ish Guiana) in 1938. A hastily dispatched royal commission, dominated by Fabians and chaired by Lord Moyne (hence called the Moyne Commission), toured the region and reported on the dismal conditions, making strong recommendations for significant

political reform. The Moyne Commission noted as causes of the riots increased politicization of workers in the region, deriving from the war experiences of West Indian soldiers, the spread of elementary education, and the influence of industrial labor unrest in the United States. After the riots, the reforms sought by the union of the middle classes and the workers were formalized. In 1940 the British Parliament passed the Colonial Development Welfare Act, the first foreign assistance program legislated specifically for the islands. The British government also extended the franchise to all adults over the age of twenty-one and set about building the apparatus for modified self-government with greater local participation.

Jamaica held its first general election under universal adult suffrage in 1944, and the other territories followed soon thereafter. The alliance of professionals and labor leaders easily captured the state apparatus from the old combination of planters and bureaucrats. Thus, in most colonies a very close bond developed between the political parties and the workers' unions. In Jamaica the Jamaica Labour Party drew its basic support from the Bustamante Industrial Trade Unions. Its rival, the People's National Party, was at first affiliated with the Trades Union Congress; after the purge of the radicals from the party in 1952, the party created the National Workers Union—the popular base that catapulted Michael Manley to political eminence in 1972 (see Historical Setting, ch. 2).

In Barbados the Barbados Labour Party depended in the early days on the mass base of the members of the Barbados Workers Union. Likewise, labor unions formed the catalyst for the successful political parties of Vere Bird, Sr., in Antigua and Barbuda, Robert Bradshaw in St. Kitts and Nevis, and Eric Gairy in Grenada. The notable exception was Eric Williams in Trinidad and Tobago. His People's National Movement, established in 1956, succeeded despite a constant struggle against a sharply divided collection of strong unions (see Historical Setting, ch. 3).

Beginning after World War II and lasting until the late 1960s, a sort of honeymoon existed between the political parties and the labor unions. Expanding domestic economies allowed substantial concessions of benefits to workers, whose real wages increased significantly as unionization flourished.

The West Indies Federation, 1958–62

As part of Britain's decision to push modified self-government, the British authorities encouraged an experiment in confederation. The idea had been discussed in the Colonial Office since the late nineteenth century, but it was brought to new life with a regional

conference held at Montego Bay, Jamaica, in 1947. The British were interested in administrative efficiency and centralization. The West Indians talked about political independence. At the conference, a compromise was worked out. The West Indian Meteorological Service (the forerunner of the Caribbean Meteorological Council) and the University of the West Indies, as a College of London University, were set up, and plans were made for the creation of a political federation that would unite the various territories and eventually culminate in the political independence of the region. These new regional organizations joined others already in existence, such as the Caribbean Union of Teachers, established in 1935; the Associated Chambers of Commerce, organized in 1917; and the Caribbean Labour Congress, inaugurated in 1945.

The West Indies Federation was established on January 3, 1958, and consisted of ten island territories: Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, and Montserrat. The federation began inauspiciously, however, when the leading politicians in Jamaica (Prime Minister Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante) and in Trinidad and Tobago (Eric Williams) refused to participate in the federal elections. A federative assembly election was held on the ten island territories in 1958. Manley, Williams, and Bustamante did not seek election as assembly members, although the political parties of Manley and Williams did participate in the election. Bustamante was opposed to the idea of federation. Doomed from the start by lukewarm popular support, the federation quickly foundered on the islands' uncompromisingly parochial interests, especially those of the principal participants, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica. The former would not accept unrestricted freedom of movement; the latter would not accept a binding customs union. On September 19, 1961, some 54 percent of the Jamaican electorate voted to end their participation. It was the lowest popular vote in any Jamaican election, but the government accepted the decision and initiated the plans to request complete independence for the state. Attempts by Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados to salvage the federation after the withdrawal of Jamaica failed. Trinidad and Tobago thereupon voted to withdraw from the federation, which was formally dissolved in 1962.

In 1962 Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago became the first British Caribbean countries to achieve independence. Barbados gained its independence in 1966; the Bahamas in 1973; Grenada in 1974; Dominica in 1978; St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 1979; Antigua and Barbuda in 1981; and St. Kitts and Nevis

in 1983. In late 1987, Montserrat, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands remained crown colonies with limited internal self-government. Anguilla, having broken away from St. Kitts and Nevis in 1967, became an associated state (see Glossary) of Britain in 1976. The proliferation of ministates in the British Caribbean will most likely continue. The five remaining British dependencies may yet seek independence. Moreover, it is not inconceivable that one or more multiple-island states, such as St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, or even Trinidad and Tobago, might split into separate entities.

Political Systems

Despite generally similar political traditions throughout the region, there are marked differences among the political systems in the various countries. For example, in the Bahamas, Jamaica, and Barbados, a strong two-party political system has developed, and the performance of third parties has been dismal in elections. Trinidad and Tobago has a multiparty system, which, between 1956 and 1986, was dominated by the People's National Movement, first under the leadership of Eric Williams (party leader, 1956–81) and then under George Chambers (party leader, 1981–86). Furthermore, in Trinidad and Tobago, ethnic politics constitutes a significant part of the political equation, as Hindu and Muslim East Indians compete and form coalitions with black Trinidadians and Tobagonians (see Political Dynamics, ch. 3).

In the smaller islands, a number of factors have coincided to make dual-party, democratic politics a difficult achievement. In some cases the populations are simply too small to provide the critical mass of diversity and anonymity. Family and kin relations make secret balloting and privacy elusive. The associations and cooperative organizations that were so important in Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago did not exist in the smaller societies. As a result, political stability and coherence of the kind found in the larger countries have been difficult to achieve in smaller countries. For example, between 1979 and 1983, the government of Grenada was taken over by a band of self-avowed Marxists led by Maurice Bishop. The People's Revolutionary Government, as it called itself, tried to create a new kind of politics in the British Caribbean—namely, a populist government ruling without the benefit of elections (see Grenada, Government and Politics, ch. 4). The experiment, which went against a long, strong tradition of elections in the Commonwealth Caribbean, ended abruptly in confusion as a result of the military intervention by troops from other

Caribbean states and the United States in October 1983 (see Current Strategic Considerations, ch. 7).

Social and Cultural Characteristics

With the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, where East Indians and Africans are nearly equal in number, the Caribbean states have predominantly African-derived populations. Race, ethnicity, class, and color, however, do not constitute the mutually reinforcing cleavages found elsewhere. No regional political or social organization is based exclusively on race, class, or color. Overt forms of segregation and discrimination do not exist, and crude political appeals to race and color have not been successful. Nevertheless, color consciousness permeates the societies, and various forms of more subtle social discrimination against non-Christians and East Indians, for example, have persisted.

Despite the common official language, common institutions, and common historical experience, each island and state has a distinct set of characteristics. For example, the local inflection of the English spoken in Jamaica varies significantly from that spoken in Barbados or Trinidad and Tobago.

In a region where a constant racial and cultural mixing over centuries has resulted in extreme heterogeneity, any ethnic ideal clashes with the observed reality of everyday life. Nevertheless, ideals exist, often based on European models, and are at variance with the expressed rhetoric of the political majority, which tries to emphasize the African cultural heritage. At all levels of Caribbean societies, tensions exist between state policies and ideals on the one hand and individual beliefs, family, and kin on the other hand. These tensions are exacerbated by the fragile political structures and even more delicate economic foundations on which a viable, cohesive nationalism must be forged among the Commonwealth Caribbean peoples. The most urgent challenges for the new political leaders lie in satisfying the constantly rising expectations amid the reality of constantly shrinking resources.

Perhaps as a result of its heterogeneity, the area is extremely dynamic culturally. There has been a veritable explosion of local talent since World War II. Poets and novelists of international renown include Samuel Selvon, V.S. Naipaul, and Earl Lovelace from Trinidad; Derek Walcott from St. Lucia; George Lamming from Barbados; and Mervyn Morris, Vic Reid, John Hearne, Andrew Salkey, and Roger Mais from Jamaica. In painting and sculpture, the late Edna Manley of Jamaica was universally recognized. Commonwealth Caribbean music in the form of the calypso, reggae, *ska*, and steelband orchestra has captivated listeners around

the world. Like the people themselves, art forms in the Caribbean demonstrate an eclectic variety combining elements of European, African, Asian, and indigenous American traditions.

* * *

General regional historical background on the islands of the Commonwealth Caribbean may be obtained from Franklin W. Knight's *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism;* Eric Williams's *From Columbus to Castro;* John H. Parry and Philip M. Sherlock's *A Short History of the West Indies;* and Gordon K. Lewis's *The Growth of the Modern West Indies.* Much useful information also is available in *Baedeker's Caribbean, Including Bermuda, 1987,* as well as in *The Caribbean: Survival, Struggle and Sovereignty.* Individual political histories can be found in Michael Craton's *A History of the Bahamas;* George E. Eaton's *Alexander Bustamante and Modern Jamaica;* Norman Washington Manley's *Norman Washington Manley and the New Jamaica;* Trevor Munroe's *The Politics of Constitutional Decolonization;* George I. Brizan's *Grenada, Island of Conflict;* W. Richard Jacobs and Ian Jacobs's *Grenada: Route to Revolution;* David Lewis's *Reform and Revolution in Grenada, 1950–1981;* and Bridget Brereton's *A History of Modern Trinidad, 1783–1962.* Economic information is available in the annual reports published by the Inter-American Development Bank for the member states, i.e., the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago; J.R. Mandle's *Patterns of Caribbean Development;* Ransford W. Palmer's *Problems of Development in Beautiful Countries* and *Caribbean Dependence on the United States Economy;* Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton's *Dependency under Challenge;* and Clive Y. Thomas's *Plantations, Peasants, and State.* Migration information is treated in Robert A. Pastor's *Migration and Development in the Caribbean.* Information about relations with the United States is given in Lester D. Langley's *The United States and the Caribbean in the Twentieth Century.* (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 2. Jamaica

OUT OF MANY ONE PEOPLE
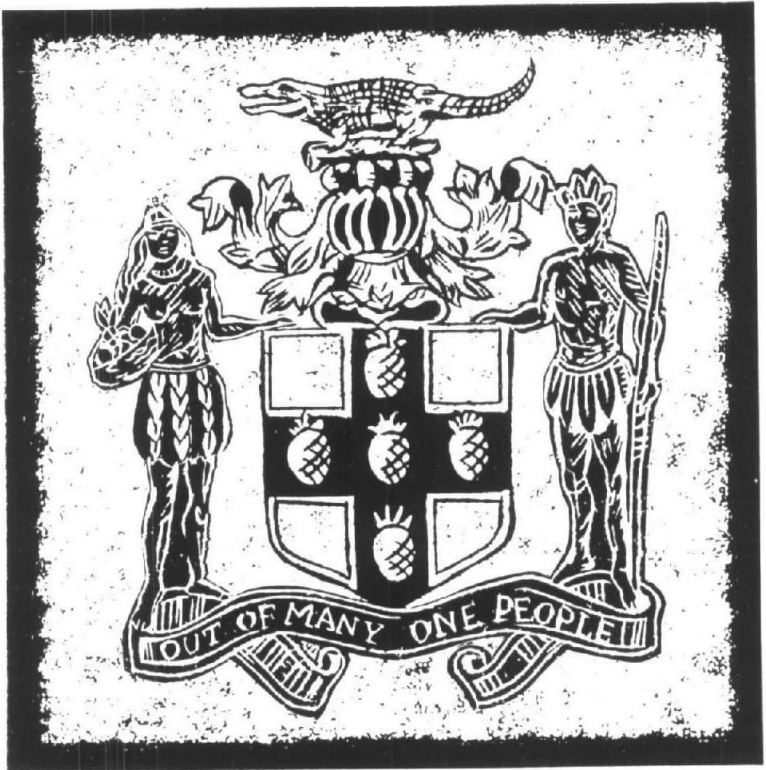
Jamaican coat of arms

Jamaica

Official Name .... Jamaica

Term for Citizens .... Jamaican(s)

Capital .... Kingston

Political Status .... Independent, 1962

Form of Government .... Parliamentary democracy
and constitutional monarchy

Geography
Size .... 10,911 sq. km.
Topography .. Narrow coastal plain; mountainous interior;
limestone plateau covering two-thirds of the country
Climate .. Upland tropical on windward side of mountains,
semiarid on leeward side

Population
Total estimated in 1986 2,304,000
Annual growth rate (in percentage) in 1986 .... 0.9
Life expectancy at birth in 1985 73
Adult literacy rate (in percentage) in late 1970s 85
Language .... English; some patois
Ethnic groups ... Black (76 percent), mulatto (15 percent),
black-East Indian or black-Chinese (4 percent),
East Indian (2 percent), Chinese (1 percent);
remainder white, of European or Middle Eastern descent
Religion .... Protestant (75 percent), Roman Catholic
(8 percent), Rastafarian (5 percent);
remainder Muslim, Jewish, or spiritualist

Economy
Currency; exchange rate .... Jamaican dollar(J$);
J$5.50 = US$1.00
Gross domestic product (GDP) in 1985 .... US$1.7 billion
Per capita GDP in 1985 .... US$940
Distribution of GDP (in percentage) in 1985
Public administration 19
Manufacturing 16
Distributive trade 15

Financial services and real estate 12
Agriculture 9
Financial institutions 7
Transportation and communications 7
Mining 5
Construction 5
Electricity and water 1
Other 4

National Security
Armed forces personnel 1,780
Paramilitary personnel 0
Police 5,601

BEFORE THE SPANIARDS occupied Jamaica in the early six-
teenth century, the island was inhabited by the Arawak Indians,
who called it Xaymaca, meaning "land of springs" or "land of
wood and water." Lying on the trade routes between the Old World
and the New World, Jamaica served variously for centuries as a
way station for Spanish galleons, a market for slaves and goods
from many countries, and a prize for the Spaniards, the British,
buccaneers, and entrepreneurs. By far the largest of the English-
speaking islands in size and population, independent Jamaica has
played a leading role within the Commonwealth Caribbean and
has been active in international organizations.

Jamaica's story is one of independence that began in the seven-
teenth century with the Maroons, runaway slaves who resisted the
British colonizers by carrying out hit-and-run attacks from the in-
terior. Their 7,000 descendants in the Cockpit Country have sym-
bolized the fervent, sometimes belligerent, love of freedom that is
ingrained in the Jamaican people as a result of both their British
tutelage and their history of slavery. Independence came quietly,
however, without a revolutionary struggle, apparently reflecting
the lasting imprint of the British parliamentary legacy on Jamai-
can society.

Despite its people's respect for the rule of law and the British
Westminster system of government, Jamaica's first twenty-five
years as an independent state were marked by significant increases
in criminal violence and political polarization. The extremely vio-
lent 1980 electoral campaign and the boycott by the opposition party
of the 1983 local elections strained the island's two-party political
system. In 1987 Jamaica was still bitterly divided, both politically
and socially. This trend seemed to belie the motto beneath the
Jamaican coat of arms, reading "Out of Many, One People." Both
kinds of violence on the island—political and criminal—have been
attributed among other things to Jamaican cultural and societal
traits, the socioeconomic structure of Jamaican politics, worsen-
ing economic conditions, narcotics trafficking, and inadequate law
enforcement.

Notwithstanding the periodic outbursts of violence around elec-
tions and the one-party legislative situation, the nation's well-
institutionalized political system remained generally intact during
the first quarter-century of independence. Jamaicans have cherished
their inherited parliamentary system of government, whose roots

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extend back to the seventeenth century. Despite the divergent ideologies and intense antipathy of the two principal political parties, they have recognized their common stake in the stability of political life. Jamaica has no history of coups, assassinations of national leaders, or racial confrontation. The two main parties have alternated in power every ten years, and neither has ever retained power beyond its constitutionally mandated term of office. It was widely expected that a changeover would result from the elections constitutionally required in early 1989.

Historical Setting

From May 5, 1494, when Christopher Columbus first set foot on what he described as ''the fairest isle that eyes have beheld,'' to its emergence as an independent state on August 6, 1962, Jamaica passed through three main periods. First, it served for nearly 150 years as a Spanish-held way station for galleons en route to and from the Spanish Main (the mainland of Spanish America). Second, from the mid-1600s until the abolition of slavery in 1834, it was a sugar-producing, slave-worked plantation society. Thereafter, it was a largely agricultural, British colony peopled mainly by black peasants and workers.

The Spanish adventurer Juan de Esquivel settled the island in 1509, calling it Santiago, the name given it by Columbus. In the period of Spanish dominance from 1509 to 1655, the Spaniards exploited the island's precious metals and eradicated the Arawaks, who succumbed to imported diseases and harsh slavery (see The Pre-European Population, ch. 1). An English naval force sent by Oliver Cromwell attacked the island in 1655, forcing the small group of Spanish defenders to capitulate in May of that year (see The European Settlements, ch. 1). Within 3 years, the English had occupied the island, whose population was only about 3,000 (equally divided between the Spaniards and their slaves), but it took them many years to bring the rebellious slaves under their control.

Cromwell increased the island's white population by sending indentured servants and prisoners captured in battles with the Irish and Scots, as well as some common criminals. This practice was continued under Charles II, and the white population was also augmented by immigrants from other Caribbean islands and from the North American mainland, as well as by the English buccaneers. But tropical diseases kept the number of whites well under 10,000 until about 1740.

Although the slave population in the 1670s and 1680s never exceeded about 9,500, by the end of the seventeenth century imports of slaves increased the black population to at least five times the

number of whites. Thereafter, Jamaica's blacks did not increase significantly in number until well into the eighteenth century, in part because the slave ships coming from the west coast of Africa preferred to unload at the islands of the Eastern Caribbean (see Glossary). At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the number of slaves in Jamaica did not exceed 45,000, but by 1800 it had increased to over 300,000.

Beginning with the Stuart monarchy's appointment of a civil governor to Jamaica in 1661, political patterns were established that lasted well into the twentieth century. The second governor, Lord Windsor, brought with him in 1662 a proclamation from the king giving Jamaica's nonslave populace the rights of English citizens, including the right to make their own laws. Although he spent only ten weeks in Jamaica, Lord Windsor laid the foundations of a governing system that was to last for two centuries: a crown-appointed governor, an appointed advisory council that doubled as the upper house of the legislature, and a locally elected—but highly unrepresentative—House of Assembly.

England gained formal possession of Jamaica from Spain in 1670 through the Treaty of Madrid. Removing the pressing need for constant defense against Spanish attack, this change served as an incentive to planting. For years, however, the planter-dominated House of Assembly was in continual conflict with the various governors and the Stuart kings; there were also contentious factions within the assembly itself. For much of the 1670s and 1680s, Charles II and James II and the assembly feuded over such matters as the purchase of slaves from ships not run by the royal English trading company. The last Stuart governor, the duke of Albemarle, who was more interested in treasure hunting than in planting, turned the planter oligarchy out of office. After the duke's death in 1688, the planters, who had fled Jamaica to London, succeeded in lobbying James II to order a return to the pre-Albemarle political arrangement, and the revolution that brought William III and Mary to the throne in 1689 confirmed the local control of Jamaican planters belonging to the assembly. This settlement also improved the supply of slaves and resulted in greater protection, including military support, for the planters against foreign competition. This was of particular importance during the Anglo-French War in the Caribbean from 1689 to 1713.

Early in the eighteenth century, the Maroons took a heavy toll on the British troops and local militia sent against them in the interior; their rebellion ended, however, with the signing of peace agreements in 1738. The sugar monoculture and slave-worked plantation society characterized Jamaica throughout the eighteenth

century. After the abolition of the slave trade in 1808 and slavery itself in 1834, however, the island's sugar- and slave-based economy faltered (see The Post-Emancipation Societies, ch. 1). The period after 1834 initially was marked by conflict between the plantocracy and elements in the Colonial Office over the extent to which individual freedom should be coupled with political participation for blacks. In 1840 the House of Assembly changed the voting qualifications in a way that enabled a majority of blacks and people of mixed race to vote. But neither the change in the political system nor the abolition of slavery changed the planters' chief interest, which lay in the continued profitability of their estates, and they continued to dominate the elitist assembly. Nevertheless, at the end of the eighteenth century and in the early years of the nineteenth century, the crown began to allow some Jamaicans— mostly local merchants, urban professionals, and artisans—into the appointed council.

In 1846 Jamaican planters, still reeling from the loss of slave labor, suffered a crushing blow when Britain passed the Sugar Duties Act, eliminating Jamaica's traditionally favored status as its primary supplier of sugar. The House of Assembly stumbled from one crisis to another until the collapse of the sugar trade, when racial and religious tensions came to a head during the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 (see Political Traditions, ch. 1). Although suppressed ruthlessly, the severe rioting so alarmed the planters that the two-centuries-old House of Assembly voted to abolish itself and asked for the establishment of direct British rule.

In 1866 the new crown colony government (see Glossary) consisted of the Legislative Council, which replaced the House of Assembly, and the executive Privy Council, but the Colonial Office exercised effective power through a presiding British governor. The Legislative Council included a few handpicked prominent Jamaicans for the sake of appearance only. In the late nineteenth century, Britain modified crown colony rule on the island and, after 1884, gradually reintroduced representation and limited self-rule. Britain also reformed the colony's legal structure along the lines of English common law and county courts and established a constabulary force.

The smooth working of the crown colony system was dependent on a good understanding and an identity of interests between the governing officials, who were British, and most of the nonofficial, appointed members of the Legislative Council, who were Jamaicans. The elected members of this body were in a permanent minority and without any influence or administrative power. The unstated alliance—based on shared color, attitudes, and interest—

between the British officials and the Jamaican upper class was rein-
forced in London, where the West India Committee lobbied for
Jamaican interests. Jamaica's white or near-white propertied class
continued to hold the dominant position in every respect; the vast
majority of the black population remained poor and unenfranchised.

Marcus Mosiah Garvey, a black activist and labor leader,
founded one of Jamaica's first political parties in 1929 and a workers
association in the early 1930s. The so-called Rastafarian Brethren
(commonly called the Rastafarians—see Glossary), which in 1935
hailed Ethiopia's emperor Haile Selassie as God incarnate, owed
its origins to the cultivation of self-confidence and black pride
promoted by Garvey and his black nationalist movement. Garvey,
a controversial figure, had been the target of a four-year investi-
gation by the United States government. He was convicted of mail
fraud in 1923 and had served most of a five-year term in an Atlanta
penitentiary when he was deported to Jamaica in 1927. Garvey
left the colony in 1935 to live in Britain, where he died heavily
in debt five years later. He was proclaimed Jamaica's first national
hero in the 1960s after Edward Seaga, then a government minister,
arranged the return of his remains to Jamaica. In 1987 Jamaica
petitioned the United States Congress to pardon Garvey on the
basis that the federal charges brought against him were unsubstan-
tiated and unjust.

Dissatisfaction with crown colony rule reached its peak during
the period between the world wars, as demands for responsible self-
government grew. A growing mulatto middle class with increas-
ingly impressive education, ability, and even property identified
with British social and political standards. Nevertheless, Jamaicans,
including whites, began to feel offended by a perceived British indif-
ference to their economic difficulties and political opinions. They
also resented British monopoly of high positions and the many limi-
tations on their own mobility in the colonial civil service, especially
if they were of mixed race.

The rise of nationalism, as distinct from island identification or
desire for self-determination, is generally dated to the 1938 labor
riots that affected both Jamaica and the islands of the Eastern Carib-
bean. William Alexander Bustamante, a moneylender in the cap-
ital city of Kingston who had formed the Jamaica Trade Workers
and Tradesmen Union (JTWTU) three years earlier, captured the
imagination of the black masses with his messianic personality, even
though he himself was light-skinned, affluent, and aristocratic (see
Growth and Structure of the Economy, this ch.). Bustamante
emerged from the 1938 strikes and other disturbances as a populist
leader and the principal spokesperson for the militant urban working

class, and in that year, using the JTWTU as a stepping stone, he founded the Bustamante Industrial Trade Unions (BITU), which inaugurated Jamaica's workers movement.

A distant cousin of Bustamante's, Norman W. Manley, concluded as a result of the 1938 riots that the real basis for national unity in Jamaica lay in the masses. Unlike the union-oriented Bustamante, however, Manley was more interested in access to control over state power and political rights for the masses. On September 18, 1938, he inaugurated the People's National Party (PNP), which had begun as a nationalist movement supported by the mixed-race middle class and the liberal sector of the business community with leaders who were highly educated members of the upper-middle class. The 1938 riots spurred the PNP to unionize labor, although it would be several years before the PNP formed major labor unions. The party concentrated its earliest efforts on establishing a network both in urban areas and in banana-growing rural parishes, later working on building support among small farmers and in areas of bauxite mining.

The PNP adopted a socialist ideology in 1940 and later joined the Socialist International, allying itself formally with the social democratic parties of Western Europe. Guided by socialist principles, Manley was nonetheless not a doctrinaire socialist. The ideology of the PNP during the 1940s was similar to that of the British Labour Party concerning state control of the factors of production, equality of opportunity, and a welfare state. A left-wing element in the PNP, however, held more orthodox Marxist views and worked for the internationalization of the trade union movement through the Caribbean Labour Congress, inaugurated in 1945. In those formative years of Jamaican political and union activity, relations between Manley and Bustamante were cordial. Manley defended Bustamante in court against charges brought by the British for his labor activism in the 1938 riots and looked after the BITU during Bustamante's imprisonment.

Bustamante had political ambitions of his own, however. In 1942, while still incarcerated, he founded a political party to rival the PNP, called the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP). The new party, whose leaders were of a lower class than those of the PNP, was supported by conservative businessmen and 60,000 dues-paying BITU members, who encompassed dock and sugar plantation workers and other unskilled urban laborers. On his release in 1943, Bustamante began building up the JLP. Meanwhile, several PNP leaders organized the leftist-oriented Trade Union Congress (TUC). Thus, from an early stage in modern Jamaica, unionized labor was an integral part of organized political life.

For the next quarter-century, Bustamante and Manley competed for center stage in Jamaican political affairs, the former espousing the cause of the ''barefoot man'' and the latter the cause of ''democratic socialism,'' a loosely defined political and economic theory aimed at achieving a classless system of government. Jamaica's two founding fathers projected quite different popular images. Bustamante, lacking even a high school diploma, was an autocratic, charismatic, and highly adept politician; Manley was an athletic, Oxford-trained lawyer, Rhodes scholar, humanist, and liberal intellectual. Although considerably more reserved than Bustamante, Manley was well liked and widely respected. He was also a visionary nationalist who became the driving force behind the crown colony's quest for independence.

Following the 1935–38 disturbances in the West Indies, London sent the Moyne Commission to study conditions in the British Caribbean territories. Its findings led in the early 1940s to better wages and a new constitution in Jamaica (see Labor Organizations, ch. 1). Issued on November 20, 1944, the new constitution modified the crown colony system and inaugurated limited self-government based on the Westminster model and universal adult suffrage. It also embodied the island's principles of ministerial responsibility and the rule of law. Elections were held in 1944, but only 31 percent of the population participated. The JLP—helped by its promises to create jobs, its practice of dispensing public funds in pro-JLP parishes, and the PNP's relatively radical platform—won an 18-percent majority of the votes over the PNP, as well as 22 seats in the newly created 32-member House of Representatives. Five percent of the vote went to the PNP, and another 5 percent went to short-lived parties. In 1945 Bustamante took office as Jamaica's first chief minister (the preindependence title for head of government).

Under the new constitution, the British governor—assisted by the six-member Privy Council and ten-member Executive Council—remained responsible solely to the crown. The Legislative Council became the upper house, or Senate, of the bicameral Parliament. Members of the House of Representatives were elected by adult suffrage from single-member electoral districts called constituencies. Despite these changes, ultimate power remained concentrated in the hands of the governor and other high officials.

After World War II, Jamaica began a relatively long transition to full political independence. Jamaicans preferred British culture over United States culture, but they had a love-hate relationship with the British and resented British domination, racism, and the

dictatorial Colonial Office. Britain gradually granted the colony more self-government under periodic constitutional changes. Jamaica's political patterns and governmental structure were shaped during two decades of what was called "constitutional decoloniza- tion," the period between 1944 and independence in 1962.

Having seen how little popular appeal the PNP's 1944 campaign position had, the party shifted toward the center in 1949 and re- mained there until 1974. The PNP actually won a 0.8-percent majority of the votes over the JLP in the 1949 election, although the JLP won a majority of the seats in the House of Representa- tives. In the 1950s, the PNP and JLP became increasingly similar in their sociological composition and ideological outlook. During the cold war years, socialism became an explosive domestic issue. The JLP exploited it among property owners and churchgoers, attracting more middle-class support. As a result, PNP leaders di- luted their socialist rhetoric, and in 1952 the PNP moderated its image by expelling four prominent leftists who had controlled the TUC. The PNP then formed the more conservative National Workers Union (NWU). Henceforth, PNP socialism meant little more than national planning within a framework of private property and foreign capital. The PNP retained, however, a basic commit- ment to socialist precepts, such as public control of resources and a more equitable distribution of income. Manley's PNP came to power for the first time after winning the 1955 elections with an 11-percent majority over the JLP and 50.5 percent of the popular vote.

Amendments to the constitution that took effect in May 1953 reconstituted the Executive Council and provided for eight ministers to be selected from among members of the House of Representa- tives. The first ministries were subsequently established. These amendments also enlarged the limited powers of the House of Representatives and made elected members of the governor's Ex- ecutive Council responsible to the Jamaican Parliament. Manley, elected chief minister, accelerated the process of decolonization dur- ing his able stewardship beginning in January 1955. Further progress toward self-government was achieved under constitutional amendments in 1955 and 1956.

Assured by British declarations that independence would be granted to a collective West Indian state rather than to individual colonies, Manley supported Jamaica's joining nine other British territories in the West Indies Federation, established on January 3, 1958 (see The West Indies Federation, 1958–62, ch. 1). Manley became Jamaica's first premier after the PNP again won a decisive

victory in the general election in July 1959, securing thirty of forty-five seats in the House of Representatives.

Membership in the federation remained an issue in Jamaican politics. Bustamante, reversing his previously supportive position on the issue, warned of the financial implications of membership—Jamaica was responsible for a disproportionately large share (43 percent) of the federation's financing—and an inequity in Jamaica's proportional representation in the federation's House of Assembly. Manley's PNP favored staying in the federation, but he agreed to hold a referendum in September 1961 to decide on the issue. When 54 percent of the electorate voted to withdraw, Jamaica left the federation, which dissolved in 1962 after Trinidad and Tobago also pulled out. Manley believed that the rejection of his profederation policy in the 1961 referendum called for a renewed mandate from the electorate, but the JLP won the election of early 1962 by a fraction. Bustamante assumed the premiership that April, and Manley spent his remaining few years in politics as leader of the opposition.

Jamaica received its independence on August 6, 1962. The new nation retained, however, its membership in the Commonwealth of Nations and adopted a Westminster-style parliamentary system (see Appendix B). Bustamante, at age seventy-eight, became the new nation's first prime minister and also assumed responsibility for the new ministries of defense and foreign affairs. Jamaicans welcomed independence, but they had already spent their nationalistic passion over the emotional issue of federation. The general feeling was that independence would not make much difference in their lives.

Geography

Jamaica lies 145 kilometers south of Cuba and 160 kilometers west of Haiti (see fig. 1). Its capital city, Kingston, is about 920 kilometers southeast of Miami. At its greatest extent, Jamaica is 235 kilometers long, and it varies between 35 and 82 kilometers wide. Having an area of 10,911 square kilometers, Jamaica is the largest island of the Commonwealth Caribbean and the third largest of the Greater Antilles, after Cuba and Hispaniola (the island containing Haiti and the Dominican Republic). Jamaican territory also includes a number of cays (see Glossary). A cluster of cays is above, with the Pedro Banks, an area of shallow seas lying southwest of Jamaica that extend generally east to west for over 160 kilometers. To the southeast of Jamaica lie the Morant Cays, fifty-one kilometers from Morant Point, the easternmost point of Jamaica.

Jamaica and the other islands of the Antilles evolved from an arc of ancient volcanoes that rose from the sea billions of years ago. During periods of submersion, thick layers of limestone were laid down over the old igneous and metamorphic rock. In many places, the limestone is thousands of feet thick. The country can be divided into three landform regions: the eastern mountains, the central valleys and plateaus, and the coastal plains (see fig. 2).

The highest area is that of the Blue Mountains. These eastern mountains are formed by a central ridge of metamorphic rock running northwest to southeast from which many long spurs jut to the north and south. For a distance of over 3 kilometers, the crest of the ridge exceeds 1,800 meters. The highest point is Blue Mountain Peak at 2,256 meters. The Blue Mountains rise to these elevations from the coastal plain in the space of about sixteen kilometers, thus producing one of the steepest general gradients in the world. In this part of the country, the old metamorphic rock reveals itself through the surrounding limestone.

To the north of the Blue Mountains lies the strongly tilted limestone plateau forming the John Crow Mountains. This range rises to elevations of over 1,000 meters. To the west, in the central part of the country, are two high rolling plateaus: the Dry Harbour Mountains to the north and the Manchester Plateau to the south. Between the two, the land is rugged, and the limestone layers are broken by the older rocks. Streams that rise in the region flow outward and sink soon after reaching the limestone layers.

The limestone plateau covers two-thirds of the country, so that karst formations dominate the island. Karst is formed by the erosion of limestone in solution. Sinkholes, caves and caverns, disappearing streams, hummocky hills, and terra rosa (residual red) soils in the valleys are distinguishing features of a karst landscape; all these are present in Jamaica. To the west of the mountains is the rugged terrain of the Cockpit Country, one of the world's most dramatic examples of karst topography.

The Cockpit Country is pockmarked with steep-sided hollows as much as fifteen meters deep and separated by conical hills and ridges. This area of the country was once known as the "Land of Look Behind," because Spanish horsemen venturing into this region of hostile runaway slaves were said to have ridden two to a mount, one rider facing to the rear to keep a precautionary watch. Where the ridges between sinkholes in the plateau area have dissolved, flat-bottomed basins or valleys have been formed that are filled with terra rosa soils, some of the most productive on the island. The largest basin is the Vale of Clarendon, eighty kilometers long and thirty-two kilometers wide. Queen of Spain's Valley,

Nassau Valley, and Cave Valley were formed by the same process.

The coastline of Jamaica is one of many contrasts. The northeastern shore is severely eroded by the ocean. There are many small inlets in the rugged coastline but no coastal plain of any extent. A narrow strip of plains along the northern coast offers calm seas and white sand beaches. Behind the beaches is a flat raised plain of uplifted coral reef.

The southern coast has small stretches of plains lined by black sand beaches. These are backed by cliffs of limestone where the plateaus end. In many stretches with no coastal plain, the cliffs drop 300 meters straight to the sea. In the southwest, broad plains stretch inland for a number of kilometers. The Black River courses seventy kilometers through the largest of these plains. The swamplands of the Great Morass and the Upper Morass fill much of the plains. The western coastline contains the island's finest beaches, stretching for more than six kilometers along a sandbar at Negril.

Two kinds of climate are found on Jamaica. An upland tropical climate prevails on the windward side of the mountains, whereas a semiarid climate predominates on the leeward side. Warm trade winds from the east and northeast bring rainfall throughout the year. The rainfall is heaviest from May to October and peaks in those two months. The average rainfall is 196 centimeters per year. Rainfall is greatest in the mountain areas facing the north and east. Where the higher elevations of the John Crow Mountains and the Blue Mountains catch the rain from the moisture-laden winds, rainfall exceeds 508 centimeters per year. Since the southwestern half of the island lies in the rain shadow of the mountains, it has a semiarid climate and receives less than 762 millimeters of rainfall annually.

Temperatures are fairly constant throughout the year, averaging 25°C to 30°C in the lowlands and 15°C to 22°C at higher elevations. Temperatures may dip to below 10°C at the peaks of the Blue Mountains. The island receives, in addition to the northeast trade winds, refreshing onshore breezes during the day and cooling offshore breezes at night. These are known on Jamaica as the "Doctor Breeze" and the "Undertaker's Breeze," respectively.

Jamaica lies at the edge of the hurricane track; as a result, the island usually experiences only indirect storm damage. Hurricanes occasionally score direct hits on the islands, however. In 1980, for example, Hurricane Allen destroyed nearly all of Jamaica's banana crop.

Although most of Jamaica's native vegetation has been stripped in order to make room for cultivation, some areas have been left
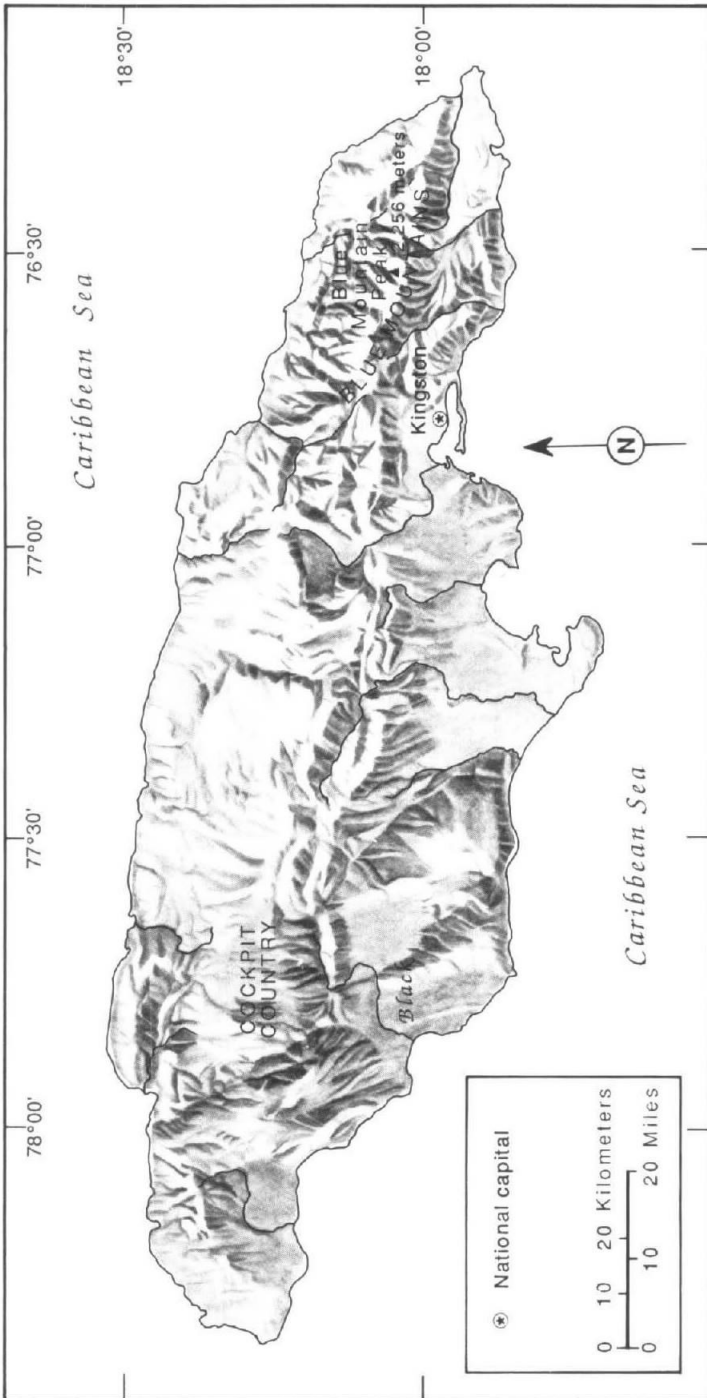
Figure 2. Jamaica. Topography and Drainage

virtually undisturbed since the time of Columbus. Indigenous vege-
tation can be found along the northern coast from Rio Bueno to
Discovery Bay, in the highest parts of the Blue Mountains, and
in the heart of the Cockpit Country.

Population

In 1986 Jamaica had an estimated population of 2,304,000 per-
sons, making it the most populous of the English-speaking Carib-
bean islands. The most recent census, in June 1982, recorded a
total population of 2,095,858 persons, an increase of 13.4 percent
over the 1970 census count of 1,848,508. Between 1970 and 1982,
Jamaica's average annual rate of population growth was 1.1 per-
cent, a relatively low rate in comparison with other developing coun-
tries. In 1986 the rate of population growth had dropped further,
to 0.9 percent. Jamaica's low rate of population growth reflected
gradually declining birth rates and high levels of emigration, the
country's most striking demographic features. Nevertheless, sig-
nificant reductions in mortality rates, resulting from better health
care and sanitation, also affected the overall population growth rate,
tending to raise it.

Jamaica's annual rate of population growth has been relatively
stable since the end of World War I. Between 1881 and 1921, emi-
gration and disease caused the rate of population growth to fall
to very low levels. Some 156,000 Jamaicans emigrated during this
period, 35 percent of the country's natural increase. Between 1911
and 1921, the rate of growth was only 0.4 percent per year as
workers left Jamaica for Costa Rican banana plantations, Cuban
sugar estates, and the Panama Canal. The burgeoning industries
of the United States and Canada also attracted many Jamaicans
during this period. Thousands of Jamaicans, however, returned
home when sugar prices fell because of the Great Depression. As
a result, from 1921 to 1954 the rate of population growth rose, aver-
aging 1.7 percent per year.

Increased emigration after World War II reduced the rate of
population growth once again. Between 1954 and 1970, the rate
of growth was only 1.4 percent because large numbers of Jamaicans
moved to Britain, the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. This
exodus continued unabated during the 1970s and early 1980s, when
276,200 men and women, over 10 percent of the total population,
departed. A significant percentage of the emigrants were skilled
workers, technicians, doctors, and managers, thus creating a huge
drain on the human resources of Jamaican society. The world eco-
nomic recession of the early 1980s reduced opportunities for migra-
tion as a number of countries tightened their immigration laws.

Nevertheless, by the mid-1980s, it was estimated that more than half of all Jamaicans lived outside the island.

In July 1983 the Jamaican Parliament adopted the National Population Policy, which was developed by the Population Policy Task Force under the auspices of the Ministry of Health. The objectives of the policy were to achieve a population not in excess of 3 million by the year 2000; to promote health and increase the life expectancy of the population; to create employment opportunities and reduce unemployment, underemployment, and emigration; to provide access to family-planning services for all Jamaicans and reduce the average number of children per family from four to two, thus achieving replacement fertility levels; to promote balanced rural, urban, and regional development to achieve an optimal spatial distribution of population; and to improve the satisfying of basic needs and the quality of life through improved housing, nutrition, education, and environmental conditions.

Family planning services have been visible, accessible, and active in Jamaica since the 1960s. The success of family planning reduced the country's birth rate by about 35 percent from 1965 to 1985. The Planning Institute of Jamaica, a government agency, estimated that the crude birth rate (the annual number of births per 1,000 population) was 24.3 per 1,000 in 1985. The fertility rate (the average number of children born to a woman during her lifetime) decreased from 5.5 in 1970 to 3.5 by 1983. The government perceived its population goal of 3 million or less by the year 2000 as feasible only if the yearly population growth rate did not exceed 1.6 percent and the replacement fertility rate were two children per woman.

The crude death rate (the annual number of deaths per 1,000 population) was quite low at 6 per 1,000 in 1985. By comparison, the United States had a crude death rate of 9 per 1,000 in the same year. Between 1965 and 1985, Jamaica's crude death rate declined by 44 percent, the result of significant levels of investment in health care delivery systems and improved sanitation facilities during the 1970s. In 1985 life expectancy at birth (the average number of years a newborn infant can expect to live under current mortality levels) was very high at seventy-three years. The infant mortality rate (the annual number of deaths of children younger than 1 year old per 1,000 births) was 20 per 1,000 births during the mid-1980s, and this rate was consistent with the average rate of 23 per 1,000 found in other English-speaking Caribbean islands.

Jamaica, like most of the other Commonwealth Caribbean islands, was densely populated. In 1986 its estimated population density was 209.6 persons per square kilometer. In terms of

arable land, the population totaled nearly 1,000 persons per square kilometer, making it one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Since the 1960s, the population has become increasingly urban. In 1960 only 34 percent of the population lived in urban areas, but in the late 1980s more than 50 percent of the population was urban. Kingston and the heavily urbanized parishes of St. Andrew, St. James, and St. Catherine accounted for 48.3 percent of Jamaica's total population in 1983 (see fig. 3).

Jamaica is a country of young people. Roughly 40 percent of the population was under 15 years of age in the late 1980s. The fastest growing age-groups were those ten to thirty-four years of age and those seventy and over. Slower growth for middle-aged groups was generally explained by their greater tendency to emigrate. The 1982 census revealed that the group up to nine years of age was the only one not becoming larger; this suggested both that the country's population was aging and that family planning was working. The 1982 census also revealed that 51 percent of the population was female.

The country's national motto points to the various ethnic groups present on the island. Although a predominantly black nation of West African descent, Jamaica had significant minorities of East Indians, Chinese, Europeans, Syrians, Lebanese, and numerous mixtures thereof in the late 1980s. Approximately 95 percent of all Jamaicans were of partial or total African descent, including 76 percent black, 15 percent mulatto, and 4 percent either black-East Indian or black-Chinese. Nearly 2 percent of the population was East Indian, close to 1 percent Chinese, and the remainder white, of European or Middle Eastern descent. Although racial differences were not as important as class differences, the lightness of one's skin was still an issue, especially since minorities were generally members of the upper classes.

About 75 percent of Jamaica's population was Protestant, and 8 percent was Roman Catholic; various Muslim, Jewish, and spiritualist groups were also present. Rastafarians constituted roughly 5 percent of the population. Religious activities were popular, and religion played a fairly important role in society. The most striking religious trend occurring in Jamaica in the 1980s, as it was throughout the Americas, was the increasing number of charismatic or evangelical Christian groups.

Education

The education system was slow to reach most Jamaicans until the early 1970s. Even after the abolition of slavery, education remained uncommon; early efforts were conducted mostly by