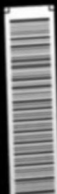




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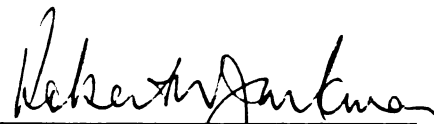
INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN DEVELOPING  
SOCIETIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

presented by

Whitfield Edmund Constantine Tillett

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Political Science

  
Major professor

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INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN DEVELOPING  
SOCIETIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Volume I

By

Whitfield Edmund Constantine Tillet

A THESIS

Submitted to  
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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## ABSTRACT

### INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN DEVELOPING SOCIETIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

By

Whitfield Edmund Constantine Tillett

Trade unions became closely linked to political parties in many Caribbean countries and the subsequent industrial conflicts have generally been examined from a historical perspective. This dissertation goes one step further and uses quantitative analysis to examine industrial conflicts in certain Caribbean Basin countries.

This is an area in which the indigenous population was decimated in the early stage of its colonization. The need for plantation labor resulted in the transportation of Blacks from Africa to work as slaves on the plantations. This led to a society which was stratified along racial lines on the basis of skin color. These countries have never recovered from the legacy of their colonial history.

As a result this dissertation discusses industrial conflict in the light of the racial stratification of the society and the colonial political system. A clear relationship is developed between certain economic, social and political variables and the pattern of industrial conflict.

Strike trends are used to indicate the shape of strikes over the period 1960 to 1979, and the political changes over

that period are considered in the subsequent discussion of the shape of strikes. Four hypotheses are tested using Ordinary Least Squares multiple regression analysis. The findings explain the impact of economic, social and political variables on industrial conflict in the countries included in the study.

TO:

My wife Kathy, my son Edmund, and my Mom,  
Olivia who passed away before I could  
give her a copy of this dissertation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the culmination of an educational process which began at Cornell University in Fall of 1974. As an undergraduate at Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations I had the good fortune to have Professor John P. Windmuller as my advisor. Professor Windmuller's advice and his invaluable critiques of papers I wrote for his courses stressed the importance of scholarly research in comparative industrial relations, especially in the area which was my homeland viz. Central America and the Caribbean Basin. After leaving Cornell there was little doubt in my mind that this research would be carried out and Professor Windmuller's influence has been the catalyst for my initiative to complete this undertaking.

The members of my dissertation committee deserve special credit for tirelessly reading drafts and discussing various points of view, many of which were controversial, but which I felt should be part of this research. My committee chair Robert Jackman was willing to continuously afford me all the support and value of his expertise especially in quantitative analysis which at times became a frustrating task. Jack Knott and Dan Kruger were admirable choices as the other members of my committee. They deserve all my thanks and gratitude

for their excellent support and advice during the long process of completing this dissertation. A very special mention is due to David Rhode who as the fourth member of my committee was willing to undertake the reading of the final draft at short notice.

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Finally but by no means least I must express my gratitude to my wife Kathy and son Edmund for their support during the writing of this dissertation. At times I may have taken advantage of their love and patience, this I acknowledge. However, the task is now complete and I am sure we will all be proud of the finished product, completed through their unending sacrifice and love.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### General Remarks

Many doctoral dissertations represent the analysis and culmination of a carefully delimited area of scholarly research. This dissertation departs from the generally recognized format since it represents phase one of the author's research interest in Caribbean Basin countries. The reason for approaching the research from this point of view is because it is felt that there is a "shortage" or in certain instances an absence of political science research dealing with industrial conflict in Caribbean Basin countries.

The economists, e.g. under the aegis of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) have carried out economic surveys and analyses upon which they have based projections of future economic trends for individual countries and the area as a whole. The political scientists on the other hand appear to have a preference for reacting to changes in the status quo rather than attempt any futuristic projections.

In recent years certain political changes have profoundly affected this region, not to mention the foreign policy of the "great eagle" to the north (the USA). Some of the more

radical changes have been the rise to power of Fidel Castro in Cuba, the election (and subsequent assassination) of President Allende in Chile, and the overthrow of the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua.

As we move from these macro areas of political conflict to the more micro areas of conflict, the absence of a research agenda or empirical research becomes more noticeable. The reasons usually given to justify this situation are inter-alia, a decline in research grants/funds, the absence and/or the difficulty in generating reliable data. But probably the most important of all has been a basic disinterest or unconcern for the politics of mini-states as evidenced by the dearth of articles in this vein in the political science literature in this country.

This study represents a modest attempt at examining the political dimensions of industrial conflict in eleven Caribbean countries. While this will not by any means fill the void in the literature mentioned above, it will undoubtedly be a step in the right direction. As an ancient Chinese proverb says "the longest journey starts off with a single step."

The research will examine the social, economic, and political background of trade unionism in eleven countries in the area currently known as the Caribbean Basin. During the formative period trade unionism in many former colonial territories was to a certain extent strongly influenced, and in some instances controlled by political and economic

forces operating within the metropole. Likewise the political systems and the legislative machinery affecting trade unionism, were also based upon the systems in the European metropolitan countries.

Despite these limitations we have witnessed the growth of the trade union movement in the third world in general, and in the Caribbean Basin countries, in particular. In addition labor movements in the third world have played a crucial role in the struggle for independence, and in many instances leaders in the labor movement emerged as national leaders when independence was finally achieved. The anti-colonial struggle generated a trade union movement somewhat larger than would have been predicted based upon the economies of the countries concerned. Leadership in the movement tended to be highly political and as a result had a profound effect on the nascent trade union's economic activities. Membership fluctuated, dues collections were low and irregular, and goals were to a certain extent unattainable given the low level of industrialization and politicization of the movement. Within the social, economic, and political conditions inherent in the colonial system in these territories, the political role of the trade union movement was an inevitable consequence of these conditions. The trade union like any other organization adapts itself to its environment, and in the developing countries it will fulfill a different role in comparison to unions in the more advanced industrialized countries. This study will also consider the political commitment of



trade unions in the former countries in the light of late industrialization and the revolution of rising expectations in Caribbean Basin countries.

### Background of the Study

#### The Region

For many of us the term "Caribbean" conjures up notions of sun-drenched islands with white sandy beaches and the haunting rhythms of calypso music. This is the Caribbean of the travel brochures. For the serious researcher the Caribbean is much more than a playground for the wealthy, and those who though existing on deficit financing find it fashionable to "vacation in the islands." There are three distinct conceptions of the term Caribbean as follows:

- a) the English speaking Caribbean or Commonwealth Caribbean, consisting of all the English speaking islands (former British colonies) and the mainland countries of Guyana and Belize.
- b) the Caribbean archipelago which comprises all the islands of the Caribbean sea and including the mainland territories of Guyana, Surinam and Belize
- c) the Caribbean Basin which includes all the islands in the Caribbean Sea and the bordering countries viz., Mexico, the five Central American Republics, Belize, Panama, Columbia, Venezuela and the Guianas.

In this study the Caribbean Basin (CB) will be used in general reference to the region as a whole.

When Columbus stumbled across an island in the Caribbean Sea in October, 1492, he opened the door to an arena wherein

would develop the most intense European rivalries for hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. By 1500 there were Spanish settlements on the island of Hispaniola (now the Dominican Republic and Haiti). In fact Spain controlled the larger islands Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica in addition to most of the mainland territories viz., Mexico, Central America and northern South America.

While Spain did not occupy many of the smaller eastern Caribbean islands, it laid claim to all the Caribbean Basin territories. Support for this position was of course based upon the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494, in which Spain and Portugal were given control over all lands and peoples west and east of a line 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, respectively.

The early seventeenth century saw penetration into Spanish America by the British, French, and the Dutch. Spain was engaged in the Thirty Years War in Europe and found it increasingly difficult to protect its settlements in the Caribbean Basin. By the end of the seventeenth century, Spain had clearly lost its control in the area.

With that decline, Spanish colonies in the Caribbean began to fall to other European powers. The British conquered Jamaica in 1655 and the western third of Hispaniola became a French colony (now Haiti) in 1697. France settled the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, also establishing a French colony (French Guiana) in northern South America. The Dutch did likewise establishing Dutch Guyana (now Surinam)

in northern South America and in addition seizing the small islands of Curacao, St. Eustatius, St. Martin, and Saba. Even the Danes made a thrust to obtain territory in the Caribbean, but their influence was limited to the Virgin Islands, which they later sold to the United States of America.

One principal consequence of these political changes was a social and economic revolution in these islands. Spanish colonization was based upon the extraction of precious metals where these existed in the Caribbean Basin territories. There was also the attempt to establish settlements where small farming and cattle ranching were carried out. Once the British, French, and to a certain extent the Dutch became players on the Caribbean stage, the role for the colonies changed. Their new role was that of economic units engaged in plantation agriculture producing for the export market, and it was not long before sugar displaced tobacco as the most important agricultural export from the Caribbean islands. However, plantation agriculture required large amounts of labor, which were not available due to decimation of the indigenous population by the early Spanish conquistadores. But it was not difficult to locate the source of an adequate labor supply. Africans from the west coast of Africa had been shipped to the Caribbean into slavery as early as 1501, mainly to the Spanish colonies. With the large scale expansion in sugar production the demand for slaves increased, this lucrative trade expanded, and the importation of Africans into slavery in the Caribbean increased rapidly. As plantation

agriculture increased we find the start of the inextricable connection of sugar and slavery.

By 1561 the British became directly involved in the slave trade and this was to continue for over two hundred years. While the slave trade was terminated in 1807, slavery was not abolished throughout the British Empire until August 1, 1834. The French abolished slavery in their colonies in 1848, the Dutch in 1863, and the Spanish completed the process between 1873 and 1886.

With the official termination of slavery in the Caribbean islands the difficult task of nation building began. Haiti after wresting its independence from the French in 1804 charted the path to nation building in the Caribbean Basin. This process ended a few years ago with the attainment of independence by Belize from the United Kingdom in September, 1981. However, in the Caribbean we find that the political state was the first creation and later the task of nation building was pursued concurrently with that of constitutional decolonization.

It is not generally realized how many colonizing powers have contributed to the political, economic, and socio-cultural diversity found in the Caribbean Basin countries. Table 1:1 provides information on the countries comprising the area now known as the Caribbean Basin, showing population, land area, constitutional status, year of independence, and colonizing power at the date of independence. We tend to see the Caribbean Basin as a small region with neighboring

Table 1:1

Country, Population, Land Area, Constitutional Status, Date of  
Independence, and Colonizing Power at Independence

Country	Pop.(mill.) 1980	Land area (sq.mi.)	Constitu- tional Status	Year of Indepen- dence	Colonizing Power at Independence
Cuba	9.83	42,823	Independent	1902	Spain
Haiti	5.01	10,714	Independent	1804	France
P.Rico	3.20	3,421	Commonwealth U.S.	--	--
Jamaica	2.17	4,410	Independent	1962	Britain
Cayman Is.	0.02	100	Dependency G.B.	--	--
Br. Virg. Is.	0.01	59	Dependency G.B.	--	--
US Virg. Is.	0.10	133	Dependency U.S.	--	--
Antigua	0.08	170.5	Independent	1981	Britain
St. Kitts, Nevis	0.05	101	Dependency G.B.	--	--
Montserrat	0.01	32	Dependency G.B.	--	--
Guadeloupe	0.32	627	Dependency France	--	--
Martinique	0.31	425	Dependency France	--	--
St. Lucia	0.12	233	Independent	1979	Britain
Barbados	0.26	166	Independent	1966	Britain
St. Vincent	0.12	150	Independent	1979	Britain
Grenada	0.11	133	Independent	1974	Britain
Trinidad/Tobago	1.17	1,980	Independent	1962	Britain
Guyana	0.88	83,000	Independent	1966	Britain
Surinam	0.39	63,027	Independent	1975	Netherlands
Belize	0.16	8,866	Independent	1981	Britain
Guatemala	7.26	42,042	Independent	1821	Spain
Honduras	3.69	112,088	Independent	1821	Spain
Nicaragua	2.72	57,143	Independent	1821	Spain

Source: Compiled by the author.

islands and nearby mainland territories. In reality this is not quite accurate. Guatemala is over 2,200 miles from Guyana, Jamaica is more than 1,000 miles from Trinidad and over 800 miles from Belize. Along with these physical distances there are corresponding cultural differences brought about through a dichotomy of influence by northwest European and Iberian heritages.

The other important influence was that of slavery and again we have a dichotomy within the system of slavery. If we examine the countries east of a line running from Cuba to Jamaica and on to Guyana, we find that in all those countries the plantation system developed. Slaves were employed by the thousands on the larger (mainly sugar) estates.

In Central America (i.e. west of the above mentioned line) slavery was not such an important part of the overall economic structure, as in the Caribbean islands. For example a plantation economy did not develop in Belize.<sup>1</sup> Instead during the period 1640 to the 1950s the economy was dependent upon the export of forest products. But forestry operations did not require the large labor force found on the sugar estates on the islands. Work in the forest gang required good health and a degree of skill, there were no "whip drivers" and the slaves were usually armed while in the forest.

It has been reported that the average price of a slave in Belize was more than £35 Jamaican currency in 1805,<sup>2</sup> and by 1820 this price had risen to £120, in contrast to a Jamaican slave valued at approximately £45.<sup>3</sup> This high price was

a reflection of the value of the slave to the woodcutter's operations, since the loss of a good mahogany "hunter" could seriously affect the logging operations for an entire year (the logging season lasted six months). In addition to the high cost of slaves there was also a problem with runaway slaves. The proximity of the neighboring countries offered a haven for runaways, and according to Burdon the problem became extremely serious:

in view of the number of runaways -- a reward of twenty five dollars is offered for any such apprehended and of fifty dollars for proof of husbanding, employing or concealing such by any free person.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore the Caribbean Basin was influenced by two cleavages, the area that experienced a "plantation" economy and the area that did not. With the end of slavery in the 19th century, there is another variation added to the economic and social structure of the Caribbean. This variation was the system of indentured labor which brought to Guyana and Trinidad almost 400,000 East Indian immigrants over a period of four decades.

The introduction of African slaves and the use of indentured labor after the abolition of slavery as the main form of labor organization resulted in conspicuous dissimilarities among Caribbean Basin countries. There is a distinct African heritage which permeates most of Caribbean society, however in Guyana, East Indians make up about fifty percent of the population, while in Trinidad and Tobago it is more than one third. Surinam has extensive Hindu and Moslem

populations, Puerto Rico has a population which comprises a mixture of Spanish settlers, Indian aborigines, and African slaves, while the French island of Guadeloupe has a population which is overwhelmingly mullato (French African miscegenation) with a small black minority.

The region reflects strong artificial barriers due in part to the legacy of its colonial history. Colonialism ensured that the avenues of communication should be between the territory and London, Paris or Madrid, rather than between each territory in the area. According to Frank Cundall:

A Jamaican sees more of his brethren of the other islands in six months spent in London than in sixty years in his own island.

In geopolitical terms the internal form of the region can be recognized conceptually as a nodal area, although a very weak one with the Caribbean Sea as its main unifying element. There is strong internal differentiation among the territories of the region taking into consideration current national boundaries and the colonial heritage, while this is the only area of the world with such a proliferation of small states. It has been said that:

When God made the world, he shook the earth from his hands into the water and thus created the West Indies.

But these mini-states, although quite picturesque, are economically and politically weak, and are highly susceptible to outside pressures and influence. The recent case of the invasion of Grenada by the United States is an example of



the fragility of sovereignty of a mini-state, especially when it exists in the shadow of a dominant world power. These small national units of government will remain prone to outside influence, and in many instances pawns in the international political arena until some form of political unity can be forged among them.

The English speaking countries have established the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) a major element of which is the Caribbean Common Market, but whose broad focus is regional integration, using economic integration as the starting point. After the abortive experience with the Federation of the West Indies between 1958 and 1962, which was an attempt at political federation, the idea of regional economic association appeared more feasible in the mid 1960s. History, of course, indicates that successful integration of political units is enhanced once a community of economic interests has been established. Those involved with CARICOM now appear to have learned that lesson.

One of the many distinguishing features of the region is its cultural, political, social, and racial diversity. This diversity arises from the succession of colonial powers to which the area has been subjected (and in recent years neo-colonialist hegemony), the decimation of the indigenous population, and the means by which that population was replenished (importation of slaves and indentured labor from Africa and India, respectively).

Another pertinent feature is the relatively small size of the units in land area and population, and in the case of the islands their geographic separation. Despite the fact that many of these states were governed by the same colonial power, they all evolved as separate political, social and economic entities. With modern technology calling for larger units of production, these mini states are obviously at a disadvantage, and moreso with their small domestic markets. This has resulted in dependence upon external sources of supply for certain commodities (imports) and an external market for domestic production making these states vulnerable to foreign manipulation.

In examining trade unionism in these mini states, the first salient feature is the large percentage of the labor force employed in agriculture. Table 1:2 shows the working population by major industrial groups for the countries in the study for 1960, 1970, and 1980. Historically the agricultural sector has been the largest employer of labor in these countries, but as Table 1:2 indicates, since 1960 there has been a steady decline in agricultural employment and a marked increase in the service sector. Extensive employment in agriculture arises out of the history of a plantation economy which was developed by the ruling colonial powers, and the sugar industry was by far the largest employer of labor.

With the largest proportion among the major industrial classifications employed in the agricultural sector one would

Table 1:2  
Working Population by Major Industrial Group for Countries in the Study -  
1960, 1970 and 1980 (%)

Country	Major Industrial Group																	
	Agric. Forestry Fishing & Hunting			Manufac- turing			Construc- tion			Commerce			Transport Storage & Communica- tions			Services		
	'60	'70	'80	'60	'70	'80	'60	'70	'80	'60	'70	'80	'60	'70	'80	'60	'70	'80
Antigua	na	10.6	na	na	7.3	na	na	14.3	na	na	20.2	na	na	8.4	na	na	28.6	
Barbados	27.0	17.8	8.5	15.2	13.6	12.6	11.5	15.0	5.5	17.3	15.4	20.9	5.2	5.8	4.3	23.7	32.5	32.9
Belize	42.1	37.2	na	15.2	15.2	na	8.6	10.6	na	8.1	8.8	na	4.9	4.8	na	21.2	23.4	na
Grenada	43.2	34.5	na	10.3	8.5	na	13.0	17.8	na	11.7	10.2	na	3.4	5.4	na	18.4	23.7	na
Guadaloupe	32.4	na	na	10.4	na	na	18.5	na	na	11.9	na	na	6.5	na	na	18.2	na	na
Guyana	40.9	34.7	29.1	16.3	15.3	18.6	8.5	5.3	8.7	11.4	11.0	10.8	4.8	5.0	4.7	18.1	28.7	25.3
Jamaica	40.4	34.1	36.8	15.0	16.0	10.8	8.9	8.6	3.6	10.1	9.7	12.6	3.3	4.2	4.7	22.2	27.4	29.9
St. Lucia	53.2	40.2	na	12.1	8.3	na	9.8	13.9	na	8.7	11.9	na	2.2	4.1	na	14.0	21.6	na
Puerto Rico	23.0	7.1	5.5	17.2	19.7	18.3	10.8	14.0	9.5	15.5	20.7	20.5	4.9	4.7	3.8	23.6	32.9	40.6
Surinam	24.8	na	na	8.9	na	na	9.8	na	na	11.1	na	na	2.4	na	na	29.7	na	na
Trinidad	26.1	21.7	9.6	16.6	14.0	17.5	13.4	12.5	23.4	13.3	13.3	18.5	6.2	7.2	6.9	25.3	31.3	22.5

Source: Norma Abdulah, The Labor Force in the Commonwealth Caribbean, St. Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, 1977, pp. 52-53, and International Labor Organization, Yearbook of Labor Statistics, 1982 and 1983.

\* n.a. - not available

expect that this would have a detrimental effect on the potential for trade union organization. The predominant view in industrial relations circles is that agricultural workers are difficult to organize. In fact when the National Labor Relations Act was passed in the United States, agricultural workers were specifically excluded from the definition of the term "employee," and were not covered by the Act.

In a colonial environment with a labor force lacking in skills and employment opportunity it was not difficult to organize workers, not so much for genuine economic bargaining, but to express concern for overall social and economic advancement. With the depression of the 1930s these concerns became more urgent throughout the Caribbean. However, being islands with limited communication with each other, there was little potential for building a trade union movement that could act with some measure of uniformity against a common colonizer. In many instances it was easier to travel from Jamaica to Britain than to one of the Eastern Caribbean islands.

The task of building a trade union movement could also be complicated by the ethnic diversity found in some colonies. In Guyana, for example, where there are two predominant ethnic groups (East Indians and Blacks) there was an attempt to break the base of the PPP (predominantly East Indian) led by Dr. Jagan, a marxist. Racial animosities were stirred up which eventually split the trade union base of the PPP along racial lines and also the PPP itself. Dr. Jagan an

East Indian continued to lead the PPP with strong East Indian support, while his associate and co-founder of the PPP (Forbes Burnham of African descent) broke away forming the Peoples National Congress, pulling most of the Black supporters with him. The basis for these ethnic problems and foreign involvement in the trade unions of Guyana are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

The 1950s and 1960s were the decades during which the cold war reached its peak and many events in Latin America and the Caribbean were viewed against a cold war background. The emergence of a marxist Prime Minister in Guyana was not taken lightly in Washington, and it was no coincidence that a general strike in 1963 lasted more than eighty days, paralyzed most of the country's import-export trade and caused extensive damage. According to Sir Harold Mitchell:

The widespread publicity given to the general strike underlined the international importance attached to the struggle. To the United States, deeply disturbed by Cuban events, a communist Guyana which had frontiers with both Brazil and Venezuela, presaged further danger. Venezuela was grappling with communist problems and stood out as a target for Castro's Cuba. The international angle to the Guyana crisis was also emphasized by advice to the striking unions from their US counterparts and by aid which may have amounted to \$80,000 US a week.

We should therefore not lose sight of the fact that these mini-states are indeed susceptible to outside pressures and influences. In the case of the Caribbean states where most of the political parties had their base in the labor movement, fermenting labor unrest could easily lead to a

crisis in the government. This was the case in Guyana where industrial conflict led to a general strike, precipitating riots and ethnic violence. This eventually resulted in the removal of the marxist oriented Jagan government by the roundabout method of the colonial power changing the electoral system from single member districts to a proportional representation system. Thus the marxist government of Dr. Jagan being unacceptable to Washington was removed and a coalition government was formed headed by Forbes Burnham, who incidentally described himself as a socialist.

Of course in conjunction with subverting the trade unions (some trade unions), the application of economic pressure enhances the development of industrial conflict. The Jagan government in Guyana was unable to obtain economic development aid from the United States during the Kennedy administration. Attempts to obtain loans from Canada, West Germany and France were unsuccessful. It was almost impossible for the government to raise any funds locally for industrial development purposes.

The capitalists who controlled the international banks and aid agencies realized that time was running out for the PPP government. Both the British and Americans knew this quite well. This is really international economic sabotage, similar to that used against the Allende government in Chile in the 1970s. Without foreign assistance the government was unable to implement its development programs thereby reducing sources of increased local revenue. The result

is that private investment stagnates, and fears about a collapse of the economy develop. Under these conditions it does not take much prodding for industrial conflict to arise, especially when the whole process is linked to an external source intending to destabilize and eventually topple the government. According to Sir Cameron Mitchell:

As soon as Burnham headed the Guyanese government . . . the PNC government obtained increased aid from the United States government and Great Britain, while it also stimulated investment from western countries.<sup>8</sup>

#### Political, Economic and Social Overview

##### The Commonwealth Caribbean

Of the eleven countries included in the study eight were former British colonies (Antigua, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago). Within this group six of the countries are islands, while Belize and Guyana are mainland territories on the Caribbean coast of Central America and on the northern coast of South America, respectively. The British colonies were ruled by Governors sent out from Great Britain, but each island had an Assembly which was elected by "men of property." The franchise was limited to (1) men, (2) freemen, and (3) freeholders, i.e. property owners, effectively limiting the numbers of those who could participate in elections. In Jamaica e.g. out of a population of approximately half a million only 1,903 persons were eligible to vote in 1864.<sup>9</sup>

The Assemblies could pass laws as well as money Bills which generated taxes to meet the cost of administering the islands. However, the members were mainly concerned with the interests of the planters (after all they were mostly planters) whereas the Governor owed his loyalty to London. Friction developed when laws were passed to which the Governor objected, yet many times such laws were added to the revenue bill, giving the Governor no choice but to accept the law or lose his taxes.

The Assembly system was so troublesome to the British that when Britain acquired St. Lucia, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago it was decided that they would not be allowed the luxury of elected Assemblies. These colonies were placed under "Crown Colony" rule, which meant that the Governor was all powerful, he could select members of a legislative Council (to discuss new laws) and an Executive Council (to carry them out). He also had authority to appoint judges who would interpret the laws. This system appeared to be more acceptable to the metropolitan government in London, and it was not long before it sought an opportunity to abolish the Assembly system in the older colonies in order to install the Crown Colony system.

By the end of the 19th century Crown Colony government had been established in all the Caribbean colonies except Barbados. Guyana was also allowed to retain the rights it had enjoyed under the Dutch (it had been a Dutch colony up to 1803). Thus we find that in the second half of the 19th



century these colonies took a retrograde step, constitutionally. The differences between the crown colonies and the legislative colonies was that in the former, the Governor both ruled and governed, while in the latter, the Governor governed but did not rule. Under crown colony government although there is a legislative council, administrative and executive control remains in official hands. The council may be a purely nominated body, or partly elected, if elected, those members may be either a majority or a minority.

We must recognize that in 1834 the abolition of slavery led to the freeing of three quarters of a million slaves who formed the majority of the population of the British colonies. Emancipation had the potential to create formidable political, social and economic problems in the colonies. It has been argued that the reversion to crown colony rule was implemented due to the desire on the part of the British to ensure for the black majority a better and fairer government, than that provided by an oligarchy of wealthy planters under the Assembly system. According to Sir Allan Burns a former colonial Governor, in the late 19th century:

It was more than ever obvious that the irresponsible and unrepresentative assemblies could no longer be allowed to hamper the progress of the colonies by their captious and selfish approach to all problems.<sup>10</sup>

In fact the establishment of crown colony government was an improvement on the form of government based upon the assembly system. It would appear that the full benefits

of emancipation were not realized by the former slaves until after the assemblies had been dissolved. But there was strong resentment among those who had lost power with the change in the legislative systems, especially in the light of increasing influence and political consciousness of the population.

Emancipation created a middle class which was not able to develop under slavery and the consequences of such an occurrence were not considered prior to the event. But we must also view these developments in the context of constitutional changes in Britain at the time. Abolition of slavery in 1834 occurred only a year after the First Reform Act gave the franchise to about half the British middle class. It was not until another fifty-four years that manhood suffrage was granted to British citizens in the United Kingdom. Universal adult suffrage was adopted in Britain in 1928. Yet while these advances were being achieved in Britain, the foundation for self-government in the Caribbean was being effectively delayed by the new crown colony status now applied to Britain's Caribbean colonies.

As far as this study is concerned emancipation is extremely important, had it not occurred, a study of this nature might have been unlikely. Industrial conflict involves the inability to form compatible objectives between labor and management in the employment relationship. But first of all there has to be freedom to form that relationship, and emancipation allowed individuals to relinquish their status

as "chattels" and assume the status as "freeman," which as indicated before was the second of the three criteria for obtaining the franchise and therefore full participation in exercising one's rights in society.

The employment relationship between buyer and seller of labor although largely shaped by these two participants, is also influenced by the government through its legislation and regulation. The system of government also has an important bearing on the overall industrial relations system.

There was little necessity for the early assemblies, dominated by the plantocracy to develop and implement labor legislation granting rights to slaves, and even after emancipation their attitude towards the former slaves did not reflect any change through the legislative process. This insensitivity on the part of the plantocracy must have influenced the decision to change the Assembly system.

The passing of the old Representative System did not significantly alter the subordinate status of the majority of the population in the colonies. Likewise it did not result in a profound change in the superordinate position of the planter and the merchant elites within the political system. The effect of the change was a movement from a formal oligarchy to a gubernatorial autocracy with the traditional patterns of power remaining intact, i.e. in the hands of the whites. The colonial government therefore sought to balance the scales between blacks and whites through a

constitutional change, due to the emancipation of thousands of former black slaves.

The influential and entrenched minority was now (after 1838) faced by a majority of freed slaves concerned with basic survival, but whose first priority was a struggle for land ownership, wages and appropriate living conditions. Rather than risk outright rebellion by those who had now taken their first sip from the cup of freedom, the colonial power sought to ensure that participation in the political system could be achieved by meeting certain economic requirements, and not only depend on skin color. Those blacks who could meet the property qualifications were able to run for elective office. But the emergence of black leadership arising out of the masses was remote, since any black who was able to satisfy the property qualifications to run for office would obviously be outside the class of the masses.

With Crown Colony government if blacks were able to improve their economic circumstances, then upward mobility was possible even to the extent of being elected to the legislature. By 1910, for example, in the Jamaica legislature there was "one black and five coloreds" among the fourteen elected members. But clearly these people were elected not by the masses who lacked the franchise, but by the few whose social class they were penetrating.

The masses were able to recognize that political participation was available, but that they would have to challenge the existing order with vigour, and leadership from within

their own social class. It was necessary to make a bid for economic advancement wherein was the basis for participation in the political process. There was little value in forming a political party since the majority of the population could not vote to elect their own candidates. But it was possible to combine in furtherance of obtaining higher wages and better working conditions, although trade union legislation in the colonies during the early 20th century was more likely to discourage union formation.

However, mass rebellion and incidents of violence could cause some rupture in the existing order, leading to serious investigation of grievances. Such incidents started shortly after WWI, culminating in the mass disturbances of the 1930s. Therefore while crown colony government did not lead to a second emancipation it did indicate that there was light at the end of the tunnel leading to political participation for the people. The route to that goal would lead to the development of a mass movement under the umbrella of a rudimentary trade union movement, evolving into organized trade unionism and eventually spawning political parties to agitate for constitutional advancement.

There is some evidence that fundamentalist religion and the church provided an ideological frame of reference during the early years of the struggle for advancement. But this study will not delve into this aspect of political development in the Caribbean states. However, we are seeing a similar phenomenon today in South Africa, where a people

denied participation in the politics of their society find other means of congregating and making their voices heard. This of course is a reference to using funerals (which are not yet banned in South Africa) as a forum for expression of a political and economic message.

Industrial conflict is not confined to trade unions and employers alone, but may involve a third party, the government, especially in developing countries where the public sector is a large employer of labor. Conflict may also arise in instances where there are strong links between political parties and trade unions which is very common to most of the countries in this study.

During the late 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century crown colony government continued throughout the British Caribbean territories, except in Guyana (then British Guiana) and Barbados. However, the pressure for reform was building up in the colonies and provision was made for some elective seats in the legislatures.

The turning point was reached as a result of the economic depression of the 1930s and the social unrest which flared up throughout the British colonies in the region. The unrest was so extensive that a Royal Commission under the Chairmanship of Lord Moyne was appointed in 1938 to investigate social and economic conditions in the British Caribbean.

The terms of reference of the Commission were set out in a Royal Warrant signed by King George VI which stated that:

Whereas, we have deemed it expedient that a commission should forthwith issue to investigate social and economic conditions in Barbados, British Guiana, British Honduras, Jamaica, the Leeward Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Windward Islands, and matters<sup>11</sup> connected there with and to make recommendations.

Despite its terms of reference, the Commission made recommendations for constitutional advance in the British Caribbean territories. While the report was completed in 1940, the full text was not published until 1945, i.e. after the end of World War II, because it was highly critical of British colonial policy. It was felt that its publication may have resulted in further unrest in the colonies, especially in view of Britain's involvement in WWII at the time. However, the recommendations<sup>12</sup> arising out of the report were published in February, 1940 and there was no delay in their acceptance by the British government.

The modern era in the political, economic and social development of the Commonwealth Caribbean territories starts with the depression of the 1930s. These countries were highly dependent upon sugar cane which brought them prosperity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but failure to diversify their economies led to misfortune afterwards. Competition subsequently arose from three areas, Cuba, the Far East and in the latter part of the 19th century from the heavily subsidized and protected beet sugar industry in Europe. However, the bottom fell out of the sugar market during the years of the great depression in the 1930s. The price of

sugar fell from £23.10.0. a ton in 1923 to £5.0.0 a ton in 1934, resulting in severe economic problems for the Commonwealth Caribbean countries.

In 1930 a British Royal Commission chaired by Lord Oliver pointed out that if sugar production was abandoned, the working population affected would be 100 percent in Antigua, 66 percent in Barbados, 50 percent in British Guiana (Guyana), 33 percent in Trinidad, 25 percent in St. Lucia and 10 percent in Jamaica.<sup>13</sup> With the decline of sugar prices, unemployment increased and with the absence of social insurance programs, living conditions quickly became intolerable. These social and economic circumstances led to strikes and violence throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean between 1935 and 1938. These disturbances paved the way for the establishment of labor movements which were the forerunners of political parties, through which the fight for political reform eventually led to independence for the British colonial territories.

### The French Caribbean

The old French empire in the Western Hemisphere which once included Canada, Louisiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Haiti, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent, was largely lost by the end of the first quarter of the 19th century. Under the Treaty of Paris (1783) following the Seven Years War with Britain some territory was restored to France (Guadeloupe, Martinique



and St. Lucia). France supported the colonists during the American War of Independence against Britain, and at the same time sought to regain lost territory in the Caribbean, but although the British were defeated in North America, the French were unable to make any territorial gains in the West Indies.

A further loss to the British during the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 resulted in the decimation of French naval power and virtually eliminated any hope of regaining lost territory in the Caribbean, and Britain emerged as the most forceful colonizing power in the Caribbean. The French were left with the islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guiana on the northeastern tip of South America.

According to the Treaty of Vienna in 1815, France agreed to the abolition of the slave trade, but the trade continued particularly with the newly independent United States of America where slavery was legal. In 1848 slavery was abolished in the French colonies and these colonies were given direct representation in the French Parliament in Paris. However, political instability in France resulted in fluctuating changes in the status of the Caribbean colonies. Political representation was suspended between 1854 and 1871 and it was not until 1946 that those colonies were constitutionally integrated as Departments of France.

The French clearly exhibited a different attitude towards their colonies, and colonial subjects in comparison to the British. French colonial policy was one of association and

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The French clearly exhibited a different attitude towards their colonies, and colonial subjects in comparison to the British. French colonial policy was one of association and

centralization, while neither the British nor the Dutch allowed colonial representation in the metropolitan legislative bodies. In addition France in allowing full representation to its colonial subjects in the French parliament, also applied its welfare laws to those subjects, and the policy of assimilation led to the adult franchise being introduced in the French colonies far in advance of the British colonies. The British Colonial Secretary, addressing the House of Commons in 1938 stated that: "In the French West Indies there is adult suffrage and this ought to be extended to the British West Indies."<sup>14</sup>

Despite a later date of emancipation for the slaves, in comparison to the British colonies, French subjects in the islands were granted the franchise at an earlier date than in the British colonies. In a way this diffused the potential for any struggle based upon a demand for full political participation. Whether consciously or unconsciously, French policy had removed one of the sore spots which the British had to deal with, i.e the demand for adult suffrage.

French colonial policy of centralization was attractive to the economically weak Caribbean colonies, and this gave rise to remarkable economic impetus in the colonies and to some improvement in the social condition of the workers. Centralization led to economic integration and ensured the unrestricted export of colonial products to France, which then supplied the colonies with manufactured goods.

It was felt at the outset that this policy of integrating the colonial economy with that of France would result in some profit to the metropolitan country. Instead the reverse occurred and French policy became one of subsidizing its colonies. France clearly felt that its mission was to create Frenchmen out of its colonial subjects and a strong emphasis was placed upon raising the educational levels in the colonies to that in France. The French did not contemplate abandoning their overseas departments and therefore they proceeded to make them as much like the metropolitan country as possible. In order to realize this goal a heavy financial burden devolved upon the central government and this shows up in the extent of French financial contribution to the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. In 1966 for example this assistance total \$106 million. This amount is significant taking into consideration the fact that the combined population of both these islands at that time was six hundred and thirty three thousand.

As in the case of the Commonwealth Caribbean islands the economy of the French islands is characterized by specialization in agricultural products. The largest sector of the population is engaged in some form of agricultural activity, and the most important products are sugar, bananas, rum and pineapples. However, these products are not competitive. Due to the political links to France, labor receives European level wages and fringe benefits. This results in

the islands being very dependent upon the French market and those of the European Economic Community (EEC). Geographically Gaudaloupe is a part of the Caribbean, but economically it is part of France, which is its most extensive trading partner.

Just as the economy of the islands is closely linked to France, so is the political structure. With the 1946 constitution, legislative control in the colonies was placed on the same basis as that in France. The French administrative system was introduced in the islands and the local administrative services became dependent upon the relevant minister in Paris. Prior to department status the islands were ruled by a Governor appointed by the King, and a General Council consisting of French nobles. Under the new status a departmental Prefect was appointed with responsibility for governing the island, including the added responsibility for external defense and internal security. With this constitutional change the General Council lost its influential role in local politics, and its right to some semblance of control over the local administration of the island.

The granting of departmental status to the islands has not met with the success that was anticipated. The Prefect has limited power of action in comparison to his predecessor (the Governor), and the General Council has lost its jurisdiction, resulting in an overall erosion of the political power base in the island.

Since the French Third Republic acquired a colonial empire, the problem for France has been developing the most satisfactory method of maintaining that empire. With a colonial policy based on the doctrines of assimilation or association, proponents of assimilation supported the idea that France was indivisible, that its colonial subjects should be absorbed within the French culture, and adopt the language, customs and attitudes of the French. Association on the other hand would respect the country's traditions and customs while aiding in its economic, social, and political development; the intention being that some form of self-determination would eventually evolve in these territories.

After 1945 with most of the European colonial powers rebuilding from the devastation of the war and political elites expounding their nationalist aspirations in the colonies, a review of colonial policy was clearly necessary. The international political situation was changing and the colonial powers would have to decide whether they should continue to keep their colonies under subjugation, or facilitate nationalist demands for movement towards early self determination.

In 1954 the French Secretary of the Interior announced a policy review on the overall status of the overseas departments. In an attempt to make the process of assimilation more realistic, increased powers were given to the local authorities and the General Council. These modifications could be seen as granting more autonomy and self government

to the islands especially in view of the problems which France was experiencing with the outbreak of the Algerian revolution in 1954.

French policy towards its Caribbean territories is that the islands are French and wish to remain that way. This is in marked contrast to its policy for its African territories where it was prepared to grant independence. With the continuation of departmental status, the policy relies on the acceleration of social and economic development in the islands. While there is some merit to these attempts at social and economic change we find that these improvements threaten the status quo of the local elites, and this in turn has an adverse effect on the implementation of development policy.

The cooperation of these elites is necessary if government policy is to filter down into the domestic environment. Failure could affect the local bourgeoisie who would see this as shattering their hopes for attaining equality with whites. Furthermore if this situation resulted in political malaise we could see a recurrence of the violence which occurred in the early 1960s in both Guadeloupe and Martinique.

According to Tony Smith the British were able to deal with nationalist development in their colonies more satisfactorily than the French. They were said to have been following "Burke's sage counsel to reform in order to preserve: London made concessions more usually to subvert opposition to British rule than to prepare for its demise."<sup>15</sup> It was

clearly inevitable that new forms of relationships between the colonies and the metropolises would have to evolve, and the British were quick to apply the Commonwealth principle, in order to retain close links with the former colonies.

France on the other hand did not show the slightest inclination to develop any mechanism which could serve as a formula for transfer of power to colonial subjects. Smith *inter alia*, points to the differences between the British and the French domestic political institutions as affecting their abilities to implement a smooth decolonization policy.

Britain had:

a loyal opposition, a stable two party system and a strong executive. France to the contrary was plagued by disloyal opposition from both the Right and Left, by a multiparty system, and a notoriously weak executive. Hence the French were not so able as the British to process a problem of the magnitude of decolonization.<sup>16</sup>

Smith goes on to point out that while the British socialists (Labor government of 1946 to 1950) were planning the British withdrawal from India, the French socialists were arguing in favor of military action in Indochina. "The leaders of both parties wore socialist labels, but they were more clearly recognized by their national than their party memberships."<sup>17</sup>

### The Dutch Caribbean

In the Caribbean the Dutch territories consist of two political units, Surinam and the Netherland Antilles. Our interest in this study lies with the former rather than the latter.



Surinam is in the middle of the three Guianas, flanked by Guyana and French Guiana. However, although part of the South American mainland and bordering the two Guianas with Brazil to the south, Surinam is more of an island than Curacao, considering its relations with its immediate neighbors. The Dutch established settlements in Dutch Guiana (Surinam) early in the seventeenth century, but the Netherlands was affected by the spirit of reform which was felt throughout Europe in 1848. This led to the crown succeeding the Dutch West India Company, and the King appointed a Governor to administer the colonies in the West Indies.<sup>18</sup> In 1865 a Colonial Assembly was established in Surinam consisting of thirteen members, nine being elected and four appointed by the Governor. As in many other colonies at this time, the franchise was highly limited (tied to property qualifications) with the result that only a few were eligible to participate in the electoral process.

The system of government was clearly colonial, comparable to that found in the British colonies, with absolute supremacy of the authorities in the metropolitan country. Decisions of the legislature could be set aside and the budget was controlled by the Colonial Ministry in the Hague. This was typical of the control exerted by colonial powers over their territories in the Caribbean. In 1922 when the Netherlands' constitution was revised the status of the colonies was changed to that of territories, these territories being regarded as integral parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

With this change the Governors of the territories were granted a greater amount of independence from interference by the Hague government, in the exercise of their duties. All domestic matters were handled by the local authorities and the governmental bodies.

However, these provisions of the revised constitution would be implemented through enactment by the Dutch parliament, but it was not until 1936 that Parliament eventually passed the revisions into law. The suffrage regulations in Surinam allowed only males who had attained the age of twenty-five and had a minimum income of 800 guilders annually, or a high school diploma to participate in the electoral process, women were not allowed participation in that process. During World War II the Netherlands was occupied by the Germans and the colonial territories in the Caribbean were to a certain extent "left on their own." The exiled Cabinet Ministers of the Netherlands in London, attempted to govern the territories without the assistance of parliament. By the end of the war the first serious demands for self-government were made in Surinam, and the impact of the war, and its consequences, were to leave their imprint on the Dutch West Indies, along with the aspiration for home rule. Surinam attained internal autonomy in 1950 and it became part of the Tripartite Kingdom of the Netherlands (the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles, and Surinam) in 1954.<sup>19</sup> The Crown was represented in Surinam by the Governor appointed after consultation with the Surinam government, and executive power

was exercised by a Parliament consisting of thirty nine members elected every four years by universal suffrage.<sup>20</sup> The population of Surinam was 384,903 in 1971 consisting of seven major groups as shown in Table 1:3 below, which clearly indicates a population with a high degree of ethnicity.

Table 1:3  
Surinam, Population by Ethnic Groups  
1964 and 1971

<u>Ethnic Group</u>	<u>1964 (000)</u>	<u>1971 (000)</u>
Creole	115.0	118.5
Hindustani	112.6	142.3
Javanese	48.5	58.9
Amerindian	7.3	10.2
Chinese	5.3	6.4
European	4.3	4.0
Bush Negro	27.7	39.5
Other/Unknown	3.5	5.1
TOTAL	324.2	384.9

Source: The Difficult Flowering of Surinam, Martinus Nighoff, The Hague, 1975, p. 5.

Along with the ethnic diversity is also religious diversity, more than half the population is non-christian, an unusual phenomenon among Caribbean Basin countries. The Creoles are mostly Christians, while Hindustanis are generally Hindus or Moslems, and the Javanese are usually Moslems. Dutch is the official language of the country, but three other languages are widely spoken, Creole (Saranantonga) a mixture

of African, English and Dutch, Hindi, and Javanese. These internally differentiating characteristics have led to solidarity along ethnic lines, and ethnicity remains paramount in the political structure of the country.

During the years 1954 to 1967 Surinam experienced its longest period of political stability under self-rule. Economic aid from Holland along with new investments from ALCOA (Aluminum Company of America) in the bauxite industry resulted in a healthy growth of the economy. In 1966 the electoral system was changed to PR (Proportional Representation) resulting in a shift in alliances between the NPS (Nationale Partij Suriname) and the VHP (Vernigde Hindostanese Partij: United Hindustani Party), the two largest political parties. Elections were held in 1967 under the new PR system and although the NPS polled 56 percent of the total vote, the result of the election was a break up of the long standing alliance between the NPS and the VHP.

By mid-1969 the NPS Government had fallen due to industrial unrest, and new elections that year resulted in a majority for the VHP, although in forming the government a coalition was developed with three smaller parties. However, once again there was strike activity and this continued to plague the government until the elections of 1973. Once more the NPS and its block of parties were swept into power and the most important goal following the election was the attainment of full independence. While the election resulted in a high degree of polarization, with the potential for

confrontation between Creoles and Hindustanis, the Creole coalition was in control of the government with the Hindustanis in opposition.

Talks between the ruling NPS alliance and the Dutch government regarding independence for Surinam began in May 1974. Following the announcement of the start of these talks leading to independence, the rate of migration (particularly among Creoles and Hindustanis) to the Netherlands increased dramatically. This was mainly due to tensions developing between the ruling NPS alliance and the VHP, the opposition party. The principal causes for these tensions arose from differing views about the way certain issues considered fundamental to an independent Surinam by the VHP, were being handled by the ruling NPS alliance. Issues such as economic self sufficiency, the articles of the new constitution, methods of choosing the Head of State and the Vice-President, ethnic make-up of the military, establishment of an independent election authority, and new elections immediately after independence were paramount among concerns of the VHP.

For its part the Dutch government was set on independence for Surinam by November 25, 1975, the date set by the NPS alliance i.e. the government of Surinam. The debate in the Dutch Parliament over the Bill to grant Surinam independence was passed overwhelmingly in both Chambers on October 28, 1975. By its action the Dutch made it clear that it was up to the politicians in Paramaribo (the capital of Surinam) to resolve their differences and unite in preparation for

midnight November 25, 1975. That was the date when the Dutch would relinquish their control over the colony of Surinam, and proclaim the Republic of Surinam as an independent state. The political leaders in Paramaribo faced with independence as a fait accompli placed the national interest above party or ethnic differentiation and after a marathon session of Parliament were able to satisfactorily resolve their differences in a dramatic text book last minute example of conflict resolution. Surinam achieved independence on November 25, 1975.

### The Spanish Caribbean

Spanish influence in the Caribbean Basin was established shortly after the initial voyage of Columbus in 1492. Within the Caribbean area Spain quickly occupied the islands known as the Greater Antilles, i.e. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic). Our interest in this study lies with Puerto Rico which came under Spanish control in 1509, when Ponce de Leon became its first governor. Although first thought to be a promising source of gold, the metal was quickly exhausted and the colonists turned to sugar production as the basis for the island's economic development. During the latter part of the 16th century, when the British, French and Dutch began to challenge the Spanish for hegemony in the Caribbean, Puerto Rico was converted into a military base. The island

guarded the approaches to the highly travelled sea lanes at the time, leading to Cuba and New Spain (Mexico), as well as to the South American Vice-Royalties of New Granada (Columbia) and Peru.

In the 19th century there was a sharp increase in the population of Puerto Rico, due to the influx of Spanish royalists who were fleeing the revolutions against Spain which were taking place in Central and South America. The immediate effect of the population increase was to tip the balance between the Black-Indian population and the Spanish in favor of the latter.<sup>21</sup> By a Royal Decree in 1815 Puerto Rico was allowed to trade with other countries and the island continued to develop economically. The first indigenous political party was formed in 1870, and a year later Puerto Ricans were granted self government within the Spanish Empire. Universal manhood suffrage along with the Bill of Rights of the Spanish constitution was extended to the island in 1887. The following year the Spanish-American war broke out and in July 1898 American troops occupied Puerto Rico. Spain could only put up feeble resistance and by the end of the year the Treaty of Paris was signed ending the war. With the end of the war Cuba was to be independent, but would have an American army of occupation for many years. In addition the United States took outright possession of Puerto Rico, along with the Philippines and Guam in the Pacific.

Puerto Ricans quickly found out that they had simply exchanged a Spanish master for an American one. The reforms

which Spain had instituted in 1897 did not have a chance to take effect before war broke out in 1898. When the Americans took possession of the island they instituted military rule which lasted until a civilian government was established under the Foraker Act passed by the United States Congress in 1900.<sup>22</sup> Under the Act executive authority was vested in the Governor and an eleven member Executive Council, five of whom were to be Puerto Ricans, all appointed by the President of the United States. The Justices of the Supreme Court were also Presidential appointees while the people could elect only the members of the Lower House of the Legislature, and elected positions of their municipal governments.

The quest for self-government had to begin anew and this time it took half a century to achieve it. The island had its first civilian government in 1900, and it was not until 1949 that the first Puerto Rican to become Governor took office. In 1917 the Jones Act granted American citizenship to Puerto Ricans, and established an elected Upper House. The Governor was authorized to appoint all his department heads except the Attorney General and the Commissioner of Education. These two offices along with the Auditor and Justices of the Supreme Court continued to be appointed by the President of the United States.

Under the Elective Governor Act of 1947 Puerto Ricans were able to elect their Governor. In 1952 the island was declared an "Estado Libre Asociado" (Free Associated State),



or Commonwealth. The term Commonwealth as used in the case of Puerto Rico, a colony of the United States was not synonymous to the concept as used by the British, another colonial power. In the British case the Commonwealth was an association of independent states. Puerto Rico was by no means an independent state in free association with the United States. In fact the United States still has power to pass legislation which is applicable to Puerto Rico. For example if war was declared by the United States Congress, Puerto Ricans would be bound by that declaration. Draft laws for military service apply to Puerto Ricans just as they apply to citizens in the United States.

The effect of the United States presence in Puerto Rico has in a way blunted the latter's relationship with other Caribbean countries. The island's cultural and linguistic ties lie with its neighbors in the Greater Antilles, but its population, economy, and political life have been integrated with the United States. This situation is particularly significant since all the other countries in the Caribbean Basin which formed part of Spain's colonial empire have long achieved independence. Puerto Rico unfortunately is not a free actor within the Caribbean community of nations. The economic and social development of Puerto Rico have been influenced by the type of transformation which the country underwent at the turn of the century. In the 18th century, Spain a mercantilist colonial power profited from its control over the island and its commerce. The Puerto Rican economy

was dominated by a sugar plantocracy which established sugar cane latifundias (large estates). According to Lewis this plantocracy was an entrenched feudal type of society, cultivating their land with imported black slaves.<sup>23</sup>

Parallel with the development of the sugar plantations on the flat coastal belt, coffee plantations were being established in the hilly western area of the island. The coffee growers were "rural" in social class in comparison to the "urban" sugar planters, and this was particularly true of the semi-subsistence farmers known as the jibaros. These rural farmers whose culture represented strong individualism, and an independent spirit, were to play an important role in the selection of the first Puerto Rican governor in 1949. Within the first few years of United States rule a process of rapid redistribution of land occurred. This change started at about the same time that a natural disaster (a hurricane of August 1899) destroyed both the coffee and sugar cane crops, and killed about 3,000 persons.<sup>24</sup>

The coffee plantations received more damage than the sugar plantations, since within a year the latter could be rehabilitated, but it took many years for the coffee trees to reach the productive stage. The damage caused by the hurricane led to sugar growing lands being sold to American businessmen, with the island becoming almost totally dependent upon the export of sugar and sugar products. By the 1930s over seventy percent of domestic income was derived from the export of sugar.<sup>25</sup>

It should be noted that sugar production was almost totally in the hands of United States Corporations. During the 1930s the island suffered terribly from the Great Depression and it was categorized as "a scene of almost unbelievable misery."<sup>26</sup> In 1938 the Popular Democratic Party was founded with a promise to improve the economic conditions, and ten years later its leader Luis Munoz Marin became the first elected Governor. "Operation Bootstrap" an economic program designed to industrialize the Puerto Rican economy was established by the new Governor in 1951. It was reported that by 1961 "factories were going up at the rate of five per week."<sup>27</sup> While Operation Bootstrap may have resulted in large United States private investment in the island's economy, we must also recognize that its social and economic system is closely integrated with that of the United States. According to one report Puerto Rico receives \$2 billion annually in United States aid, which includes housing subsidies, grants for education, welfare payments, and food stamps.<sup>28</sup> A study by Berrios in 1977 indicated that approximately 71 percent of all Puerto Rican households are dependent on the United States food stamp program.<sup>29</sup>

In looking at the island's per capita income in comparison to the other countries in the study, we need to be mindful of its economic ties to the United States and the level of economic assistance which it receives annually. In 1967 Puerto Rico was classified as a "developing economy" by the

World Bank, and Table 1:4 shows a comparison of the per capita income for all the countries in the study.

Politically Puerto Rico continues to be in a state of "limbo," not a state of the United States and yet not a colony. More than three decades of associated statehood made Puerto Rico different from its neighbors in the Caribbean, however by the 1980s the significant difference is that the island is not independent, while all the other countries are independent states.

#### SUMMARY

The Caribbean Basin provides broad scope for carrying out studies in comparative colonial history. We find stable parliamentary democracies in the former British territories. By comparison there were dictatorships in Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Central American republics have been the breeding ground for dictators and revolutions. Although this is not a study in comparative history, it has been necessary to provide some of the historical background to development in the countries included in this study. In these countries the colonial powers almost completely destroyed the indigenous society, replacing it with slaves from Africa. As slaves these Africans were considered to be inferior to the white European, they were denied the right to own property, to vote, to make contracts, and to protect themselves. Afro-Caribbean people therefore had a social

Table 1:4  
Gross National Product Per Capita and Population for  
Countries in the Study

Country	1965		1970		1975		1980	
	pop. mil.	gnp/pc	pop. mil.	gnp/pc	pop. mil.	gnp/pc	pop. mil.	gnp/pc
Antigua	0.06	280	0.07	370	0.07	840	0.08	1380
Barbados	0.24	370	0.24	570	0.24	1410	0.25	3270
Belize	0.11	330	0.12	590	0.14	670	0.16	980
Grenada	0.10	220	0.19	300	0.11	390	0.10	780
Guadaloupe	0.31	n.a.	0.33	760	0.33	1500	0.33	3940
Guyana	0.66	280	0.70	370	0.78	510	0.88	690
Jamaica	1.76	460	1.87	670	2.04	1110	2.19	1090
Puerto Rico	2.58	990	2.72	1650	3.12	2300	3.44	3220
St. Lucia	0.10	180	0.10	340	0.11	580	0.12	890
Surinam	0.33	340	0.37	530	0.36	1370	0.39	2840
Trinidad/ Tobago	0.97	620	1.03	860	1.08	2000	1.14	5010

Source: World Bank Atlas 1967-1981, IBRD, Washington, D.C. USA, and United Nations  
Demographic Yearbook 1960-1981. United Nations, New York, USA.

status which was devoid of all rights, and whose primary function was to provide the owners with labor.

The sugar industry on which most of the Caribbean countries depended had to deal with two problems in the immediate post emancipation period. First there was the increase in production costs due to the payment of wages, although this was no doubt offset by the masters not having to "provide" for the slaves anymore. Second in the late 19th century West Indian sugar producers had to deal with strong competition from the state encouraged European beet sugar producers. As a result many estates went out of business and there was a substantial fall in wages.

The labor force in this depressed colonial economic environment was largely unskilled and without the economic power or employment opportunity to even attempt any type of bargaining under the guise of unionism. There was a fear of unemployment in a situation where management was dominant and an industrial relations system as we know it today was not in place. As long as there were no aspirations for an improved standard of living or the acquisition of power in order to achieve those aspirations there were no threats to the status quo. But these aspirations did lead to increased demands, and as Fox and Flanders point out "Interests are indisputably in conflict, but the conflict remains latent since aspirations cannot receive effective expression."<sup>30</sup> This latent conflict becomes manifest only

when the group is able to develop sufficient power to challenge the prevailing norms.<sup>31</sup> Fox and Flanders go on:

In this context the relationship between power and aspirations is a complex one. Consciousness of power tends to stimulate aspirations though a group may possess power before they become conscious of it. Conversely, new aspirations may prompt a group to seek ways of augmenting their power, or<sup>32</sup> to direct their present power towards new ends.

With the historical background of these colonies this was the context in which political unionism developed, in order to attempt to obtain changes in the normative system. Because of the prevailing colonial economic infrastructure, the unions once they developed had a tendency to emphasize political rather than economic collective action. While the intention was to eventually achieve economic gains the early unions lacked the economic power to challenge the employers, and thus they strongly supported political action, through an unusual fusion of trade unions and political parties. With the background given in this chapter we establish the base upon which political unionism developed in the countries included in this study.

## CHAPTER ONE: FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>But see George Beckford, Persistent Poverty. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972, for arguments which claim that a forestry economy and a sugar economy are plantation economies.

<sup>2</sup>Captain George Anders, An Account of the British Settlement in Honduras. London: C & R Baldwin, 1809, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup>Narda D. Leon, Social and Administrative Developments in British Honduras 1798-1843. B. Litt. Thesis, Oxford University 1958, (Unpublished), p. 203.

<sup>4</sup>See Major Sir John Alder Burdon, (ed.), The Archives of British Honduras Vol. 2, 1801-1940. London: Sifton Praed, 1935.

<sup>5</sup>Frank Cundall, "Jamaica" in British America. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., 1900, p. 400.

<sup>6</sup>See Mrs. Carmichael, Domestic Manners and Social Conditions of the White, Coloured and Negro Population of the West Indies. London: Whittaker and Co., 2nd Ed., Vol. II, 1834, p. 137.

<sup>7</sup>Sir Harold Mitchell, Contemporary Politics and Economics in the Caribbean. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1968.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>9</sup>See Franklin W. Knight, The Caribbean. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 159-161.

<sup>10</sup>Sir Alan Burns, History of the British West Indies. London: Allen & Unwin, 1954, p. 652.

<sup>11</sup>West India Royal Commission, Report Cmd. 6607. London: HMSO, 1945, p. XI.

<sup>12</sup>See West India Royal Commission, 1938-1939. Recommendations. Cmd. 6174. London: HMSO, 1940.

<sup>13</sup>Great Britain, Report of the West Indies Sugar Commission, Cmd. 3517. London: HMSO, 1930, pp. 5, 13, and 123.



<sup>14</sup>See Hansard 332, Col. 797.

<sup>15</sup>Tony Smith, "A Comparative Study of French and British Colonialism," Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1978, pp. 70-102.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>18</sup>See Bernard H. M. Vlekke, Evolution of the Dutch Nation. New York: Roy, 1945, p. 299.

<sup>19</sup>According to the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands the constitutions of both Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles stipulates that the ruler of the Netherlands is also Head of Government in these countries. See also A. Curtis Wilgus (ed.) The Caribbean, British, French Dutch, United States. Florida: University of Florida Press, 1958, p. 64.

<sup>20</sup>Suffrage is limited to resident males and female citizens of the realm (Netherlanders, Surinamers, and Netherland Antilleans) who have attained the age of twenty three years.

<sup>21</sup>See Gordon K. Lewis, Puerto Rico: Freedom and Power in the Caribbean. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964, p. 58.

<sup>22</sup>See U. S. Senate Report No. 249 to accompany S2264 (56th Congress, 1st Session, 1900).

<sup>23</sup>See Gordon K. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 30-32.

<sup>24</sup>George W. Davis, Industrial and Economic Conditions of Puerto Rico, Report War Department, Division of Insular Affairs, 1899. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899.

<sup>25</sup>Ralph Hancock, Puerto Rico A Success Story. Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Co. Inc., 1960, p. 63.

<sup>26</sup>Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot. Cambridge, Mass: MIT and Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 86.

<sup>27</sup>Earl Parker Hanson, Puerto Rico, Ally for Progress. Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Co. Inc., 1962, p. 103.

<sup>28</sup>See U. S. News and World Report, January 1977, p. 73.

<sup>29</sup>Ruben Berrios Martinez, "Independence for Puerto Rico: The Only Solution." Foreign Affairs, 55, (April 1977), p. 562.

<sup>30</sup>Alan Fox and Allan Flanders, "The Reform of Collective Bargaining: From Donovan to Durkheim," British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. VII March 1969, p. 159.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 159.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Perspectives on Theories of Industrial Conflict

Industrial conflict has generated interest among industrial relations specialists, social scientists and other scholars who are interested in explaining and predicting the occurrence of this phenomenon. But is industrial conflict a phenomenon or a variety of phenomena, and what exactly do we mean by the term industrial conflict?

According to Clark Kerr the term industrial conflict denotes a variety of phenomena. He states that:

Its means of expression are as unlimited as the ingenuity of man. The strike is the most common and most visible expression. But conflict with the employer may also take the form of peaceful bargaining and grievance handling, of boycotts, of political action, of restriction of output, of sabotage, of absenteeism, or of peaceful turnover. Several of these forms . . . may take place on an individual basis and constitute alternatives to collective action. It may involve all the workers or only key men . . . . It may also involve such rigid adherence to rules that output is stifled.

Dahrendorf sees industrial conflict as vertical class conflict between labor, the subject class, and management, the dominant class.<sup>2</sup> As the subject class, workers do not determine what they produce and they have very limited control

(if any) over the pattern or pace of the production process. They have limited ability to be creative on the production line, thus their creative abilities find outlets in other areas. One of these areas is of course the power of veto through the withholding of labor. Due to the nature of the distribution of social and economic power, whenever industrial conflict erupts, this exposes the hostile environment of the workplace. Allen asserts that:

Strikes take place within a hostile environment even though they are a common everyday phenomenon. They are conventionally described as industrially subversive, irresponsible, unfair, against the best interests of the community, contrary to the worker's best interests, wasteful of resources, crudely aggressive, inconsistent with democracy, and in any event, unnecessary.

Perrow gives us an interesting discussion on the implications of the official and the unofficial hierarchical order, he states that:

One of the true delights of the organizational expert is to indicate to the uninitiated the wide discrepancy between the official hierarchy (or rules, for that matter) and the unofficial one . . . Departmental secretaries in many universities have power far beyond their status.<sup>4</sup>

He also points to Dalton's study of a manufacturing plant in which top people had no power, and those three or four levels below had extensive power.<sup>5</sup> This brings us to the argument of Michels, who in describing conflicts between authority levels in unions, said that "where authority is split among parallel hierarchies, industrial conflict is described as more horizontal."<sup>6</sup> The implications of Michels'

argument are that industrial conflict could become chronic where such problems exist, and also that there could be rank and file reaction against the leadership.

A good example of this is the British case, where many strikes called by shop stewards were in breach of union rules, and frequently these strikes were directed as much against the union leaders as against the employers. In the former British colonies included in this study, the industrial relations system is similar to that in Britain, collective agreements are not legally binding and strikes can be called by shop stewards, often necessitating retroactive official sanction by the union leadership.

Industrial conflict therefore comprises individual and collective forms. Conflict whether latent or overt is a part of industrial relations. Indeed according to Barbash:

Conflict is the essence of industrial relations because the structural features of industrialism necessarily generate stratifications which, in turn, necessarily create tensions among those stratified.<sup>7</sup>

Since conflict is inherent in the nature of the industrial relations system, then we need to determine the locus of such conflict. Again we turn to Barbash:

The locus of conflict is either the bargaining table for the negotiation of the agreement or the shop floor for the application of the agreement . . . . The third locus of the conflict is politics where unions and employers carry on their collective bargaining contest, and occasionally their common interests, in the form of public policy.<sup>8</sup>

In order to adequately deal with the definition of the term industrial conflict, we should first clarify the notion of industrial relations. As used in this study industrial relations will be defined functionally rather than institutionally, emphasizing the collective relations of employment in the process of production. This means that we will be emphasizing group behavior of workers in a relationship with those who hire or control labor in the productive process.

It is felt that such a functional definition of industrial relations is more suitable in a study of this nature which deals mainly with third world countries. Historically the concept of industrial relations arose out of western democratic societies which had developed a capitalist form of production. Along with this form of production powerful trade unions evolved, thus developing distinct patterns of collective bargaining between themselves and the employers of labor. The state became the third party to this relationship, in some instances playing an active role, in others a very passive role.

This clarification in the use of the concept of industrial relations is necessary since the countries included in this study, have industrial relations systems which have close ties to the political systems. The trade unions have historically been used as vehicles for political change, due to their relationship with the political parties, consequently upon examining these countries we may not find the clear distinctions as envisaged by Dunlop:

An industrial relations system is comprised of three groups of actors: workers and their organizations, managers and their organizations, and governmental agencies concerned with the work place and work community.

In view of the above definition of industrial relations, industrial conflict will be treated in a similar manner, i.e. conflict between employees as a group and their employer or employers. It is usual to refer to such conflict as a "strike" and in this study the terms strike and industrial conflict will be synonymous.

We should note that there are other forms of conflict in industrial relations in addition to the strike. Hibbs points out that:

Chronic absenteeism, high labor turnover rates, work slowdowns, outright sabotage, as well as various kinds of political protest and rebellion, are also significant manifestations of discontent which, unlike strikes, have unfortunately not been recorded with any regularity.<sup>10</sup>

However, in this study only the strike (or industrial conflict) will be examined.

A common view of industrial conflict is that of a process which is disruptive and to a large extent destructive. But there has been the argument that the expression of conflict can act as a means of reinforcing the status quo. Lewis Coser has been one of the most well known proponents of that theory. He states that:

. . . conflict, rather than being disruptive and dissociating, may indeed be a means of balancing and hence maintaining a society as a going concern  
 . . . A flexible society benefits from conflict

because such behavior, by helping to create and modify norms, assures its continuance under changed conditions.<sup>11</sup>

The relevance of this view of industrial conflict is that Coser has used industrial relations as evidence that conflict, if well organized becomes self-regulating. Workers' and employers' organizations become engaged in a struggle which does not end with a victor, and the vanquished. Instead the end result is a set of rules of the game which both sides wish to protect. According to Coser "conflict becomes institutionalized and peace can be concluded and maintained effectively."<sup>12</sup> The industrial relations system in the United States is a good example of this type of outcome, where the collective bargaining agreement is a legally binding document. Union/management relations are regulated by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), the various regulations and decisions handed down by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and the courts, based upon the Act.

Of course in the context of this study, industrial conflict was not only intended to establish "a set of rules for the game," it was intended to revise the game and establish new players. The game had to be changed from one of managerial authoritarianism and paternalism to more constitutional management.<sup>13</sup>

In developing a perspective on industrial conflict, we need to examine the trade union and its role in such conflict. At the outset trade unions were perceived to be



organizations only for the "laboring classes," but this view has changed dramatically, especially since the end of WW II. Today we find that a large proportion of union membership, particularly in the western industrialized countries consists of white collar workers.

Trade unionism arose out of the need of working people to deal with economic deprivation, and poor working conditions to which they were exposed. In Great Britain trade unions effectively started in the second half of the eighteenth century with the spread of the factory system, yet it was not until 1824 with the repeal of the Combination Acts that trade unions ceased to be criminal conspiracies. But in 1825 an amending Act was passed by Parliament, and this Act severely circumscribed the activities of the trade unions. The present status of the British trade unions is derived from the Trade Union Act of 1871, which inter alia provides that a trade union would not be regarded as illegal if it involves restraint of trade, and that agreements in restraint of trade would not be illegal. According to the Trade Union Act of 1913 a trade union's right to include a political or other lawful objective in its constitution was clearly established provided the principal objectives were those of a trade union.

In the United States there is evidence that shortly after the Declaration of Independence, cordwainers (shoemakers) and carpenters were organizing in Philadelphia and Boston, respectively.<sup>14</sup> However, it was with the founding of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1886 that we find the

beginning of modern unionism as we know it today in this country. The AFL was a federation of craft unions, i.e. membership was based upon occupation or skill. Following a clash between the President of the Carpenters Union and the President of the United Mineworkers Union at the 1935 AFL Convention, the Committee for Industrial Organizations (CIO) was formed in November 1935. The name was later changed to Congress of Industrial Organizations.

The CIO was intended to be a federation of industrial unions, and membership in a CIO union was based upon employment in an industry, rather than employment in a particular skilled occupation. The CIO unions were able to recruit members for the new mass production industries, and were so successful in organizing e.g. in the auto and steel industries that in retrospect Walter Galenson was able to make the following comment:

The entire social structure of the country, its basic power relationships, were altered fundamentally . . . the United States had suddenly been propelled into the ranks<sup>15</sup> of nations in which the voice of labor counted.

Despite the new reality of the CIO and its growth through affiliated unions, the whole country now had two union federations, the AFL and the CIO. This brought up the obvious problem of union jurisdiction, and the absence of any mechanism for dealing with union rivalries, competition and even overlapping jurisdictions. These problems were effectively settled with the merger of the AFL and the CIO into a single

federation, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) on December 5, 1955. This does not mean that all unions in the country belong to the AFL-CIO. In fact, one of the largest unions, the Teamsters, was not a member of the AFL-CIO (they were re-admitted in 1986), and the United Auto Workers (UAW) withdrew from the federation in 1968, but rejoined in 1981.

This brief overview of the British and American models of trade unionism is necessary since in most of the countries included in this study, we find some measure of adaption of one of these models. In the former British islands there is an adaption of the British model, i.e. the omnibus or blanket type unions, which basically incorporates all workers within one organization, regardless of industry or occupation. Yet within this model there are also semblances of the U.S. model conforming to craft or industrial distinctions. On the other hand in Puerto Rico, Guadaloupe, and Surinam there is a transposition of the model of the metropolitan country, i.e. the U.S., France, and the Netherlands, respectively.

In developing countries trade unions are not of recent origin. Forms of trade unions could be found on the Indian subcontinent as early as the 1930s. As far back as 1906 the Trinidad Workingmen's Association was formed in Trinidad. This is of particular significance for this study since we are concerned with trade unionism in Caribbean Basin countries.

A number of scholars have attempted to explain the growth and development of trade unions in various countries, and

this has resulted in the argument that trade unions are the result of structural changes in society, usually associated with industrialization. Smelser in his study of the Lancashire cotton industry identified structural changes involving both industry and family. He argued that it was in response to the changes in the structure of industry and the family why the unions in the cotton industry developed into organizations similar to present day unions.<sup>16</sup> Davis on the other hand has stated that the growth of trade unionism may be influenced by factors such as the nature and quality of union leadership and the state.<sup>17</sup> The Marxists, however, stress the structural explanation. Allen argues that trade unions develop as a result of their environment, and he emphasizes that they develop due to the nature of the society which relies upon the sale of labor and a division between sellers and buyers, making the latter the controller of the exchange. Trade unions therefore become necessary in that type of society in order to defend those who sell their labor.<sup>18</sup>

While there have been varying explanations for the development and growth of trade unions, popular explanations have emphasized the structuralist approach. This approach posits that trade unions are the result of changes in society, i.e. the result of social change. According to the Feierabends "The notion of social change is complex. It refers to movement through time of a variety of ecological, socioeconomic, political, structural, cultural, and ideational aspects, and conditions of social existence."<sup>19</sup>

In the Caribbean an unusual fusion of trade unions and political parties developed, partly as a result of the colonial governmental structures. The growth of political parties was almost impractical due to the limited franchise, widespread illiteracy, and overall government control from the Colonial Office in London. While on the one hand the development of political parties was limited, on the other hand the Colonial Office encouraged the establishment of labor organizations.<sup>20</sup>

In the case of Guadeloupe, French colonial policy was directed towards assimilation of its colonies. With emancipation from slavery in 1848, political equality was granted to all the inhabitants of the island, and this included the franchise. Political parties and the politics of the island have long been closely related to the politics of metropolitan France.

The Dutch like the British did not have a policy of assimilation for their colonial territories and it was not until 1948 that universal suffrage was introduced in Surinam. However, there was limited political activity as Goslinga points out:

Surinam enjoyed a degree of franchise not known in the Antilles. Surinam's [council] Colonial States signalled a return to the Politieke Raad of the Chartered Society. Composed of thirteen members, only four were appointed by the Governor, the other nine being elected by the tightly knit group of planters and well-to-do merchants.<sup>21</sup>

It was not long before it was recognized that in the absence of a voice in the political system, the strike could

be used to obtain improvement on economic issues at the workplace, as well as a lever to prod changes in the political status quo. Trade unions became forums for advocating a greater degree of political autonomy, and constitutional reform. The analogy between the trade union movement in the western industrial world, and the developing countries is not that the movement will follow the organizational, or ideological path created by the former. Instead they will develop as a result of changes in the political and social situation of the country, and represent the demands of the membership and society at large for changes in political, economic and social conditions.

In 1960 Kerr et al<sup>22</sup> in their discussion of industrialization suggested that class conflicts which occur during the process of industrialization, would eventually decline as institutions developed which were able to cope with the disruptions caused by the movement of labor from the agricultural to the industrial sector. But one of the principal reasons for the decline is that the industrializing elite "develops its strategies and means of controlling, limiting, and directing workers' protest."<sup>23</sup>

As these societies advance industrially, interest groups such as trade unions and employer organizations become better organized, and along with the regulatory power of the state, these societies move towards egalitarianism, especially in the area of labor-management relations.

In some western industrialized countries labor organizations have been attempting to develop more formal relationships with management, in the expectation that this would lead to some semblance of equity in the sharing of power between labor and capital. Strike statistics in certain countries include the reasons given for calling the strike, but this has not become a uniform practice on an international basis. As a result it is not possible to use that information in statistical analysis of strike data. However, industrial conflict does arise out of the demand for more economic benefits and/or an attempt to obtain social benefits for the working class.

Industrial conflict is inherent to the collective bargaining relationship, and with the political background in some developing countries, there was the potential for such conflict to transcend the economic and social arena into the political. Strikes are a response by the workers to quite discrete and concrete problems, and they are usually the most effective way for workers to demonstrate their dissatisfaction or desires. On the other hand in some developing countries there is a highly politicized labor movement, and a public sector which employs a large proportion of the labor force. Trade unions are therefore more of a working class movement oriented towards seeking the attainment of goals leading to social change, rather than attempting to obtain a greater share of the product of labor.

This is particularly interesting for the countries included in this study, since in 1960 many of these countries

were not self-governing, and adult suffrage has been a recent achievement. The trade union movement was also in its infancy, in comparison to the metropolitan countries. However as the former countries advanced both economically and politically, we find certain fundamental changes taking place in the scope of conflict arising out of the employment relationship.

Dahrendorf suggests that while the working class was economically and politically subjected to a ruling elite, economic and political demands were "fused into a single front of intense conflict."<sup>24</sup> This type of conflict was of course witnessed in the Caribbean during the unrest of the 1930s. As individual rights to political participation were increased and collective economic action became more legitimate, the working class, through the trade union movement were able to mount a legitimate and concerted attack on economic and political inequities. With the acquisition of full citizenship by the working class, the position of the state had to shift from being labor's class adversary to a more central role of industrial relations "umpire." If we examine Jamaica in the light of the above analogy, we find that in 1944 in the first election held under adult suffrage, the electorate chose the candidates of the Jamaica Labor Party, a party established by the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union. Such a government would be expected to favor labor and trade union issues, and the needs of the working class.

In the research on industrial conflict many theories have been generated and it is our purpose in this chapter



to discuss these theories and their contribution to the study of industrial conflict. Haas and Stack have pointed to three main determinants of industrial disputes. First they discuss the economic paradigm which links economic conditions (unemployment, profit rates, real wage change) to the incidence of strikes. Second they discuss structural factors in industrial organizations (plant size, extent of unionization, centralization in collective bargaining, etc.) and their relationship to strike rates. Third there is the argument linking contextual factors e.g. degree of institutionalization of collective bargaining, and the political climate as influencing the linkage between social conditions and strikes. They refer to these three factors as the macrosociological approach, with the microsociological literature dealing with the impact of worker management relations in explaining individual cases of strikes. In concluding their review Haas and Stack mention recent literature in which the testing of theories on the effect of industrialization on strike rates has been carried out.<sup>25</sup>

They approach the study of industrial conflict by investigating the effect of industrialization on the level of strikes, and this is one of the popular themes upon which research on industrial conflict is based. Another current theme is that which originated with Dunlop's general theory of industrial relations systems.<sup>26</sup> Chernish uses this existing theoretical approach to analyse strike proneness. He argues that the industrial relations system model is useful for

description and analysis of national industrial relations systems and for international comparisons.

He goes on to explain that in the literature, strikes and strike patterns are usually explained at two levels of investigation: by macro analysis, or by the case study approach.<sup>27</sup> At the macro level there are studies undertaken at the international, inter-industrial, and inter-local level.<sup>28</sup> Those investigators who follow the second approach give a detailed background to the development and outcomes of specific strikes.<sup>29</sup>

In their study of strikes Kelly and Nicholson use the perspective of social psychology to examine the scope for theory building in this area. They are also critical of the various methods and approaches used in the literature on strikes, which they say "has amounted to depressingly little in the way of theoretical synthesis."<sup>30</sup> They classify these approaches into four areas: first is the purely theoretical approach of those social scientists whose primary goal is to model or explain the social system in terms of cultural properties, values and power relationships. Second are historical and statistical analyses of the incidence of conflict; third are case studies. Fourth are studies which propose middle range theories of strike causation emphasizing strike technology, or communications, and are based upon reliable empirical data.<sup>31</sup>

After examining the three studies mentioned above we can determine two themes being used in the research on

industrial conflict. The first inquires into the variations in industrial conflict occurring between work groups, industries, regions or even nations. The second body of work encompasses analyses which explore the rationale behind industrial conflict and attempts to explain the causes of such conflict. However these two themes are by no means exhaustive of the literature, indeed there are almost as many different approaches to the study of industrial conflict as there have been studies.

This review is intended to draw selectively from the literature in order to explore the range and focus of theoretical emphasis in the various studies on industrial conflict. In order to do this four distinct approaches will be used to categorize the literature.

### Modernization Theory

The first category we will examine focuses on modernization theory from which we derive the following three classifications, viz. economic modernization, political modernization, and ideational modernization. In the last classification we look at the traits and attitudes of the "modern man." According to Inkeles modernity can be conceptualized as a certain way of doing things, as in patterns of education, urbanization, industrialization, bureaucratization, rapid communications and transportation. Indeed he goes on to elaborate upon this view as follows:

The modern is defined as a mode of individual responding, a set of dispositions to act in certain ways. It is, in other words, an "ethos" or a "spirit" in the same sense in which Max Weber spoke of the "spirit of capitalism."<sup>32</sup>

Modern man's personality, according to Inkeles is shaped in part by experiences in employment in the industrial order.<sup>33</sup> In addition there are also the effects of changes in the social and physical environment which men experience as they shift from the more traditional settings of village, farm, and tribe, to city residence.<sup>34</sup>

The relevance of this approach in the examination of strikes is the proposition that societies are understood to move from the traditional to the modern stage in their development process. During the transition to modernization it is expected that extensive migration will occur (mainly rural to urban), and if this migration is left uncontrolled, society will be transformed from a predominantly rural and agrarian life style, to one that is mainly urban and industrial. It is during this period that old social networks are destroyed, producing stress in individuals which leads to conflict (industrial) and even rebellion.

From the modernization perspective, strikes are seen as having a limited function in modern society. Hugh Clegg and the late Allan Flanders have been the main proponents of this school of thought. In their view this was an institutional problem, based upon how developed were the institutions for regulating industrial employment, and the extent

of the problems which are inherent with those institutions. They go even further to propose that the incidence of strikes is a good indicator of the level of development of bargaining techniques, and their ability to deal with the problems arising out of the employment relationship.<sup>35</sup>

In the colonial societies which are examined in this study, employer attitudes towards trade union organizations were determined under conditions of economic backwardness. However with increased industrial activity, and political reforms, trade union organizations became stronger, leading to increased demands for legislative support for the trade union movement, and more political participation by the masses.

This takes us back to the earlier view of Clark Kerr et al who stated that:

One universal response to industrialization and its implementation by organizational factors is protest on the part of the labor force as it is fitted into the new social structure. The industrial worker is seldom satisfied in a society where, largely without his participation, rules are made to prescribe his duties, to regulate the pace of his tasks and to govern his movement into and out of work, and from one position to another.<sup>36</sup>

As workers are "fitted" into the new social structure during the process of industrialization it is expected that their organizations e.g. trade unions would be at a low level of development. In these formative years unions could well meet with strong employer resistance to their activities. For example, in nineteenth century Britain, employers frequently made use of the "document" a declaration by each employee that he was not a union member.

Likewise in the United States some employers were strongly opposed to union efforts at organizing the workers. In their attempts to dissuade workers from joining unions, employers maintained blacklists of active unionists, they refused to deal with union representatives, and in some instances new employees were required to sign a "yellow dog contract" in which they agreed not to join the union. The latter practice was made non-enforceable by the Norris-LaGuardia Act passed in 1932. However, this action did not mark the end of employer resistance to the role of trade unions in the employment relationship. It was not until the passage of the Wagner Act in 1935 that trade unions were given the right to bargain collectively. The law clearly recognized, according to its preamble that "the denial by employers of the right to organize and the refusal of employers to accept the products of collective bargaining lead to strikes and other forms of industrial strife and unrest."

But is it a fact that once the mechanism for recognizing workers organizations has been established, industrial conflict will decline? According to the Webbs (Sydney and Beatrice), two of the earliest theorists of industrial relations, "industrial conflict is reduced when unionism and collective bargaining were accepted."<sup>37</sup> Dahrendorf states that "industrial conflict has become less violent because its existence has been accepted and its manifestations have been socially regulated."<sup>38</sup> Lipset was even more succinct in his conclusion that:

. . . when conflict of interest groups are legitimate, these "conflict" organizations contribute to the integration and stability of society. Trade unions should not be viewed primarily in their economic - cleavage function. They also serve to integrate their members into the larger body politic, and give them a basis for loyalty to the system.<sup>39</sup>

If we accept the views of Dahrendorf, Lipset and Kornhauser et al as the conventional wisdom, then the industrial conflict which occurred in the Caribbean in the 1930s violated the expected norms of the conventional wisdom. With increased recognition of the trade unions, there was a substantial increase in the level of industrial conflict. But the social and political infrastructure prevalent in a colonial economy acted as the catalyst to propel the trade unions from economic to a predominantly political form of collective action.

Therefore as unions gain acceptance, industrial conflict takes on an institutional aura and becomes to a certain extent professionalized. This professionalization of industrial conflict is obvious in the United States, where a stoppage of work often accompanies the negotiation of company wide agreements. Therefore as a result of the increasing stabilization of the trade unions, and the development of recognized collective bargaining and dispute resolution procedures, Kornhauser suggests that "overt conflict becomes increasingly subjected to institutional sublimation."<sup>40</sup>

This brings us to the famous study by Ross and Hartman in which they pointed to a decline in strike activity in the fifteen countries included in their research:

Mandays of idleness in the late 1950s are fewer than in the late 1940s or the late 1930s, despite the increase in population and union membership. The decline is most dramatic when described in comparative terms. One significant measure of industrial conflict is the number of strikers in relation to the number of union members. This proportion has fallen off sharply.<sup>41</sup>

These authors even went further to predict a "withering away" of strikes as stable collective bargaining machinery evolved, and as workers themselves matured.<sup>42</sup>

As we examine various explanations of strike activity we need to consider the difficulties involved when making comparative or trend studies of strike patterns. Contemporary trends in strike activity have led to critical scrutiny of the analysis by Ross and Hartman. They measured strike proneness in terms of average duration of strikes and mandays lost, which indicated a decline. In the post WWII period, in Britain for example, strike days have been substantially below the pre-war level. But an examination of British strike trends show that this was only an indication of fewer larger and protracted strikes. This could not be taken to mean that strikes were withering away. As Eldridge has pointed out, in post war Britain, taking into account the total or absolute numbers, "strikes are flourishing, rather than withering away."<sup>43</sup> Shorter and Tilly while examining the shape of



strikes in France also commented on the withering away of the strike. They found that:

In the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, France, and Japan there are in the 1960s relatively more strikes than thirty years ago. Ross and Hartman tended to miss this new blossoming of industrial conflict in part because they selected the ratio of strikers to union members as a measure of strike propensity.<sup>44</sup>

The implication is that industrial conflict should decline as society becomes more industrialized, thus we experience a withering away of the strike. Yet Shalev finds that "the withering away hypothesis has been justly criticized" and he goes on to point out that "Ross and Hartman's contribution has subsequently been discredited by the evident bankruptcy of the withering away thesis."<sup>45</sup> It is evident that Ross and Hartman in their analysis must have ignored important trends in post war strike activity, but it should be noted that the withering away thesis was not intended to be applicable on a world-wide basis.

The modernization perspective posits that with migration (rural to urban), and increased urbanization, there should be a marked increase in industrial conflict. In addition, the participants in such conflict are expected to be recent migrants, or those who have not yet been assimilated into urban society.

However, as we examine the work of Charles Tilly et al in their analyses of collective violence, we find that industrialization and modernization have some impact on the

likelihood of collective violence. But they specifically point out that:

. . . there is no tendency for recent migrants to Italian, German and French cities to become exceptionally involved in the movements of protest or in collective violence; on the contrary we have some small indications of their underinvolvement.<sup>46</sup>

Recent migrants to the urban areas usually do not have the contacts or social standing to become involved in industrial conflict. Yet we need to recognize that as a result of industrialization the urban areas become the locus of new organizations, such as trade unions which could facilitate participation in militant acts of collective protest including industrial strife.

While much of Tilly's work on collective violence is drawn from data gathered in European countries, those data cover a period from the eighteenth century onwards. His work therefore deals with a substantial period of industrialization and urbanization in Europe, and his findings will undoubtedly prove to be very relevant to the analysis being carried out in this study.

An investigation into strike activity based upon modernization theory is unlikely to produce a satisfactory explanation for industrial conflict in the countries being examined. The labor force that evolved out of the colonial economic environment had few skills and employment opportunities to allow genuine economic bargaining. A fear of unemployment and the corresponding poor social conditions were the

controlling factors in labor management relations. The overriding factor was the demand for change in the political situation, i.e. universal suffrage and an end to colonial rule. We therefore need to examine another approach in order to develop an explanation of industrial conflict in the countries included in this study.

### Structural Differentiation

The analysis of Clark Kerr points us to a different approach to the study of strike behavior in the work environment. Kerr working along with Abraham Siegel examined the strike records of eleven countries and found that certain industries appeared to have a higher propensity for strike proneness. Their studies indicated that workers with the highest propensity to strike were, miners, dockers, and seamen, closely followed by textile and lumber workers.

The argument put forward to explain this phenomenon was the location of the worker in society. Kerr and Siegel stated that:

The miners, the sailors, the longshoremen, the loggers, and to a much lesser extent, the textile workers, form isolated masses, almost a race apart. They live in their own separate communities . . . have their own codes, myths, heroes, and social standards. There are few neutrals in them<sup>47</sup> to mediate the conflicts and dilute the masses.

The point being made here is that these workers develop a sense of collective grievance, and form a strong, almost emotional attachment to their unions. Because of their closely

knit social structure and their insulation from the larger society, these combinations tend to precipitate industrial conflict.

On the other hand Kerr and Siegel found that workers who were more closely integrated into the wider society indicated a lower propensity to strike. Those who live in multi-industry communities develop association with workers with many different working experiences. This leads to the conclusion that in homogeneous communities individual grievances are less likely to "coalesce into a mass grievance which is expressed at the job level."<sup>48</sup>

Based on the study by Kerr and Siegel, their explanation of strike activity in the industries included in their analysis may appear feasible. But as other studies have indicated it would be far from satisfactory as a theory of industrial conflict. Prior to the study by Kerr and Siegel in 1954, Knowles in 1952 found that strike trends in different industries gave an indication of high correlation over time.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand Eldridge in his examination of strike proneness stated that there are industries, such as steel manufacture, which are highly strike prone in some countries, but not in others.<sup>50</sup> The important point according to Eldridge is to explain the differences between countries at the industry level as well as the similarities.<sup>51</sup>

In dealing with this type of analysis of industrial conflict we must determine whether the variables being examined, e.g. isolation or occupational homogeneity are indeed

fully covered by using industrial groupings. After all, industrial classifications differentiate on the basis of product, or function (service). The literature in this area has not supported the explanation of industrial conflict on the basis of the industry as the unit of analysis.

Howells and Alexander<sup>52</sup> carried out an investigation into strike behavior in the New Zealand meat industry in 1968, and came to a conclusion which clearly supported the findings of Kerr and Siegel. However in 1972 Geare<sup>53</sup> examined strike proneness in the same industry and found that workers involved in industrial conflict in the meat industry were responding to specific conditions of their work environment. Moreover these workers did not constitute an isolated mass as specified in the Kerr-Siegel study.

Shorter and Tilly in their study of strikes in France found that workers in isolated areas did not behave in a highly militant manner. On the other hand "the most militant, effective workers are those in the middle of the heterogeneous, swirling metropolis."<sup>54</sup> Snyder also found that in the case of Italian strikes from 1878-1903, workers employed in "isolated mass" industries gave little indication of involvement in violent industrial conflict more frequently than workers in other industries.<sup>55</sup>

The problem with the findings of Kerr and Siegel is that from among the several variables which they refer to in their study, they develop only two general hypotheses dealing with the location of the worker in society, the

character of the job and the worker. According to Britt and Galle:

Those complex hypotheses may provide a satisfying approximation to causal diagnosis . . . . Within these clusters, however there are several discrete variables which may vary independently across situations and be differently related to aspects of strike activity.<sup>56</sup>

This raises serious doubts about the applicability of the theory to the study of industrial conflict. If we accept the isolated mass hypothesis, are we accepting that human behavior is as Hyman says:

. . . mechanically determined by the social structure . . . and see workers as blissfully ignorant of all but a narrow range of environmental structures, ignorant of economic and social changes . . . as well as of politics.<sup>57</sup>

In fact over time, studies have indicated that there have been wide variations in the inter-industry propensity to strike. Dockers despite their reputation for militancy, appear to have developed that reputation during the post war period (WWII).<sup>58</sup> Miners were as strike prone as many other groups up to 1920, and since the late 1950s their level of militancy has decreased. In Britain for example strikes in mining fell from 2,226 in 1957 to 993 in 1963. Therefore despite the findings of Kerr and Siegel, we need to note that the majority of workers fall into the undifferentiated category, i.e. those who are integrated into the community. Their findings clearly fail to explain the variations in industrial conflict which occurs in the work force in these integrated communities.

An interesting analogy can be drawn between Kerr and Siegel's "isolated mass" thesis and the master/slave relationship in the Caribbean Basin countries. But the comparison can only be superficial, since slaves had no rights to make any claims from their employer, while the workers in Kerr and Siegel's study were free, with the right to bargain collectively. However, if there was an isolated mass of workers, it must have been the slaves on the sugar plantations in the West Indies.

There are well documented cases of slave rebellions in many of the Caribbean Basin countries, and these may well be explained by the "isolated mass thesis." The descendants of these slaves who took part in the disturbances of the 1930s, and fought for independence in the 1950s and 1960s, could hardly be called an isolated mass. They were isolated in the sense that they were the "have-nots" pitting themselves against the economic and political power structure.

There were limited employment opportunities and the labor market mechanism did not function effectively, thus resulting in large scale "hidden" unemployment. In addition a high level of non-market activities, and intra-family income transfers, tend to substitute for the absence of the labor market sources of income. With a slowly expanding economy and the sudden changes resulting from the great depression of the 1930s there was also increased industrial conflict. By concentrating principally on strike statistics, much of the explanation is premised upon structural factors, e.g.

changes or location in society based upon political, social and economic conditions. These are not satisfactory as factors for explaining industrial conflict.

### Economics and Bargaining Theory

The third approach arises out of the contribution of economic analysis to the study of strikes. The economist's principal concern has been with determining wage and price levels and thereby dealing with collective bargaining and strikes. Industrial conflict is seen as the result of a breakdown in wage bargaining, according to Hicks "the majority of strikes are the result of faulty negotiations, due to the inadequate knowledge or poor communications . . . adequate knowledge will always make a settlement possible."<sup>59</sup>

Ashenfelter and Johnson in a similar wage/price argument see the basic function of a strike as "an equilibrating mechanism to square up the union membership's wage expectations with what the firm may be prepared to pay."<sup>60</sup>

While there is little doubt that economists have made important contributions to the study of bargaining theory, we should not accept their wage bargaining models as predictive theories of industrial conflict, per se. Under a free market system, the union is a monopoly seller of labor, while the firm with which it is negotiating is a monopsonist buyer of labor. Because of this situation the parties at the bargaining table have such broad constraints that even with formal economic modelling the result is hardly predictable. This is of



course the case of bilateral monopoly where price fixing occurs by bargaining between the parties, and the outcome is largely dependent upon the negotiating skill of both groups. Some economists have found this to be an untenable situation, and have reacted by saying that "there is no economic solution to the bargaining problem."<sup>61</sup>

According to Marshall et al in a bilateral monopoly while the final agreed price (outcome) is not precisely predictable, it is not determined without cause, "a bilateral monopoly price is not 'determinate' in the sense of the observer being able to tell in advance what the settlement will be, but neither is it 'indeterminate' in the sense of having no economic causation."<sup>62</sup>

As the literature on bargaining theory is examined we should point out that it will be difficult to apply any of these theories to the developing countries, specifically those being examined in this study. The requirements of a theory in scientific investigation and the heterogeneity among developing countries, makes an attempt at such an application difficult.

However, we cannot simply ignore studies which put forward bargaining theories based upon data drawn mainly from the western industrialized nations. Although our study concerns developing countries, the industrial relations systems are based upon those of the former metropolitan countries, now comprising the western industrial nations. Their economies may bear little similarity to the latter, but their trade

union system and methods of collective bargaining retain the imprint of their colonial past. We have no alternative but to examine these studies, in order to determine their usefulness in this analysis of industrial conflict.

An important contribution to the study of strikes by the economists arises out of the work of Rees, who examined the question of why strikes are influenced by business conditions, or a decision aimed at maximizing worker gains. He found that unions will call a strike depending upon their strategic advantages and relative bargaining power. The important factors being the effect of the product market conditions on the worker's ability to strike, and the employer's ability to withstand the effects of the walkout. According to Rees:

Grievances can be stored up for long periods. They are most likely to boil over into strikes, or be utilized by union leaders as strike issues, when business conditions promise that the strike may be successful.<sup>63</sup>

But even more important he found that:

Political events, government policies, and the climate of public opinion all have an important influence on the timing of strikes, and that strikes may respond systematically<sup>64</sup> to recurrent political events, such as elections.

The main conclusions we may draw from Rees are that the strike decision is primarily dependent upon the union, and what it perceives as the probability of success in calling a strike. But even more important he suggests a link between strikes, government policies, and political events. This

is interesting considering that we are dealing with developing countries in this study. In these countries the union leaders' goals are very broad, in contrast to the goals of union leaders in the United States for example. There is also the tendency to use mass action - a demonstration, a strike, or even a riot to achieve, in some instances non-industrial goals. In Belize for example, in 1966 the Public Officers Union, a union of civil servants, called a strike to protest the government's handling of proposals for dealing with a border dispute with neighbouring Guatemala.<sup>65</sup> The strike had no direct bearing on the furtherance of any industrial or employment related objective.

As we examine studies which have dealt specifically with collective bargaining, there is a central theme which permeates most of these works. That is, the parties have certain utilities attached to various settlement points in terms of costs and benefits, and it is vital that they are aware of where those points lie. Miscalculation on either side could lead to industrial conflict.

Pigou saw collective bargaining being carried out within a dichotomy of constraints, while Chamberlain saw it as being ultimate and proximate. The former implies that the union cannot afford to make demands which would lead to a loss of jobs, and the employer cannot afford to make such low offers that this results in a loss of workers. The proximate constraint takes into account the unions minimum settlement point, and the employers maximum settlement point. If the former

is lower than the latter, there is room for negotiation and a strike may be averted. It would appear that Pigou is implying that the parties are aware of the potential limits within which a settlement may be achieved. In fact the parties are usually aware of those boundaries, since they are generally established during the process of negotiation.

Hicks has approached the study of the bargaining process from a cost benefit point of view. The parties need to examine the cost (or sacrifice) of achieving a demand. The longer the bargaining process (particularly if a strike or lockout occurs) the higher the cost of the disagreement, and this may result in a greater likelihood to compromise.

According to Hicks collective bargaining and strikes are implicitly tied to "the union's demand for higher wages than he (the employer) would have paid on his own initiative."<sup>67</sup> This leads to a decision by the employer of either paying higher wages, or take a strike, both of which will involve a cost to him. Hicks says the employer chooses the lesser of two evils by making a cost analysis, "if resistance appears less costly than concession, he will persist, if concession seems cheaper, he will meet the union's claim."<sup>68</sup> The union is also making its cost calculation, between "present employment and future wages."<sup>69</sup>

Hicks has schematically presented the position of both parties at the start of negotiations in the form of the diagram in Figure 2:1.

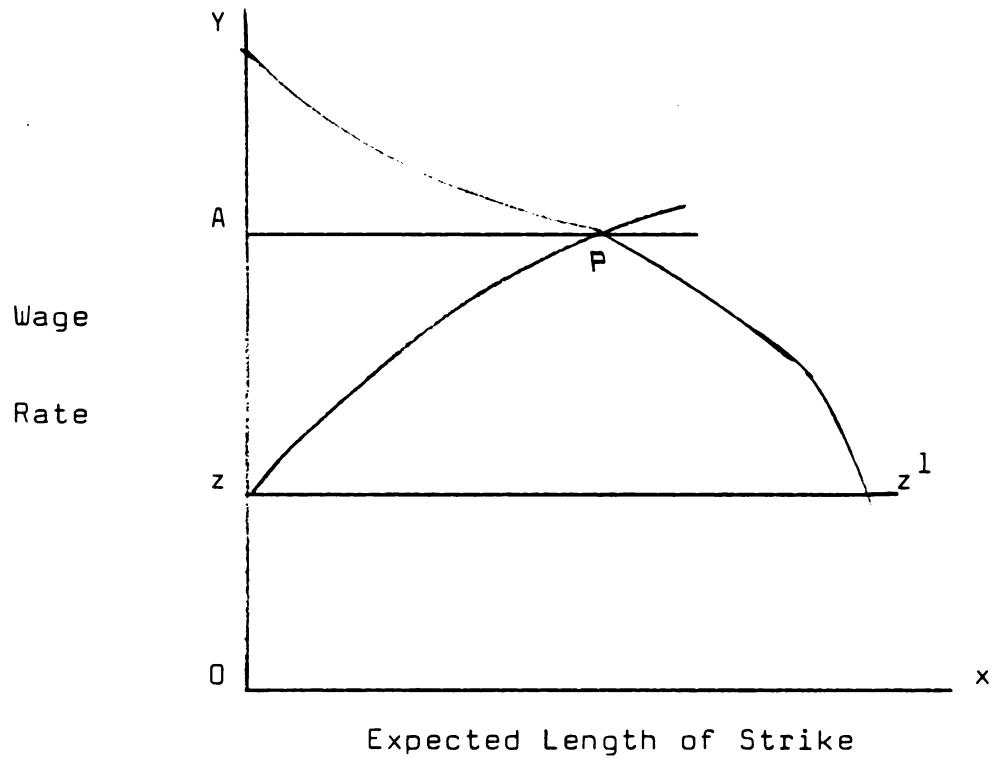


Figure 2:1 - Hick's Model of the Wage Bargaining Process

Source: J. R. Hicks, The Theory of Wages, London: Macmillan, 1966, p. 143.

In order to explain trade union activity, especially collective bargaining as this relates to strikes we must understand the circumstances under which an employer or a union will be prepared to make the extreme sacrifice i.e. lockouts or strikes, respectively. For an employer a higher wage demand, leads to a high cost of concession and a greater likelihood of resistance. On the other hand if there is evidence that the union can sustain a long strike, this may influence the point at which the employer is prepared to concede the union's demands.

Based on the diagram above Hicks is indicating that:

We can construct a schedule of wages and lengths of strikes, setting opposite to each period of stoppage the highest wage an employer would be willing to pay rather than endure a stoppage . . . . At this wage, the expected cost of concession (accumulated at the current rate of interest) just balance. At a lower wage the employee will give in, at a higher wage he will take a strike.

The employer's concession curve leaves the Y-axis at Z where OZ is the rate paid by the firm if there was not trade union pressure. Since wages are tied to profits (earnings of the firm) the concession curve will not rise beyond a certain level, as there is a point beyond which an employer will not concede a wage demand, preferring to go out of business instead.

Likewise the union's resistance curve crosses the Y-axis at y since there is a point (a wage rate) beyond which the union will not seek to go. Similarly it must cut ZZ<sup>1</sup>

at a finite point as there is some point beyond which the union cannot last, if a strike is called. Where these two curves cross at point P, gives us the wage level OA which is the highest wage that skilled negotiation will obtain for the union. Any higher wage demand than OA will be resisted, since the employer feels that should the union strike, such a strike would not last long, and the union would gain no more by striking, than by conceding. At any wage demand less than OA the employer will concede to the union's demands. The obvious problem with this analysis is the assumption that the employer can with reasonable accuracy estimate the potential length of a strike, if the wage demand is above OA.<sup>71</sup>

These two curves can be called indifference curves, and a strike at any point along the curve would be equally costly to either party. The point of intersection is the only point at which both parties to the negotiation will be prepared to accept the wage being offered, and thus avoid a strike. But the important point in these negotiations is the need to find common ground, i.e. a point at which neither party will raise objections. The basis for this according to Hicks is that "adequate knowledge will always make a peaceful settlement possible. The danger lies in ignorance by one side of the others dispositions, and in hasty breaking off of negotiations."<sup>72</sup>

One of the more pertinent issues brought out by Hicks in his study deals with the question of power. The argument has been made that unions tend to balance the power of the

workers with that of management. In Hick's view collective bargaining does not equalize the power of union and management, but merely allows them to reconcile their differences. It becomes costly for either party to dominate the other, with the result that there is some semblance of joint regulation based upon compromise through negotiation.

However Hick's model was not intended to predict what would actually occur in any specific set of negotiations, instead his study shows that if the parties can communicate in a manner which will enable them to recognize where each others curves lie, they will be able to determine the true value of the union's strike potential. One method for the parties to determine each others curves has been set out in the model put forward by Cartter and Marshall. They have reduced each side's indifference curves into its component parts i.e. the cost of agreement and disagreement. According to their model:

. . . the cost to each side of disagreeing is explicitly said to be its estimate of the other side's resistance/concession curve. The cost of agreeing with the other side can then be compared with the cost of disagreeing.<sup>73</sup>

Despite these attempts at developing models using wage bargaining it is clear that accurate information is not available. The parties to the negotiations are merely estimating each others bargaining stance, indeed the real bargaining attitude may be constantly reformulated during the course of the negotiations, thus defying full clarification. Another



point is that the bargaining model deals specifically with wage disputes. Clearly not all the issues which may lead to a dispute during negotiations fall under the heading of "pay."

As Walton and McKersie have pointed out in their study of labor negotiations, during the process of "reaching decisions about the division of the wage rate for any distributive bargaining, overlaps with other forms of bargaining between the parties."<sup>74</sup>

This makes it difficult to use any of the models as accurate predictors of the occurrence of strikes, especially if we take into account the fact that there are third parties involved e.g. the government, and the public. In addition strikes may occur due to jurisdictional, political or intra-union conflicts, and clearly a bargaining model has no capacity for explaining, or predicting such strikes.

When examining strike activity in third world countries, the data base necessary for economic modelling is generally not available, and where some data do exist, their reliability is questionable. We therefore should not concentrate too heavily on the level of strike activity, that we forego the variations in its characteristics, not ignoring of course that strike activity is sensitive to changes in the economy.

We now turn to the work of Ashenfelter and Johnson who examined fluctuations in strike activity through the use of multiple regression analysis. Their study was one of the first to apply methods of deduction and hypothesis testing

used in econometric analysis, to the investigation of strike activity. Based upon the work of Arthur Ross, Ashenfelter and Johnson moved away from Hick's suggestion that strikes occur due to faulty negotiation. Instead they argued that:

By this (Ross') view the objectives of the leadership are: (1) the survival and growth of the institution, and (2) the personal political survival of the leadership. These objectives are accomplished in most part, by satisfying the expectations of the rank and file as well as possible . . . . The leadership is aware of the possibilities of each bargaining situation . . . . If the membership's expected wage increase is much greater than the management will agree to, the union leaders will attempt to convince the membership to be satisfied with a smaller increase.<sup>75</sup>

Failure to convince the membership could result in a strike and the leadership "may at least appear as adversaries against management in a crusade which may even raise their political stock and will unify the workers."<sup>76</sup> It is assumed that the union has a concession schedule, based on its internal political structure, and the preferences of the individual members, which determines the minimum wage offer that the union will accept as a function of length of strike. This was evident in Hick's construct in his discussion of industrial disputes.<sup>77</sup>

Ashenfelter and Johnson take the approach that union leaders do not have any specific set of settlement utilities, and they would quite easily accept those of the employer. This would lead us to conclude that union leaders simply manipulate their membership. But it does not appear to be a realistic generalization to make. Although it is acknowledged

that there have been instances of racketeering and the signing of "sweetheart" contracts by certain union leaders, this practice is not common throughout the labor movement.

According to Garth Mangum:

Analysis of the common factors of the industries which have been plagued by labor racketeering reveals that they are all highly competitive, small scale industries where the union serves an important regulatory function and are characterized by casual labor markets and highly autonomous labor unions.<sup>78</sup>

In highly competitive industries, deals are made and "sweetheart" contracts signed with union leaders that give them an advantage over their competitors, or prevent them from being organized by legitimate unions. Such contracts may be signed by employers with purely paper locals which have never held membership meetings. Rank and file membership in such organizations have little input into the affairs of the union, and almost no voice in the determination of contract demands.

Ashenfelter and Johnson therefore look at the strike as incidental to the union/management wage negotiation. They develop an optimizing model in which management makes one of two choices, accepting the union's wage demands thus avoiding a break in the production that goes along with a strike, or on the other hand incurring a strike with the expectation that employer resilience may lead to moderate demands from the union, thus resulting in lower wage costs. This rationale is predicated upon two factors, first the size of the union's demand, and second an estimation of the rate at which worker's

resistance will waiver under actual strike conditions. Therefore the higher the union's demands, the higher the cost of concession to the employer, and the more likely it is for him to "take" a strike.

The model as posited by Ashenfelter and Johnson is based upon the premise that union leaders approach the negotiations with a somewhat fixed wage demand which represents the minimum increase for which the membership will settle. This is derived from three economic factors:

- (1) The level of employment.
- (2) The level of profits.
- (3) Past changes in real wages.

In a tight labor market workers can move to a higher paying job, and may thus demand more wages in their present job. The potential costs of striking are lowered by opening up part time jobs. Likewise the higher the level of profits the higher the wage union members feel they deserve and union leaders may also not attempt to persuade the membership to settle for lower benefits. Finally workers base their expectations of long run real wage changes on their constant desire for increased wages, and weighted moving average of past changes. But we must note that Ashenfelter and Johnson feel that due to the nature of the political pressures on union leaders, the wage increase which the membership of the union will accept becomes the one and only bargaining position of the union. It is left to the employer to bring his offer up to the level of the union's position or accept a strike.

Finally the model divides the causes of stoppages into three categories - wage increases, non-wage items such as fringes and union function, and institutional reasons such as union recognition and grievances. The first two categories can be explained by the model, however the third category poses problems. In fact, it is inferred that there is some difficulty in determining a monetary equivalent for institutional strikes.

According to Shalev, "over the last few decades only about half of all strikes in the United States have been broadly concerned with the wage issue, or have occurred during the negotiation of a contract."<sup>79</sup> This raises questions about the applicability of the model to about 50 percent of the industrial conflicts that it is supposed to explain. In discussing the Ashenfelter and Johnson model with reference to strikes in Britain (which has a markedly different system of industrial relations than the United States), Pencavel pointed out that: Most strikes in the United Kingdom are:

described as unofficial . . . the senior officials away from the branch organization are often unaware of the discontent among their members. If the Ashenfelter-Johnson model is to have any meaning in the British context, the leadership position must be interpreted as being occupied either by the branch official, or more especially, by the shop steward organizations at the place of work.<sup>80</sup>

There is little doubt that the model presented by Ashenfelter and Johnson using economic analysis in the study of industrial conflict marked a watershed in this area especially with the use of multiple regression techniques.

But we should also recognize that despite the sensitivity of multiple regression analysis, industrial conflict arises out of a human decision making process which involves the interpretation of phenomena in terms of their political, economic and social utility at a specific point in time. It was Routh who put forward the argument that the "economic paradigm is seriously flawed by its assumptions that man reacts in a determinate way to economic stimuli, and that statistical series can therefore be regarded as an adequate representation of reality."<sup>81</sup>

We are not arguing for a dismissal of any attempt at applying the Ashenfelter and Johnson model to countries with industrial relations systems which differ from that in the United States. Nevertheless using the Ashenfelter and Johnson model for example, in the countries covered by this study would have to take account of the differences in the market orientations of U.S. industrial relations. By this we mean a high level of dependence on the market for their welfare among U.S. workers, than for example in western European countries. Trade unions in the latter countries are more centralized, with a broader base and access to non-market resources. The unions are usually affiliated to a political party, and are therefore able to achieve certain goals due to the close links between the party and the union.

The three previous approaches upon which we have focussed, emphasized the measurement of workers' attitudes and desires, assuming that these were used to foster industrial conflict.

But in addition to desires and attitudes, it is necessary to have the ability to call a strike with a reasonable chance of success. In this connection we need to look at the work of Shorter and Tilly as the principal source for the political-organizational model.

### Political-Organizational Approach

We now turn to a "new" approach to the study of industrial conflict which utilizes a broad socio-political perspective, based upon the work of Shorter and Tilly.<sup>82</sup> Workers' demands can generally be said to emphasize two objectives, for the purposes of broad clarifications: a political and/or an economic objective.

However, it is difficult to clearly separate these two objectives. Political demands will usually be directed toward a public authority, governmental, quasi-governmental, or legislative body; while economic objectives will be concentrated on employers or their organizations. These demands are not mutually exclusive, a strike may be called because of a wage demand, but it could also result in a change of government in certain instances. It would be useful if we could classify agreements neatly under the headings of "economic" or "political," but this is not easily done. Workers who have full citizenship rights will not accept inadequate wages, or poor working conditions for any length of time. Recent analyses on industrial conflict have shown an interest in working class

political influence. Once the working class acquires "citizenship rights" (the right to vote, trade union membership, etc.) they will use that power to change conditions of employment. Likewise the demand for political representation becomes urgent. When citizenship rights have been denied, or stifled, the trend has been for industrial conflict to take on political overtones. This coincides with the views of Shorter and Tilly who see the strike as:

an instrument of working class political action  
 . . . not so much as real tests of economic strength,  
 as displays of political energy and resoluteness.<sup>83</sup>

In many of the newly developing countries, in the post WWII period, the advancement of the working class was seen as being tied to national liberation, and the labor movement became a part of the struggle for freedom from colonial rule. This of course led to strong involvement in political action by the trade unions, and the countries included in this study are no exception. This development led Walter Galenson to conclude that:

The outlook for non-political unionism in the newly developing countries is not bright. We may expect, rather, a highly political form of unionism, with a radical ideology. Indeed so strong is the presumption that this will be the prevailing pattern that, where it is absent, we may draw the conclusion that unionism is, in fact, subordinated to the employer, or to the state, i.e. that we are dealing either with company unionism, or a labor front.<sup>84</sup>

To a significant extent the forecast by Galenson has been accurate and we have seen highly politicized trade union development in many third world countries. But the tendency



towards such a development was strongest at the time when many of these third world countries were seeking to attain independence. Today in many African and Asian countries, political activity by trade unions is somewhat circumscribed. In Latin America and the Caribbean, there are less restrictions, and trade unions still undertake significant political activity.

Shorter and Tilly also agree that in the post war period there has been a new level in the politics of industrial conflict:

Where the strike rate soared, revolutionary unionism acquired new organization resources in the drive for political representation. Where the strike rate fell, workers had been accepted into the polity, and now needed no longer use strikes as a means of pressing political demands.<sup>85</sup>

However, we need to determine what is the effect of being "accepted into the polity" especially in the developing countries. Political unionism served a very effective role in winning political independence in many third world countries. With independence there is an emphasis on economic development and rapid industrialization, and the role of the government appears to be on a collision course with the generally accepted functions of a trade union.

These countries rely heavily upon the foreign sector, and low wages are considered to be one of the principal incentives which lure foreign firms to locate in third world countries. Trade unions on the other hand are expected to seek improved wages and conditions of employment for their members.

In many instances the government has imposed wage restraints of some kind, abolished the unions, or have placed them under government control. Indeed some economists have emphasized that there is a contradiction between a policy of economic development, and demands by the unions for increased wages and extensive social legislation. Baur and Yamey (1957),<sup>86</sup> Lewis (1954),<sup>87</sup> and Dunlop (1958)<sup>88</sup> have argued that demands for high wages and increased social legislation leads to increased total consumption, which reduces savings, and in turn adversely affects the surplus available for reinvestment in further capital development in the economy. They advise that there should be a policy of wage restraint, very limited social legislation, and some degree of government control over trade union activity.

Shorter and Tilly's analysis would appear to fit the above scenario. After the workers have won political representation, they point out that:

Rather than abandoning extra-parliamentary action, as has been the case in northern Europe, British workers have turned<sup>89</sup> to shop floor issues and away from national ones.

It is this turn to shop floor issues which results in activity to control the trade unions in some developing countries. But according to Shorter and Tilly, industrial conflict is basically political, and strikes reflect and respond to shifts in the locus of political power. They found that:

. . . since the 1890s great concentrations of conflict have surged up at critical junctures in France's political history. . . . accumulations of strikes and disturbances eventuate when it becomes apparent to the working classes as a whole that a point of critical importance for their own interest is at hand in the nation's political life.

The crux of this discussion is not a direct relationship between industrial conflict and political crisis, but rather collective action arising out of a well organized body of workers. The implication is that the political dimension of the strike will expand as the labor movement becomes more nationalist in ideology. We therefore need to pay special attention to the development of industrial conflict, and whether this has a relationship with the development of a trade union organization.

Shorter and Tilly have determined that the nature of the job and the technology it utilizes has a direct relationship with the workers' ability to develop a strong, well organized representative body. The primary basis for the ability to forge such an organization is explained as follows:

. . . we have tried to show how technology affects worker organization both by shaping the mentalities of the worker, and by structuring the industrial environment in which they work. . . . yet if we have to say what matters most over the years or across industries<sup>91</sup> (for union development) we would say, technology.

Earlier in this review we discussed the findings of Kerr and Siegel, that community structures had a bearing on the propensity for strike proneness. David Lockwood in a study on English workers also suggested that strike behavior is

a function of the community structure and the type of work organization.<sup>92</sup> Shorter and Tilly emphasized that industrial technology influences the form of worker organization, and the latter influences the form and frequency of strikes. In support of these assumptions, they develop a typology of industrial technologies (artisanal, proletarian, white collar, and science sector workers), and associate each sector with a form of industrial conflict.<sup>93</sup> However, while the typology supports the assumptions put forward by Shorter and Tilly, a clear correlation has not been established between strikes occurring simultaneously in different industries, and technological change taking place in those industries.

The findings of Shorter and Tilly have an important bearing on this study, due to the emphasis placed upon worker's organizational strength in the examination of industrial conflict. In addition, there is the inclusion of political processes in their discussion of collective action establishing the focus upon strikes as political phenomena, which require organization for collective action. Once established, the workers become "involved in the struggle for political power and make the strike available as a political weapon."<sup>94</sup> They see industrial conflict as basically political, and intimately linked to broader societal struggles for power.

Their analysis runs parallel to developments in the Caribbean in the 1930s and 1940s. More liberal trade union laws had been established allowing for the development of trade unionism. With the grant of adult suffrage, it was

not long before there would be a shift in the locus of political influence, and power, due to the support of the trade union movement. The political process then became intertwined with strikes as the working class began to demonstrate the strength of their political activity.

From the studies reviewed above it is felt that the model developed by Shorter and Tilly best allows for examining the influence of political and organizational variables, which are pertinent to industrial conflict in the countries covered by this study.

#### Theories of the Labor Movement

The characteristics of the trade union movement in a country or region generally reflects an array of social, economic, and political variables, in addition to the historical and traditional background from which the movement originated. With this in mind we expect that there will be diversity among national labor movements. Where there is such diversity, as social scientists it is necessary to explain the reasons for the differences.

A theory of the labor movement is an attempt to give an ordered explanation to account for the origin and behavior of the movement. One reason for developing such theories is that they may be useful in predicting the behavior and policies which we observe occurring in the labor movement from time to time. However, with these good intentions in

mind Hugh Clegg has some words of wisdom for the enthusiastic theorist:

. . . at a time when trade unions are regarded as one of the most powerful forces shaping our society and determining our future - at least in democratic countries - there exists no systematic theory of trade union behavior as it exists today.<sup>95</sup>

Clegg argued that there are existing generalizations, views and opinions regarding trade unions, but they are not acceptable as explanations of trade union behavior because:

. . . they take little or no account of the immense variety of trade unionism, and a hypothesis which cannot explain differences in trade union behavior is not a theory of trade unionism.<sup>96</sup>

One of the earliest attempts to deal with developing a theory of trade unionism was by the economist Lugo Brentano. He suggested that trade unions were the successors to the old Gilds (guilds) and that their objectives, as those of the old craft guilds, was the maintenance of an entire system of order and a standard of life which was being undermined by the growing number of factory owners. Brentano was writing in the 1860s, a time when most of the unions in England consisted of skilled men, thus his claim to their similarity to the old craft guilds.

The Webbs (Sydney [later Lord Passfield] and Beatrice Webb), followed Brentano in the discussion of the origins and theories of the labor movement. In their view a trade union was a continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their

working lives. Trade unionism as they saw it at that early stage was "not merely an incident of the present phase of capitalist industry, but has a permanent function to fulfill in the democratic state."<sup>97</sup>

They disagreed with Brentano's view about the origin of the labor movement, positing instead that its origins resulted from the separation of the classes in the late 17th century when the property-less wage earners appeared on the scene.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Webbs' contribution to the theory of trade unionism revolves around their concepts of the trade union movement. The following themes arise out of their analysis:

1. the need for justice and the development of a social order predicated upon the rule making process;
2. a clear differentiation between the function and structure of the union;
3. the differences between the regulatory processes as established in the various trade union organizations;
4. the application of the Common Rule and its ramifications;
5. the strength of democracy in society; and
6. the replacement of collective bargaining by a method of legal enactment.

In the light of these perspectives it is clear that the Webbs were establishing the foundations upon which much of the later analysis of trade unionism would be carried out. However there has been some criticism of their analysis.

Allan Flanders felt that their study did not give sufficient emphasis to the political characteristics and the social achievements of trade unions.<sup>98</sup> Dunlop claimed that what the Webbs called their "theory of trade unionism" would ordinarily be called a theory of the development of the labor movement, it was more an economic rationalization for the establishment of minimum standards.<sup>99</sup>

Another of the pioneers in seeking to develop a theory of trade unionism was Selig Perlman. He pointed to three principal factors which could account for the differences in the character of the labor movement in different parts of the world. The first was the demonstrated capacity of the capitalist group to survive as a ruling group, and their ability to convince the masses of the legitimacy of their rule. Second was the influence of the intellectuals over the labor movement and society at large; and third, the struggle of the unions to ration job opportunities among their members.<sup>100</sup> Perlman gave primacy to the need for job consciousness in the labor movement, and took the intellectuals to task. He stated that:

Trade unionism which is essentially pragmatic, struggles not only against the employers for an enlarged opportunity measured in income, security, and liberty in the shop and industry but struggles also whether consciously or unconsciously, actively or passively, against the intellectual who would frame its programs and shape its policies.<sup>101</sup>

The problem with intellectuals according to Perlman was their narrow view of labor "as an abstract mass and the



individual reduced to a mere mathematical point."<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately Perlman's critics have suggested that his theories were nothing more than interlocking definitions, and that his explanations of the role of the intellectual in the European labor movement was faulty.<sup>103</sup> In a more recent study Dunlop dealt with Perlman's view of the intellectual's role in trade unionism and pointed out that:

Labor history cannot deny a truly pivotal part to the intellectual. The character of the labor movement in any particular country must depend on the particular combination of the role of the intellectual, the resistance of capitalism, and the development of job consciousness.<sup>104</sup>

The early excursions into the development of a theory of the labor movement did not necessarily lead to formal theory based upon empirical research and the use of multivariate analysis. However, the groundwork for future research into this area of the broad field of labor and industrial relations had been established.

As we review the work of some of the contemporary scholars of trade unionism it is interesting to note the remarks of John T. Dunlop:

Facts have outrun ideas. Integrating theory has lagged far behind expanding experience. The many worlds of industrial relations have been changing more rapidly than ideas to interpret, to explain, and to relate them.<sup>105</sup>

According to Dunlop the literature on theories of the labor movement pose four questions:

1. How is one to account for the origin or emergence of labor organizations? . . . why have some workers organized and others have not?

2. What explains the pattern of growth and development of labor organizations? . . . since there is great diversity in the patterns of development, any theory of the labor movement must account for these differences.
3. What are the ultimate goals of the labor movement?
4. Why do individual workers join labor organizations?<sup>106</sup>

If there is a watershed between the emergence of contemporary theories of trade unionism and the approach of people like the Webbs, it is to be found in Dunlop's treatise "Industrial Relations Systems."<sup>107</sup> In fact Dunlop extended the scope of theorizing about trade unions by placing them within the relationships found in the overall industrial relations system.

Dunlop's model emphasized the process of rule making at the workplace (the problem of order), modes of organization and administration. He stated that an industrial relations system may be understood as:

. . . comprising actors, contexts, an ideology which binds the system together and a body of rules created to govern the actors in the workplace and work community.<sup>108</sup>

There is little doubt that the importance of Dunlop's study was recognized by scholars in the field. Flanders was sufficiently interested in the focus of rule making that he applied it in his discussion of collective bargaining.<sup>109</sup> Walker on the other hand saw the need for expansion of Dunlop's "web of rules" and he turned the discussion of industrial

relations around with the concept that its principal concern is the development of procedural and substantive rules.

However, while Dunlop's work has been acclaimed, there has also been substantial criticism of parts of his thesis. Blain and Gennard argued that his model did not provide testable hypotheses, although they later concluded that if the model was modified, then the specified variables could be subjected to empirical testing.<sup>110</sup>

The question which may now be asked is, are these studies relevant to an analysis of industrial conflict in developing countries? The answer is basically in the affirmative. Unions in the western industrialized democracies were formed in reaction to, or as a result of capitalist development. But trade unionism as we know it today really developed since the latter half of the nineteenth century. In many of these countries at the time trade unionism was initiated there was an absence of certain basic rights, mainly adult suffrage, and the right to join trade unions, and collective bargaining. European unions therefore linked themselves to a labor or socialist party in order to gain protection at the workplace, and also citizenship rights.

On the other hand in the United States the opposite was true. Citizenship rights had long been granted to white adult males, therefore the trade unions saw no need to form or link themselves to political parties to gain such rights. Instead they stressed bread and butter issues, while management resisted the unions with the support of the judicial system.

It was not until 1935 with the passage of the Wagner Act, that trade unions attained legal status and the right to collective bargaining.

As we look at the countries included in this study we need to determine the characteristics which were pertinent in the formative years of the trade union movement. The primary distinguishing feature was of course their colonial status and the enormous influence of the European colonizing power. In the case of one territory, Puerto Rico, there was both European and United States influence. Similar to the situation in 19th century Europe, these colonies suffered from an absence of basic citizenship rights, in addition to their non-independent status as colonial territories. Trade unions (despite their illegal status) were formed with a dual purpose, first out of concern for the worker's plight, and secondly in an attempt to influence change in the constitutional status of the colonies.

Once legislative reforms removed the stigma of illegality from the trade union movement, unions took on a highly politicized role. They were at the forefront in the pre-independence struggles in these countries, while seeking changes of a political, social, and economic nature. From this point of view there are some similarities with the early trade union movement in Europe. We are reminded that after the great dock strike of 1899 in Britain, it was Ben Tillett the leader of the strike who called for "a distinctive party with laborism its religion

and principle, to bring about the common clannishness to enable us to turn the vote at election times."<sup>111</sup>

However, while we find that in many of the now industrialized western nations trade unionism developed as a response to the capitalist mode of production, in the countries included in this study, trade unionism, and political and economic modernization proceeded simultaneously.

The relevance of the literature reviewed in this chapter to the countries covered by this study arises more as methodological guidelines for the study of industrial conflict. Whether or not the methodology can be utilized depends upon the availability of data comparable to that in the industrialized nations, and it is only quite recently that many of these countries have begun to publish these data on a regular basis. This of course may be one reason why many studies on trade unionism in developing countries have focussed more on the industrial relations structure, than upon the wider political and social context of union development and industrial conflict.

#### Trade Unions: Functions and Organization

Trade unionism may be called a social movement of laboring people which is found in most industrialized societies. In many countries a significant proportion of the working population is organized. For example in Britain, Australia, Sweden, and Belgium more than 50 percent of the working population

is organized, while in the United States trade union membership is less than 25 percent of the working population. But it is necessary to point out that the membership rate may be a deceiving measure of the unions effectiveness. Unions usually have bargaining rights for both the unionized and non-unionized workers in a factory or industry. This means that the union affects wages and working conditions for a much larger group of workers than indicated by its membership.

It was not until the middle of the 19th century that stable trade unions were established on a national scale. In Britain the "new model unions" were established in the 1850s, while in the United States although trade unionism had taken an early hold on the American worker, it was with the founding of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1886 that some stability was brought to the movement. Trade unions as organizations determine certain conventional norms of behavior which are imposed upon their membership. Likewise there are certain conventional modes of behavior which management is expected to follow (in the absence of legislated rules of procedure), and deviations are usually dealt with through the grievance procedure in the contract, or the strike.

Trade unions as organizations of working people have their base in industrial activity, but they are as much a part of the general social milieu as any other social organization. However the union's primary concern is with the welfare of the worker, and some unions which have failed to make that concern their primary goal (in the western

democracies) have also been unable to become successful organizations. If the union is an organization whose primary goal is the improvement of living conditions of its members, then its primary means of achieving that goal is through negotiations with the employers of its members. Those negotiations will include better wages, working hours, and conditions of employment.

Where the union fails to obtain satisfactory concessions from the employer through the negotiating process, it may use other means in order to achieve its goals. In many countries, the trade union movement has become involved in politics, and one of the reasons why unions have become highly politicized, is due to the necessity to obtain through the legislative process that which they could not obtain through negotiation with management.

The trade union movement uses the collective endeavor of its membership in their separate unions, and among unions acting in cooperation to bring about desired change for the membership. In addition the movement may also seek to achieve alteration in the prevailing economic, social, and political systems, thus acting as change agents.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) mission to study the trade union situation in the United States of America in 1959 reported that among union leaders, there was an almost total absence of concern about the bases of the American economic and social system. In comparison to trade unions in

Europe and in other areas of the world, American trade unions do not appear to advocate, or even consider changes in the system within which they operate.<sup>112</sup>

In evidence before the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers Associations in Britain, the British Trade Union Congress saw the objectives of trade unions as follows:

1. improved terms of employment
2. improved physical environment at work
3. full employment and national prosperity
4. security of employment and income
5. improved social security
6. fair shares in national income and wealth
7. industrial democracy
8. a voice in government
9. improved public and social services
10. public control and planning of industry

A number of these objectives clearly have nothing to do with bargaining between trade unions and employers. This gives us strong indications that in some countries the trade union movement sees itself as a pressure group seeking not only "more" as the late George Meany said, but overall societal changes by influencing government policies. Yet it is interesting to note that in the western countries there is no example in which the trade union itself acts as a political party, despite clear indications of a desire for political activity on the part of many unions. But in Europe the



connections between the trade union movement and political parties are a lot closer than for example in the United States.

According to Galenson, trade unions in the developing world are likely to be:

Highly political and imbued with radical ideology.  
 . . . If properly handled, they perform the vital function of channeling worker protest into socially useful forms, and help prevent the subversion of democracy.<sup>113</sup>

In many instances the trade union in a developing society is a stabilizing force, and one which may influence the changes taking place in that society. We find that many of the ruling political parties, especially in the newly developing countries arose out of the trade union movement. This results in the government harboring fears about the motives of the unions, and in fact, in some instances the unions have been dominated by the government, and are used as instruments for carrying out its policies. This duality of function i.e. furthering the members' interests on the one hand and aiding in the development effort and nation building on the other hand, may not appear quite reconcilable.

We need to recognize that in many of the developing nations (especially those achieving independence within the last thirty years) there is almost an absence of institutions and resources to ensure reasonable standards of living for the majority of the people. Under these conditions the government pressed their growth oriented development effort, and one of the results was that the state became the biggest

single employer, frequently employing almost half of the wage earning workforce. As a result of these policies, government felt that the trade union movement should be unified and supportive of its policies, and the best way to achieve this was to make the movement part and parcel of the governmental machinery. The late President Nkrumah of Ghana, a strong proponent of this view said "seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added unto it."<sup>114</sup>

Shortly after independence many governments (e.g. former British colonies in Africa) decided that they had to reform the industrial relations system, and centralize the trade union movement, in order to reduce or eliminate their potential for creating problems for the new governments. Measures were also taken to limit the extent of trade union action by increased governmental intervention in the collective bargaining process.

Despite the attempts at governmental domination of the trade union movement in many developing countries, conflict has not been eliminated. Conflicts arise between governmental ideology, the economic interests of labor, and management. Many unions still see their principal role as responsibility for the economic needs of their membership, although the way these needs are satisfied will be affected mainly by the political reality facing the union movement in a particular country.

## CHAPTER TWO: FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Clark Kerr, Labor and Management in Industrial Society, New York: Doubleday, 1964, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup>Ralf Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959, pp. 235-240.

<sup>3</sup>V. L. Allen, Militant Trade Unionism, London: Merlin P., 1966.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Perrow, Complex Organizations, Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1979, pp. 40-41.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>6</sup>See Robert Michels, Political Parties, New York: Collier Books, 1962, pp. 33-56.

<sup>7</sup>Jack Barbash, "Collective Bargaining and the Theory of Conflict," British Journal of Industrial Relations. Vol. XVIII, March 1980.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>9</sup>John T. Dunlop, Industrial Relations Systems, New York: Holt, 1958, p. 383.

<sup>10</sup>Douglas A. Hibbs, Jr., "Industrial Conflict in Advanced Industrial Societies," APSR, Vol. 70 (4), p. 1033.

<sup>11</sup>Lewis A. Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956, pp. 137 & 154.

<sup>12</sup>See Joseph C. Rayback, A History of American Labor, New York: Free Press, 1966, pp. 54-184.

<sup>13</sup>For a discussion of constitutional management see F. Harbison and C. Myers, Management in the Industrial World: An International Analysis, New York: McGraw Hill, 1959.

<sup>14</sup>See Joseph G. Rayback, Ibid., pp. 54-184.

<sup>15</sup>Walter Galenson, The Turning Point for American Labor, Reprint No. 120. Berkeley: Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 1959, p. 117.

<sup>16</sup>See Neil J. Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959.

<sup>17</sup>H. B. Davis, "The Theory of Union Growth" in W. E. J. McCarthy (ed.), Trade Unions, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972, pp. 219-220.

<sup>18</sup>See V. L. Allen, "Trade Unions: An Analytical Framework" in B. Barrett, E. Rhodes, J. Beishon, (eds.), Industrial Relations in the Wider Society, London: Collier-Macmillan, 1975.

<sup>19</sup>Ivo K. Feierabend, Rosalind L. Feierabend and Betty A. Nesvold, "Social Change and Political Violence: Cross National Patterns" in Jason L. Finkle and Richard W. Gable (eds.) Political Development and Social Change, New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1971, p. 569.

<sup>20</sup>A Circular Dispatch from Lord Passfield (formerly Sydney Webb) the Colonial Secretary was sent to Colonial Governments in 1930 calling for steps to "smooth the passage of labor organizations as they emerge into constitutional channels." At the time this Circular was seen as a giant step forward for colonial social policy by encouraging the development of trade unions in the colonies. See also B. C. Roberts, Labor in the Tropical Territories of the Commonwealth, London: G. Bell, 1964, p. xv.

<sup>21</sup>Cornelis C. H. Goslinga, A Short History of the Netherlands Antilles and Surinam, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979, p. 168.

<sup>22</sup>Clark Kerr, F. H. Harbison, J. T. Dunlop and C. M. Myers, Industrialism and Industrial Man: The Problems of Labor and Management in Economic Growth, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1960, p. 290.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>24</sup>Ralf Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959.

<sup>25</sup>See Ain Hass and Steven Stack, "Economic Development and Strikes: A Comparative Analysis." The Sociological Quarterly, 24 (Winter 1983), pp. 43-58.

<sup>26</sup>See John T. Dunlop, Industrial Relations Systems, New York: Holt, 1958.

<sup>27</sup>See Ran Chermish, "Strike Proneness and Characteristics of Industrial Relations Systems at the Organizational Level: A Discriminant Analysis," Journal of Management Studies 19 (4), 1982, p. 413.

<sup>28</sup>See respectively A. M. Ross and P. Hartman, Changing Patterns of Industrial Conflict, New York: Wiley, 1960; C. Kerr and A. Siegel, "The Inter-Industry Propensity to Strike: An International Comparison" in A. Kornhauser et al (eds.), Industrial Conflict, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954; J. Shorey, "An Inter-Industry Analysis of Strike Frequency," Economica, 43, 1976.

<sup>29</sup>See A. Gouldner, Wildcat Strikes, New York: Harper, 1965; and B. Karsh, Diary of a Strike, Carbondale, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1958.

<sup>30</sup>John E. Kelly and Nigel Nicholson, "The Causation of Strikes: A Review of Theoretical Approaches and the Potential Contribution of Social Psychology" Human Relations, 33, No. 12, 1980, p. 854.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 854-855.

<sup>32</sup>Alex Inkeles, "A Model of the Modern Man: Theoretical and Methodological Issues" in Nancy Hammond, (ed.) Social Science and the New Societies: Problems in Cross Cultural Research and Theory Building, East Lansing: Michigan State University, Social Science Research Bureau, 1973, p. 61.

<sup>33</sup>See Alex Inkeles and David H. Smith, Becoming Modern: Individual Change in Six Developing Countries, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup>See Alex Inkeles, "The Role of Occupational Experience," C. S., Brembeck and J. Thompson (eds.), New Strategies for Educational Development, Lexington, Mass: D. C. Heath, 1973, p. 21.

<sup>35</sup>See Hugh Clegg, The System of Industrial Relations in Great Britain, Oxford: Blackwell, 1970, pp. 314-350.

<sup>36</sup>Clark Kerr et al, "The Labor Problem in Economic Development," International Labor Review, LXXII, (1955), p. 232.

<sup>37</sup>See Sydney Webb and Beatrice Webb, Industrial Democracy, London: Longmans, 1897, pp. 220-221.

<sup>38</sup>Ralf Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959, p. 257.

<sup>39</sup>S. M. Lipset, "Political Sociology" in R. K. Merton et al, Sociology Today, New York: Basic Books, 1959, p. 113.

<sup>40</sup>Arthur Kornhauser, R. Dubin, and A. M. Ross (eds.), Industrial Conflict, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954, p. 8.

<sup>41</sup>A. M. Ross and P. T. Hartman, Changing Patterns of Industrial Conflict, New York: Wiley, 1960, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 42-59.

<sup>43</sup>J. E. T. Eldridge, Industrial Disputes, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968, p. 40.

<sup>44</sup>Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, "The Shape of Strikes in France, 1830-1960," Comparative Studies in Society and History, 13 (1), 1971, p. 83.

<sup>45</sup>See Michael Shalev, "Industrial Relations Theory and the Comparative Study of Industrial Relations and Industrial Conflict," British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. XVIII (1), 1980.

<sup>46</sup>Charles Tilly, Louise Tilly and Richard Tilly, The Rebellious Century, 1830-1930, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 269.

<sup>47</sup>Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel, "The Inter-Industry Propensity to Strike: An International Comparison," in A. Kornhauser et al (eds.), Industrial Conflict, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954, pp. 189-212.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>49</sup>See K. J. C. Knowles, Strikes: Study in Industrial Conflict, Oxford: Blackwell, 1952.

<sup>50</sup>See J. E. T. Eldridge, Ibid., pp. 38-39.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>52</sup>John M. Howells and R. P. Alexander, "A Strike in the Meat Freezing Industry: Background to Industrial Discontent in New Zealand," Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 21 (3), pp. 418-426.

<sup>53</sup>A. J. Geare, "The Problem of Industrial Unrest: Theories into the Causes of Local Strikes in a New Zealand Meat Freezing Works," Journal of Industrial Relations, 14 (1), pp. 13-22.

<sup>54</sup>Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, Strikes in France, 1830-1968, Cambridge University Press, 1974.

<sup>55</sup>David Snyder, "Industrialization and Industrial Conflict in Italy, 1878-1903." Mimeo, Department of Sociology, University of Michigan, 1970.

<sup>56</sup>David Britt and Omer R. Galle, "Industrial Conflict and Unionization," American Sociological Review, 1972, Vol. 37, p. 47.

<sup>57</sup>Richard Hyman, Strikes, Fontana/Collins, 1977, pp. 67-77.

<sup>58</sup>See D. F. Wilson, Dockers: The Impact of Industrial Change, London: 1972, pp. 44-58.

<sup>59</sup>J. R. Hicks, The Theory of Wages, London: Macmillan, 1966, pp. 146-147.

<sup>60</sup>O. Ashenfelter and G. Johnson, "Bargaining Theory, Trade Unions, and Strike Activity," American Economic Review, LIX (1969), pp. 35-49.

<sup>61</sup>John G. Cross, The Economics of Bargaining, New York: Basic Books, 1969, p. xi.

<sup>62</sup>F. Ray Marshall, Allan M. Cartter, and Allan B. King, Labor Economics, Homewood, ILL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1969, p. 338.

<sup>63</sup>A. Rees, "Industrial Conflict and Business Fluctuations," Journal of Political Economy, 1952, Vol. 60 (5), p. 382.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 382.

<sup>65</sup>See C. H. Grant, The Making of Modern Belize, London: Cambridge University Press, 1976, pp. 285-291.

<sup>66</sup>See Neil Chamberlain, Collective Bargaining, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965.

<sup>67</sup>John R. Hicks, Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>71</sup>Note: This discussion revolves around the analysis on pages 142-144 of Hicks.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>73</sup>Allan M. Cartter and Ray Marshall, Labor Economics: Wages Employment and Wages, Homewood, Ill: Irwin, 1967, pp. 328-335.

<sup>74</sup>Richard E. Walton and Robert B. McKersie, A Behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiations: An Analysis of a Social Interaction System, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965, p. 22.

<sup>75</sup>O. Ashenfelter and G. Johnson, Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>77</sup>See J. R. Hicks, Ibid., pp. 136-158.

<sup>78</sup>Garth Mangum, The Operating Engineers, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1964, pp. 191-192.

<sup>79</sup>Michael Shalev, "Trade Unionism and Economic Analysis: The Case of Industrial Conflict," Journal of Labor Research, Vol. 1 (1), Spring 1980, pp. 145-146.

<sup>80</sup>John H. Pencavel, "An Investigation into Industrial Strike Activity in Britain," in E. W. Evans and S. W. Creigh, Industrial Conflict in Britain, Frank Kass & Co. Ltd., 1977, p. 178.

<sup>81</sup>Guy Routh, Review Article on Incomes Policies, Scottish Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 20 (2), 1973, p. 182.

<sup>82</sup>See Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 343.

<sup>84</sup>Walter Galenson (ed.), Labor and Economic Development, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1959, p. 8.

<sup>85</sup>Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, Ibid., p. 317.

<sup>86</sup>See P. T. Baur and B. S. Yamey, The Economics of Underdeveloped Countries. London: Macmillan 1957.

<sup>87</sup>See W. Arthur Lewis, The Theory of Economic Growth. London, 1955.

<sup>88</sup>See John Dunlop, Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, Ibid., p. 317.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., pp. 344-345.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., pp. 186-187.

<sup>92</sup>David Lockwood, "Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society," Sociological Review, XXV, 1966, pp. 249-267.

<sup>93</sup>Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, Ibid., p. 174.



<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>95</sup>H. A. Clegg, Trade Unionism Under Collective Bargaining, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976, p. 1.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>97</sup>See Sydney and Beatrice Webb, Industrial Democracy, New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1897, p. 823.

<sup>98</sup>See Allan Flanders, Management and Unions: The Theory and Reform of Industrial Relations, London: Faber & Walker, 1970, pp. 215-216.

<sup>99</sup>John Dunlop, Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>100</sup>See Selig Perlman, A Theory of the Labor Movement, New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1966 (Reprint of the 1928 edition), pp. 3-5.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>103</sup>Adolph Sturmthal, "Comments on Selig Perlman," Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. 14 (4), 1957, pp. 483-496.

<sup>104</sup>John T. Dunlop, Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. vi.

<sup>106</sup>John T. Dunlop, Dispute Resolution, Dover, Mass: Auburn House Publishing Co., 1954, p. 53.

<sup>107</sup>See D. Fatchett and W. M. Wittingham, "Trends and Developments in Industrial Relations Theory," Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 7, 1976, p. 50.

<sup>108</sup>John T. Dunlop, Industrial Relations System, p. 7.

<sup>109</sup>See A. Flanders, Management and the Unions, p. 86.

<sup>110</sup>A. N. J. Blain and J. Gennard, "Industrial Relations Theory: A Review," British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 8, 1970, p. 52.

<sup>111</sup>See James Cronin, Industrial Conflict in Modern Britain, London: Croon Helm Ltd., 1979, p. 32.

<sup>112</sup>See International Labor Office (1960), The Trade Union Situation in the United States. Geneva: ILO. Report from an ILO Mission to the United States, March to June 1959.

<sup>113</sup>Walter Galenson (ed.), Labor and Economic Development, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1959, p. 18.

<sup>114</sup>Paul E. Sigmund, Jr. (ed.), The Ideologies of Developing Nations, New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, 1963, p. 5.

## CHAPTER 3

### POLITICAL UNIONISM IN THE CARIBBEAN

#### The Great Depression

Prior to WWII most Caribbean Basin countries included in this study had economies based upon primary production. Sugar cane was generally the most important crop, making sugar the principal export commodity. This almost exclusive dependence on a single commodity (sugar) as the basis of a country's economy has its hazards, due to fluctuation in market prices, technological advances, and subsidization of rival producers (not to mention the vagaries of the weather). The dangers of dependence on sugar in the former British Caribbean colonies became clearly evident with the onset of the depression in the 1930s. As indicated earlier the Oliver Commission in 1930 emphasized the extent of dependence on sugar production in the British Caribbean islands. With the exception of Belize (timber production), Trinidad (oil production), Surinam (bauxite production) all the other countries in this study were vulnerable to any decrease in the price of sugar.

By 1933 the imminent danger had become a reality as the prices for agricultural products fell drastically on the world market. This led to reduced wages and high unemployment throughout the area. Despite the prominence of "king sugar"

the economic and social conditions in these countries did not reflect the fortunes which sugar had created for the plantation owners, many of whom were absentee landlords residing in the metropolitan country. This plantocracy along with a minority of resident whites owned and controlled the majority of the natural resources (fertile agricultural land) in these countries.

Emancipation of the slaves in 1834 gave rise to a peasantry in conjunction with an increase in demand for land. But ownership of the land remained with the British Crown (the government) and the planters. This led to stratification into two classes, the dominant class, i.e. owners of the estates and controllers of the import-export trade, and a dispossessed mass consisting of freed slaves and their descendants. Even today most of the fertile land in these countries is owned by large land owners, and in many instances is still used for sugar cane production. An example of foreign ownership of land is shown in Table 3:1 developed from land ownership patterns in Belize in 1971.

Belize has a total land area of approximately 5.7 million acres of which the government owns 3.3 million acres, and 2.4 million acres are in private ownership. Table 3:1 shows that foreigners owned 93.4 percent of all private land in parcels exceeding 100 acres. The table does not include foreign ownership of parcels of land less than 100 acres in size, since these data were not available. It is also interesting to note that in acreage of more than 100,000 acres,

Table 3:1

Distribution of Freehold Land by Size of  
Holdings and Degree of Foreign Ownership,  
December 1971

Size of Holdings in Acres	Owners		Distribution Estimated		Owners		Foreign Ownership Estimated Acreage	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% of acreage per category
0 - 20	2,702	75	23,871	1	na	na	na	na
21 - 100	586	16	28,260		na	na	na	na
101 - 1000	215	6	82,615	4	94	42,084	51	51
1001 - 10000	75	2	228,746	10	60	190,214	83	83
10001 - 25000	32	1	459,724	19	32	459,724	100	100
25001 - 50000	4		139,894	6	4	139,894	100	100
50001 - 100000	4		293,567	12	3	217,279	70	70
over 100000 (Belize Estate and Produce Co. Ltd. 994,226)	2		1,133,144	48	2	1,133,144	100	100
TOTAL	3,620	100	2,389,821	100	195	2,182,339		

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Source: Nigel Bolland and Assad Shoman, Land in Belize 1765-1871. Kingston, Jamaica:  
Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, 1977,  
p. 105.

one company, the Belize Estate and Produce Company owns 994,626 acres, almost half of all privately owned land in Belize.

Andre Gunder Frank's comments on the latifundias of Brazil are also relevant to the situation in Belize. He states that:

The principal advantage of large land ownership, then, is not that it permits the latifundista to produce, which he doesn't, but that his ownership of a necessary resource allows him to interpose himself as a merchant and financier between the real producers and the large financial and marketing monopolies. Latifundista ownership is often little more than an institutional means of guaranteeing to the owner the supply of commodities necessary for his real economic activity - speculation.<sup>1</sup>

Beckford tends to concur with Gunder Frank according to the following statement:

While emancipation meant that the white planters could no longer own African people as slaves, they still owned the land and therefore held the key to the survival of the ex-slaves as free and independent producers. To ensure a supply of labor to the estates, every effort was made to prevent the ex-slaves from getting land.<sup>2</sup>

He goes on to explain that the worker was now free as any other proletarian, freed of the ownership of land or any other means of production. Although he owned himself, he was free to starve, or sell his labor cheaply to the capitalist planter. "Plantation capitalism deliberately created a surplus labor situation to keep wages at the minimum subsistence level of survival."<sup>3</sup>

The land tenure situation as described above for Belize was typical of the other countries in this study. But this was only one aspect of the overall economic and social decline

in these countries. Crown colony rule (described in Chapter 1) caused resentment in most of the British colonies, since the situation gave the majority of the citizens no outlet to redress their grievances. Unemployment was high, housing conditions were deplorable, as were health facilities, and there was almost complete absence of even rudimentary social services.

During WWI Britain's supply of beet sugar from the European continent was cut off and this resulted in a rise in price for West Indian sugar. This stimulated sugar cane production, not only in the Caribbean but also in other countries. At the end of the war the British began subsidizing their domestic beet sugar production, resulting in an oversupply of sugar, and a substantial fall in its price. This seriously affected the price of sugar from the Caribbean during the late 1920s, i.e. the years leading up to the Great Depression.

At this point according to the late Norman Manley, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, "The common man, alive to these conditions, would no longer endure them, and was prepared to raise hell in his own way to call attention to his wrong."<sup>4</sup> This was the understatement of the century, and during the world wide depression of the thirties the Caribbean was the locus of general strikes, demonstrations, riots, and violence.

In 1935 there was a sitdown strike and riots by Trinidad oil workers, followed by a hunger strike. There was a general strike of agricultural workers in St. Kitts, while in Jamaica

longshoremen went on strike as did their counterparts in St. Lucia. In Guyana there were riots at various sugar estates. Rioting also took place at Kingstown and Camden Park in St. Vincent in October of 1935. While 1936 was relatively quiet, by mid 1937 rioting occurred again in Trinidad, and Barbados, the latter resulting in fourteen persons being killed. Strikes also occurred in Jamaica, Guyana, and Trinidad. The disturbances in Jamaica resulted in forty-six persons being killed, over four hundred injured and several thousands being arrested. Again between January and May 1938 there were further strikes by sugar workers, wharf laborers, road construction gangs, and street cleaners. The Governor of the island declared a state of emergency, but another eight persons were killed and some two hundred injured.<sup>5</sup>

Upon examining the disturbances of 1935 to 1938 in the former British Caribbean territories, we find that the external impact of the disturbances in 1937 and 1938 was greater than that of 1935. The former only resulted in a number of questions being raised in the Parliament of Great Britain. Following the 1937 disturbances, questions were raised in Parliament touching on the role of trade unions in the colonies, development of labor, and minimum wage legislation.<sup>6</sup> The questions were really intended to bring the attention of the House to the necessity for an improvement in colonial labor relations.

Prominent among a group of Labor MPs who were raising questions on West Indian labor matters was Arthur Creech Jones, who had shown considerable interest in colonial problems.



Of course many MPs were spokesmen for various lobby groups based in the metropolitan area. It was well known that Creech Jones had ties to the International African Service Bureau, an organization interested in African and West Indian problems, comprising residents of the colonies living in London.

However, there was a more important aspect to these disturbances. In 1938 Europe was a continent on the brink of war and it would not be long before Britain would declare war on Germany, and witness the German invasion of France, Holland and Belgium, the former two countries also having colonies in the Caribbean Basin. The British could not afford to tolerate unrest in their West Indian colonies at a time when colonial subjects would be expected to "rally to the defense of the motherland."

The riots in Trinidad were a cause for concern by British officials, since much of the violence arose from discontent among oilfield workers in the island. With the uncertain situation in Europe, Trinidad would be a reliable source for oil supplies in the event of war in Europe.<sup>7</sup> While these debates on labor matters continued in the House of Parliament, Arthur Creech Jones was pointing out that the French islands enjoyed adult suffrage, but only one in nineteen Jamaicans, and one in fifteen Trinidadians had the right to vote.<sup>8</sup>

As the labor pressure in Parliament continued, the Colonial office became quite sensitive to the criticisms and decided to take some concrete action. Mini-commissions had already been appointed to inquire into the causes of the

disturbances in the various territories. Ironically it was the publication of the reports of the Barbados and Trinidad Commission of Inquiry in December 1937 and February 1938, respectively, which prompted the call for a general inquiry into conditions in the British West Indies. Those reports indicated that the problems in the West Indies were more complex than sporadic uncontrolled industrial unrest, which was implicit in the stand taken by the Colonial Office.<sup>9</sup>

The British Trade Union Congress (BTUC) also showed substantial interest in matters affecting workers in the Caribbean colonies, particularly labor issues. This interest goes back to the end of WWI when along with the British Labor Party, the Party's Colonial Affairs Committee was formed in 1920. With the extensive coverage given to the riots of 1935 - 1938 the BTUC established an advisory committee on colonial problems. Members included Dr. Drummond Shiels, former Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office during the second Labor Government (1929-1931), and Arthur Creech Jones who was to become Secretary of State for the Colonies in the third Labor Government. The committee's main purpose was to influence colonial policy towards improving the standard of living for colonial peoples, and of course the spread of the trade union philosophy in the colonies.

With the incessant criticism of British colonial policy in the Caribbean, especially in the area of industrial relations, the Colonial Office made a bold step. In 1938 it created a post of Labor Advisor to the Secretary of State

and appointed Major (later Sir Granville) Orde Browne as the first Labor Advisor. Browne had experience in Africa, serving as the head of the first Tanganyika (now Tanzania) Labor Department. He also investigated labor problems in Northern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in the late 1920s.

His first assignment as Labor Advisor was to examine labor conditions in the West Indies which he visited from September 1938 to April 1939. In his report Major Orde Browne was extremely critical of the social and economic conditions he had observed in the British Caribbean colonies. He found:

. . . housing deplorable, overcrowding general, sanitation frequently absent, tuberculosis, malaria and venereal diseases prevalent, and cleanliness despite creditable attempts about impossible to achieve. Wages undeniably low . . . so many people intermittently employed.<sup>10</sup>

The most significant aspect of his report was his recommendation that:

. . . all the British Caribbean territories needed responsible trade unions, Departments of Labor with facilities for compiling statistics on employment, conciliation boards, workmen's compensation schemes, labor legislation, and collective bargaining.<sup>11</sup>

The Labor Government of 1929 had clearly indicated the importance it attached to dealing with colonial problems with the appointment of Lord Passfield (Sydney Webb) to the post of Secretary of State for the Colonies and Dr. Drummond Shiels as his Parliamentary Under-Secretary (the latter was a member of the BTUC committee on colonial problems).

In September 1930, a Circular Dispatch had been sent out to all British colonial governments indicating that trade union legislation should be passed incorporating the principles of section 2 and 3 of the 1871 British Trade Union Act. These sections exempted trade unions from liability to prosecution or civil action on charges that their objectives were in restraint of trade. In those instances where trade unions were already established, existing legislation should be reviewed and expanded if necessary. Actually, this dispatch marked a significant turning point in the development of trade unionism in the colonial territories of the British Commonwealth.

With the fall of the Labor Government in 1931, this policy remained in effect, but there was very little emphasis on its implementation. It was not until 1935 and the appointment of Malcolm MacDonald as Secretary of State in the new Labor Government that the evolution of a colonial labor policy continued. A further dispatch was sent out by Secretary MacDonald urging that existing labor legislation be reviewed and that the administrative machinery be established for enforcing such legislation.

It was under the MacDonald stewardship at the Colonial Offices that a colonial labor policy was firmly established. But it was also about this time that the labor disturbances in the West Indies began to occur, and no doubt this policy was designed to indicate the concern of the Colonial Office regarding those events and the conditions which brought them

about. In retrospect the Orde Browne Report was used to support the overt emphasis being given by the Colonial Office to establish a policy for the improvement of labor and social conditions in colonies where the colonial governments were substantially less than enthusiastic about the implementation of such a policy.

The findings of the Orde Browne Report, its depressing analysis of the conditions in the Caribbean colonies, along with continuing pressure in Parliament led the government to announce the appointment of a Royal Commission to the West Indies. But it is important to examine other intervening factors which led to the appointment of the Royal Commission.

At the end of WWI Germany and Italy demanded the return of their colonies seized by the allied powers. This request had been denied due to the repressive nature of the government in the German and Italian colonies. Two international organizations had also been created since the war. The Permanent Mandates Commission and the International Labor Organization (ILO) were organizations which did not have enforcement power, but depended upon the sanctions of public opinion, based on information published in their reports on conditions in the colonial territories.

In addition to the disturbances in the Caribbean, there had also been disturbances in some of the African colonies, e.g. in 1935 a strike in the copper mines of Northern Rhodesia resulted in some deaths when the police opened fire on the miners. The publicity generated by these occurrences was

disconcerting to Britain's image as a colonial power and the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the disturbances in the Caribbean was seen as the most effective means of ensuring its credibility as a colonial power.

Britain was also aware of the existing tensions in Europe, and the possibility of becoming involved in a war. In fact it was little more than a year after the appointment of the West Indies Royal Commission on September 3, 1939 that Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced Britain's declaration of war on Germany. It was therefore of paramount importance for the British to ensure that their "benevolence" as a colonial power was appreciated in the colonies at a time when as colonial subjects, West Indians would be drawn into a global conflict, and would be expected to mobilize in support of the British war effort.

The West Indies Royal Commission also referred to as the Moyne Commission after its Chairman, Lord Moyne, was intended to generate wide acceptance for a course of action which the Colonial Office had already decided would be best for its political effect both at home and in the colonies. In a sense there was propaganda value in the establishment of a Royal Commission. It would indicate to Parliament and the British people the importance of a solution to the problems in the Caribbean.

There was also the financial aspect to all of this. At a time when Britain was just recovering from the depression and was on the brink of war in Europe, the British Treasury

was unlikely to consider any request for increase financial assistance to the Caribbean colonies. However if an independent commission was to conclude that large scale financial assistance was required, it would be expected that those recommendations would be more readily acceptable to all concerned. According to Lord Oliver this is exactly what the Commission was intended to achieve:

Most members of Parliament are . . . like their constituents, exceedingly ignorant about West Indian affairs, and as the British government will certainly have to face demands for financial help at the cost of the British Exchequer or the British consumers, if the present state of affairs in the West Indies is not to continue, whether the Colonial office makes such demands on its own judgement or on the strength of a report next year by a Royal Commission the Cabinet no doubt thinks it prudent to have the backing of some document to comfort the conscience of its party supporters . . . .<sup>12</sup>

According to Gordon K. Lewis the members of the Moyne Commission "were hardly fiery revolutionaries."<sup>13</sup> In fact the commission was clearly bipartisan since it was intended to obtain full support for its recommendations. La Guerre noted that the Moyne Commission was different from its predecessor in that it recognized that:

. . . the unrest in the West Indies was neither the work of agitators, nor blind protest, but the expression of a more fundamental malaise in the region as a whole - and, by way of corollary, that a regional programme rather than mere palliatives was required for the solution.<sup>14</sup>

The recommendations of the Royal Commission are numerous and detailed, and the Report was the most comprehensive survey of the British Caribbean up to the end of the 1930s. The

main conclusion was that social services programs were urgently required in the region, and the cost could not be met from regional resources. Along with measures to improve the economies of these countries, the Commission recommended the establishment of a West Indian Welfare Fund, to be financed by an annual grant of £1,000,000 a year from the United Kingdom Exchequer. It was also recommended that an organization to administer the fund be established, headed by a Comptroller for Development and Welfare and including advisors on education, social welfare and public health, economics, and agriculture.<sup>15</sup>

The report further recommended that the Comptroller's staff include a labor advisor, there should be protection for unions against action for damages resulting from strikes, peaceful picketing should be legalized, and a West Indian industrial court should be established. The Commission also advised that Whitley Councils patterned off the British model should be established for teachers and civil servants, factory legislation including provisions for inspections should be instituted. In addition the employment of children under fourteen outside their homes was to be made illegal.<sup>16</sup>

The final recommendation which has a direct bearing on this study deals with constitutional reform. It will be recalled that this topic was not included in the Commission's terms of reference, but during the hearings it was made clear that there was a political aspect underlying the disturbances. The League of Coloured People (LCP) comprising West Indian



intellectuals emphasized the need for constitutional reform in their evidence before the Commission. LaGuerre states that:

On the political side they [LCP] called for fully representative institutions, universal adult suffrage, the removal of property qualifications for legislators and the end to crown colony government.<sup>17</sup>

A West Indian (later to be a Nobel Laureate) W. Arther Lewis, then studying at the London School of Economics, echoed similar sentiments. In a call for constitutional change he said:

Unconstitutional pressure in recent months is forcing through many measures . . . unless constitutional methods are provided it is likely that the masses will have to continue to resort to unconstitutional means of securing their ends as the only measures open to them.<sup>18</sup>

However, the question of constitutional reform would have serious ramifications as far as increased development assistance from Britain was concerned. The more autonomy a colony achieved, the less budgetary control could be exercised by the Colonial Office. The Commission was not about to recommend drastic changes in the constitutional status of the colonies and in the same breath suggest pouring in millions of pounds (£) of British taxpayers money, without some provision for Colonial Office control over the disbursement of these funds.

The Commission therefore took the middle ground, recognizing that self-government should be the ultimate goal, but only advocating an extension of the franchise and lowering

the qualifications for candidates. It was also recommended that ultimate federation of the territories should be the object of colonial policy. The general emphasis of the Commission's Report was on social welfare rather than economic development, the reasoning behind this view was that economic policies to increase production and strengthen the economy were goals for the future. There were pressing social needs which required immediate financial support, and delay could result in increased tensions and more extensive disturbances than those already experienced.

The report of the Moyne Commission set the stage for a change in British colonial policy towards the Caribbean colonies. The British government accepted the findings of the Commission and began the process of implementing some of the recommendations. In the Caribbean colonies, the Report got a less than enthusiastic reception, and was criticized as an effort to substitute social services for significant political and economic reform.

While the British were instituting change in their colonial policy in the Caribbean, the other colonial powers were also reshaping their economic, social and political policies towards their colonies. The French and the Dutch colonies did not have unrest comparable to that in the British colonies, but they were facing economic difficulties due to the great depression.

The French island of Guadeloupe had an economy which was agricultural producing mainly sugar and bananas. In the

1930s French colonies in the Caribbean were considered to be assimilated territories, although they were not to become departments until 1946. As assimilated territories they enjoyed special relationships with France, e.g. their tariffs on imports were the tariffs of France, despite the fact that France was so far away. We would expect special trade relations with the neighboring islands, but according to the U.S. Tariff Commission:

Martinique and Guadeloupe prohibit the importation of sugar, molasses and certain alcohols but admit free or at rates considerably lower than the French tariff, many types of foodstuffs, lumber, coal, petroleum, and fertilizers.<sup>19</sup>

With the start of WWII and the collapse of France the situation in Guadeloupe became acute as there was high dependence on the export of sugar products to metropolitan France. The problem arose since the territory was blockaded for part of the war. According to De La Roche "The economic situation of the islands [Guadeloupe and Martinique] is almost desperate . . . the sharp reductions of exports to France since 1940 has caused widespread unemployment."<sup>20</sup> Despite the problems of the depression and later WWII, the French territories were better off than the British in the sense that due to their status, their industrial relations legislation was similar to that in France. Later in 1948 French legislation pertaining to social security would also be extended to the French colonies.

In Surinam mineral extraction gradually replaced agriculture, which was predominant up to the early years of the 20th century. By 1929 bauxite had become the leading export product, but sugar, tobacco, and coffee were also important export commodities. Surinam suffered as did the other Caribbean countries from the sluggish worldwide economy caused by the great depression.

There was shrinkage of the job market and the reduction in oil production at the refineries in Curacao (also a Dutch territory) resulted in many workers returning to Surinam. Jobs were not available for the returnees and this made a chronic unemployment situation even worse. It is interesting to note that while employed in Curacao many of these workers were union members, and it was not long before they began to organize meetings in an effort to obtain jobs for the unemployed in Surinam.

In October 1931 after one of these meetings some demonstrators began stoning the homes of the well-to-do, and looting shops. The following day the riots continued and the Governor issued a decree prohibiting public assembly. The crowd defied the law and the police opened fire killing one person and wounding several others.

The following year the Surinamese Laborers and Welfare Organization was established, an organization with a socialist philosophy, and exhibiting a strong anti-religious fervor. However, this organization was outlawed in July, 1932. Compared to the disturbances in the British colonies, the

incidents in Surinam could only be described as mild. But with the onset of WWII the colony began to experience some economic pressure due to the loss of the European market for its agricultural products.

With the German occupation of the Netherlands in 1940 Surinam became directly involved in WWII. As an important supplier of bauxite from which aluminium was made, it was in the allies' interest to protect Surinam. American troops were sent to that country in 1941 under an agreement with the Dutch government operating from London. President Roosevelt stated that: "The bauxite mines in Surinam furnish upwards of 60 percent of the requirement of the United States aluminium industry, which is vital to the defense of the United States."<sup>21</sup> Economically the war became a boom to the local economy with the building of facilities for troops from the United States, and the spectacular increase in the production of bauxite.

Puerto Rico being a U.S. possession would appear to be in the best position to deal with the depression and its aftermath. However, the island had been suffering even prior to the depression. In September 1928 a hurricane all but totally devastated the island's agricultural economy, it was estimated that 90 percent of the coffee production had been destroyed.<sup>22</sup> Overall damage was estimated at between 50 to 85 million dollars (U.S.). In March 1929 according to Golding:

. . . the Republican and Socialist parties of Puerto Rico joined ranks to ask Herbert Hoover, the newly inaugurated American President to authorize a loan

of \$100 million in order to provide a program of health, education and industrialization, and also to repay indebtedness.<sup>23</sup>

A 1930 report by the Brookings Institution indicated that there was dire poverty in Puerto Rico:

. . . most of the people in the island lived in shacks without plumbing or lights and with at least two and as many as five persons to a room, and that poverty and malnutrition were the major cause of death by disease, diarrhea, and enteritis (21.8 percent) and tuberculosis (12.1 percent).<sup>24</sup>

The findings in the Brookings Report only served to confirm the situation in Puerto Rico as reported by its Governor, Theodore Roosevelt Jr., in 1929. The story was reported in the New York Herald Tribune as follows:

I have seen mothers carrying babies who were little skeletons. I have watched in a classroom, thin pallid boys and girls trying to spur their brain to action when their bodies were underfed. . . . On the roads time and time again I have passed pathetic little groups carrying home-made coffins. . . . Riding through the hills, I have stopped at farm after farm where lean, underfed women and sickly men repeated time and time again, the same story - little food and no opportunity to get more. From these hills the people have streamed into the coastal towns, increasing the already severe unemployment situation there.<sup>25</sup>

The unemployment situation in Puerto Rico became chronic by 1933 with 65 percent of the workforce unemployed, the majority of workers were in agriculture, and most agricultural wage earners were in the sugar industry. Throughout 1933 there were strikes in the sugar industry and fearing anarchy, a request was made to the U.S. War Department, that "a strong and capable man" be sent to govern Puerto Rico.<sup>26</sup>

In the 1930s in addition to the socio-economic problems arising out of the depression and a general decline in industrial growth since the mid-1920s, there was also an increase in nationalist fervor. Table 3:2 shows national income by industrial sectors for the period 1929-1939, indicating a marked decline in the two leading industrial sectors, viz. agriculture and manufacturing. These changes in the distribution of national income by the most important sectors of the economy, were evidence of the weakness of the country's economic base. These data also imply a reduction in per capita income, since the increase in the service sectors does not compensate for the loss in the productive, primary and secondary sectors.

Following the crisis of the 1930s a policy of rapid industrialization of the Puerto Rican economy was developed. The result was increasing dependence on U.S. capital flows and access to U.S. markets, a decline in agricultural production and an increase in manufactures, e.g. fibers, apparels, and chemicals. Dependence was further heightened by the extension to the island of certain public welfare programs.

However, despite the economic problems, Puerto Ricans were keenly interested in the political status of the island. In 1928 for example they appealed to the Federal Government in Washington for increased self-government, but the request was denied. Charles Lindbergh who visited the island that same year was given a message to take back to the American people which said: "Grant us the freedom which you enjoy,

Table 3:2

Puerto Rico: National Income  
By Industrial Sectors (1929-1939)

Sectors	1929		1934		1939	
	\$(Mill.)	% of total	\$(Mill.)	% of total	\$(Mill.)	% of total
Agriculture	87	49.4	71	43.3	59	30.1
Manufacturing	16	9.0	12	7.3	14	7.1
Transportation	8	4.5	9	5.5	11	5.6
Construction	7	4.0	5	3.0	8	4.0
Commerce	17	9.7	14	8.5	15	7.6
Government	25	14.2	34	20.7	63	32.1
Services	10	5.7	15	9.1	21	10.7
Others	6	3.4	4	2.4	5	2.5
TOTAL	176	100	164	100	196	100

Source: Dudley Smith, Puerto Rico's Income. Association of Sugar Producers of Puerto Rico, Washington, D.C.: 1943, p. 18.



for which you have struggled, which you worship, and you have promised us."<sup>27</sup>

The apparent failure of Washington to understand the nationalist feelings of the Puerto Ricans left many of them perplexed. It was under these circumstances that in the 1930s the Nationalist Party which advocated independence began to organize mass rallies and demonstrations calling for independence for Puerto Rico. The party became radicalized, openly advocated violence, and there were violent clashes at the University of Puerto Rico. In 1937 during a rally in Ponce violence broke out after the permit for the rally was withdrawn, and the nationalists refused to cancel the event. Twenty one persons were killed and over 150 wounded.

#### Politicization of the Trade Unions

One of the recommendations in the report of the Moyne Commission that a welfare fund be established to finance various social and economic programs was quickly adopted by the British Parliament. The Colonial Development and Welfare Organization to be administered by a Comptroller, was established in 1940.

The Colonial Development and Welfare Act (CD&W) which superceded another CD&W Act of 1929 was passed with little dissent in 1940. The Act initially appropriated £50 million annually over a ten year period, for social and economic development for all the British colonies. About 20 percent

of this sum was to be allocated to the colonies in the Caribbean on an annual basis. In addition £500,000 was allocated annually for research in the colonies.

It is interesting to note that this commitment by the British government was made at a time when Britain was in the midst of a bloody war with the British army retreating from Dunkirk and the fate of Britain itself was in doubt. The apparent ease with which the recommendations of the Moyne Report were adopted could imply that the principal recommendations of the Report were already in the offing by the Colonial Office and that the Report was merely needed to bring pressure to bear on the British treasury and Parliament, to provide the necessary funding for the program. On the other hand it is possible that the British conscience was deeply moved by the report of the Commission which clearly exposed the plight of a people, now suffering, but whose islands were once considered to be (according to C. L. R. James) "Jewels in the European Crown."<sup>28</sup> Dr. Eric Williams was even more succinct in his depiction of the value of these islands to the European colonial powers. He pointed out that:

It was in fact sugar which raised these insignificant tropical islands from the status of pirates' nests to the dignity of the most precious colonies known to the western world up to the 19th century . . . The tiniest British sugar island was considered more valuable than the thirteen American colonies combined. French Guadeloupe with a population today of a mere 300,000 was once deemed more precious than Canada.<sup>29</sup>

The Moyne Commission had been highly critical of the failure of Colonial Office policy to get colonial governments to implement labor legislation and foster the development of trade unions. The Report stated:

Successive Secretaries of State for the Colonies have spoken publicly of the need for the encouragement of trade unions in the Colonial Empire, and from time to time over the last decade they have made representation to colonial governments in the West Indies drawing their attention to the desirability of facilitating the development of trade unions. Despite this and the repeated statements of the present Secretary of State that Your Majesty's government would welcome the establishment of trade unions, we were unable to discover that any real effort had been made until quite recent<sup>30</sup> times to assist their formation and development.

With the passage of the CD&W Act in 1940, the Colonial Office finally had the means to coerce recalcitrant colonial governments into "fostering the development of trade unions." With the support of a group of Labor members of parliament a clause was included in the Act which stipulated that assistance would be contingent upon the territory having enacted legislation protecting the rights of trade unions and that:

. . . fair conditions of labor will be observed in the execution of works and in particular that:

- (1) that the wages paid will not be less than the rates recognized by employers and trade unions in the area where the works are to be executed, or if there are no rates thus recognized, at rates approved by the person for the time being administering the government of the colony; and
- (2) that no children under such age as may be appropriate in the circumstances, but not in any case less than fourteen years, will be employed on the works.<sup>31</sup>

The need for financial assistance under the CD&W Act was sufficient to persuade most colonial governments in the Caribbean to enact the appropriate legislation. The only colony which did not do so was the Bahamas, and they did not apply for CD&W assistance. However, it should be noted that the Colonial Office considered it necessary to give a grace period from the date of the passage of the CD&W Act up to 1945 for colonial governments to comply with the eligibility requirements for CD&W assistance. In February, 1945 it was announced in Parliament that the grace period was over.<sup>32</sup>

Organizations performing the functions of trade unions had been established in the British colonies as far back as 1895. Although these rudimentary trade unions were able to call strikes (which were usually broken) they had no basis in law. In fact they were considered to be illegal, and were in the same position as British trade unions prior to 1870. Yet despite the disruptions caused by strikes called by these early trade unions, there is no record of prosecutions being made against the leaders of the unions, for breaking the law against combinations in restraint of trade or the fixing of wages.

In the post WWI period economic conditions in the region began to enter a period of depression. The price of sugar fell and the cost of living began to rise rapidly. A period of malaise set in throughout the Caribbean Basin countries, and trade union membership began to increase. While the colonial government was paying lip service to recognizing

the need for trade union legislation, workers were being organized in all the territories. Hubert Critchlow formed the first trade union in British Guiana (Guyana), the British Guiana Labour Union in 1919. He had been involved in trade union activity since 1906.<sup>33</sup> That same year in Jamaica there were unions of longshoremen, cigar makers, hotel workers, and building trade workers, the latter reportedly affiliated with the AFL. In Trinidad and Tobago the Trinidad Workingmen's Association (TWA) had been revived and by the end of 1919 claimed to have 6000 members.

There was unrest and rioting in Belize in 1919 mainly by veterans of WWI and the unemployed. Belize City, the main population center, was not an industrial area, but rather a commercial town existing on financing business connected with the forest industries and the import/export trade. An industrial proletariat never developed in Belize and due to the nature of the forest industries, it was difficult for forest workers to develop the necessary solidarity required for establishing trade unions.

The interesting factor here is the role of the war veterans in initiating the unrest. According to Samaroo, war veterans also played an active role in the unrest in Trinidad attributed to the TWA.<sup>34</sup> Likewise in Grenada a union of Returned Soldiers was formed, which began a struggle for pensions, educational benefits and jobs for "those who had fought so gallantly for King and Empire."<sup>35</sup>

Despite the agitation and unrest which arose out of trade union activity in the 1920s, the labor movement in the British colonies dates from the 1930s. The riots of 1935 to 1939 led to the formation of many unions and the development of a nascent labor movement. These new organizational developments were of course enhanced by the more permissive legislation governing trade unions, being enacted to meet the requirements for aid under the CD&W Act of 1940. Of course this was also a tacit method for curbing working class militancy which was what the colonial government expected to achieve in the long run.

Where we find industrial unions in the western democracies, there is a general tendency for political activity to take second place to collective bargaining. In the Caribbean the trade unions are referred to as "blanket" or "omnibus" unions, i.e. they accept all workers regardless of industry or craft. The economy of the British colonies up to the 1930s was based upon agriculture, except in Belize and Trinidad as mentioned earlier.

As in most other areas of the world, agricultural workers are difficult to organize, in many instances the employment is seasonal and the wages are low making dues collection difficult. But in the light of chronic unemployment and the dismal economic outlook of the 1930s it is not difficult to understand why people were willing to become organized in order to collectively protest these appalling conditions.

Beckford has the following comments on these developments in respect to Jamaica:

For the people's struggle, 1938 was most important because it marked the revolutionary entry of the working class into Jamaican history, and politics into the class struggle. The working class spear-headed the revolutionary upsurge against the oligarchy and the colonial state in protest against low wages, poor working conditions, and oppressive working conditions in general.<sup>36</sup>

Following the Moyne Report the British government took steps to effect constitutional changes in the colonies, despite being involved in war in Europe. Limited doses of constitutional reform legislation were expected to deter any recurrence of the disturbances of the 1930s. Jamaica and Guyana introduced modern trade union legislation in 1919 and 1921 respectively. The other former British colonies passed such legislation following the requirements of the CD&W Act of 1940. In 1941 a model trade union law was sent out to all British colonies in a dispatch from the Secretary of State, and by 1943 legislation incorporating the provisions of the model ordinance was in force in all the territories. According to the circular, trade union legislation should provide for: ". . . the compulsory registration of trade unions, . . . they were not unlawful because their objects were in restraint of trade, and it gave them immunity from actions in tort."<sup>37</sup>

The decolonization movement in the former British Caribbean can be traced to the disturbances of the 1930s. In the absence of political parties (in Jamaica for example the Peoples National Party [PNP] was not formed until 1938),

an alliance of workers and peasants was formed and their struggle was simply for economic survival. But underlying the everyday economic need was an emerging anti-colonial movement and the trade unions were the only organized mass groups through which there could be propagated some form of nationalistic political agitation.

In 1937 five unions were established in Trinidad viz. the Federated Workers Trade Union, the Oilfield Workers Trade Union, the Seamen and Waterfront Workers Trade Union, the All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factories Trade Union, and the Public Works and Public Service Workers Trade Union. That same year the Manpower Citizens Association (MPCA) one of the largest trade unions in Guyana was founded. The following year 1938, saw the establishment of the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) in Jamaica. The BITU became the worker base of the PNP, but by 1943 a split occurred between the leadership of the BITU and the PNP. Alexander Bustamante the president of the BITU formed his own political party, the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP), which had a conservative capitalist ideology. In forming the JLP, Bustamante effectively neutralized the worker base of the PNP, and this was evident in the national elections held the following year. Out of thirty-two seats the PNP won only four, while the newly formed JLP won twenty-three seats.

Between 1940 and 1943 trade unions were established in Antigua, St. Lucia, Barbados, and Belize. However, these unions did not fit the profile of a trade union as established



e.g in Britain at that time (1930-1940). The model of trade union which evolved in the Caribbean was the blanket union and it satisfied the need for a political response to the widespread discontent prevalent in the colonies at that time.

The overriding priority of the trade unions at this stage was the organization of a strong political movement which could influence the colonial authorities to implement the necessary political, social and economic reforms. One of the main goals was universal suffrage, a prerequisite for self-governing status. It was also felt that major trade union reform could only be achieved through legislation, but the appropriate legislation would have to await the election of sympathetic legislators, and their election was dependent upon the franchise.

The blanket union was appropriate for organizing the masses into political action, and it was also suitable for the small size of the units concerned. As these unions accepted members from all categories of workers, membership could be larger while administrative and capital costs were reduced. Knowles has argued that in the politicization of the unions, many union leaders simply used the union as an instrument for winning elections, thus gaining social status, and a steady income. Even more controversial is the statement that many unions were merely instruments of hopeful politicians, and that most workers understand neither the principles of unionism nor the objectives of political parties.<sup>38</sup>

These remarks indicate a misunderstanding of the circumstances which led to the political orientation of the trade unions. In 1938 it was merely one hundred years since emancipation or legal freedom had been granted to the mass of the population in the British colonies. Emancipation removed the gross abuses of the slave system, it did nothing to initiate changes in the dominant class - color differentiations in colonial society. The color hierarchy i.e. white, colored, and black, in that order, remained salient features of the society.

While the economic power of the plantocracy declined, that of the colonial mercantile class expanded and became stronger. Salmon was very critical of the system, he pointed out that:

Restricted inflow of capital, excessively high customs tariffs benefiting a closed monopoly of local merchant houses; a heavy burden of colonial revenues carried by taxation upon local necessities such as corn, flour, rice, fish and meat; the failure of local real and personal property to share in the tax burden; the excessive costs of colonial administration . . . had produced a maladjusted economy in which the West Indies bought their foodstuffs dear and sold their produce low, and from which both planter and worker suffered. It is obvious . . . that a great injustice has been done to these islands. They have been handed over as it were to a powerful corporation, and the consequences of this monopoly are seen in the want of development, and that stagnation which is<sup>39</sup> the only end possible to such a state of things.

The conditions described above were to be found in the British colonies even up to the late 1930s and these are the circumstances to which Manley refers in his statement that:

"One hundred years later, the legal question apart, it was a moot question as to who was better off, in material terms, the slave of 1838 or the worker of 1938."

Slaves had no freedom and enjoyed no rights (political, social or economic). A hundred years later while the descendants of these slaves were legally free, the idea that workers could have "rights" was repudiated by the employers in the West Indian plantocracy. Benefits if and when they existed were seen as employer generosity, not rights to which the worker was entitled as a consequence of the employment relationship. As a result there existed a working class in virtual economic servitude to a well organized employer class. Due to the benign neglect of these colonies by the colonial power (Britain) the seeds of oppression had been sown and generously nurtured for a hundred years after emancipation, resulting in the inevitable harvest of rebellion in the 1930s.

This was the situation which led to mass protest for reform and self determination under the banner of the trade union in the thirties. Earlier attempts at the formation of trade unions had been abortive but as Shakespeare said "there comes a time in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune." The point had arrived at which the people had had enough, and were willing to ride the tide of opportunity into the rebellion for self-determination.

The beginning of trade union activity in Puerto Rico can be traced back to the 1890s and the Federacion Libre de

Tradajadores (Free Federation of Labor ) [FLT]. The organization of this labor federation is linked to Santiago Iglesias Pantin who migrated to Puerto Rico from Spain via Cuba. The FLT was the dominant union organization in Puerto Rico for about forty years and became affiliated with the AFL in 1901.

In Puerto Rico the majority of the workers were employed in agriculture, mainly in the sugar industry where wages were low and the employment seasonal, the FLT unions could not adopt the AFL craft structure and attempt to use economic action to obtain benefits for the membership. The employers had the upper hand if a strike was called, and it was not until 1933 that collective bargaining was achieved in the Puerto Rican sugar industry.

Iglesias realized that benefits for his union members would only be realized through legislation rather than through strike activity. He therefore formed the Socialist Party of Puerto Rico in 1899, but the accomplishments of the FLT and the Party were meagre. The Socialists decided to form a coalition with the Republicans in 1924, and they eventually won control of the legislature in 1932. The coalition was not supportive of labor's goals, the FLT being socialist in ideology while the Republicans represented a conservative constituency. This must have been disheartening to Iglesias who traded labor votes for political patronage; he was elected Resident Commissioner and went to live in Washington. One writer Mejias has suggested that:

. . . when the biography of Iglesias is written it should be divided into two parts in such a way that his activities as the compromised politician in power are not permitted to "becloud" his accomplishments as the uncompromised trade unionist and politician of the powerless class.<sup>40</sup>

The FLT began to decline during the period of socialist coalition as there was more accommodation and compromise than real legislative gains for the workers. The AFL had been charged with support for a socialist trade union (the FLT and its Socialist Party) simply as a facade for continued U.S. domination of the island. Rodrigues Vera argued that:

There are the men of the American Federation of Labor, they take part in political campaigns in the United States side by side with the National Democratic Party, which is the party to which President Gompers is affiliated. There, they are the enemies of socialism, while here in Puerto Rico they defend, patronize and pay propagandists for the establishment of an International Socialist Party.<sup>41</sup>

The straw which broke the camel's back was a strike by FLT members against its own leadership due to a "sweetheart" contract signed by the FLT with the sugar corporations for the 1934 harvest. Incidentally this was the first time the FLT was able to negotiate island wide agreements with the sugar companies. Iglesias died in 1939 and the FLT was unable to regain the hegemony which it once held over the workers. In 1950 the union lost its affiliation with the AFL.

The decline of the FLT led to a vacuum in the labor movement. At the same time economic conditions in Puerto Rico began to improve in the late 1930s with the infusion of

millions of dollars into the economy, under the federal relief programs administered by the Emergency Relief and Reconstruction Administration. According to Murray Edelman, these are the circumstances under which certain status realignment occurs. He states that:

. . . when labor as a class can demonstrate that working people can enjoy more support than is reflected in existing institutions, it becomes inevitable that workers will grow increasingly restive until new institutions and a major status realignment occurs.<sup>42</sup>

In the early 1940s Puerto Rico exhibited clear evidence of Edelman's observation as far as the labor institutions were concerned. The existing trade unions were failing to respond to the needs of the workers. This was a time of rising expectations and the laboring classes were in need of new leadership. A new political party the Popular Democratic Party (PPD) known as the "Populares" emerged in the late 1930s with a charismatic leader, Luis Munoz Marin who was later to become Governor of Puerto Rico.

The PPD was a party of the democratic left with its labor support in a new organization the Confederacion General de Trabajadores (CGT). This was a militant organization, clearly leftist in ideology, its international affiliation being with the Confederacion de Trabajadores de la America Latina (CTAL), which was the western hemisphere branch of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), a communist dominated organization. Eventually the CGT's alliance with the PPD fell apart in 1945, and the union was split into the CGT-Autentica and the CGT-

CIO (affiliated to the U.S. Congress of Industrial Organizations), the later organization was also subdivided into three smaller unions.

Puerto Rico's labor movement has in fact developed in three stages, stage I from the late 19th century to about 1937, the period of the FLT; stage II from 1938 to the mid-fifties, the period of the CGT; and stage III from the late fifties to the present when there is an influx of international unions from the United States mainland. The history of the labor movement is one of fragmentation and deep involvement in politics from the outset.

The socialist party was able to use its worker base in the FLT, and similarly the PPD brought together a coalition of socialists, communists and independentistas (those advocating independence for Puerto Rico) in an attempt to meet its goal of improving social and economic conditions in the island. While there are hardly any questions about the close links between trade unions and political parties in Puerto Rico, questions do arise over whether or not the workers/members benefit from such organizations. It has been argued that close association between the PPD and the Packinghouse Union for example, prevented adequate representation of the union members as the leadership was preoccupied with political matters. On the other hand, the view has also been held that as the unions are too weak to win adequate benefits at collective bargaining, association with the party assures the passage of legislation mandating certain desirable benefits. However,

the important point is that workers consider themselves "Populares" first and trade unionists second. In the circumstances in Puerto Rico the members are aware that the party has the greater potential for fulfilling their goals, than the union.

Puerto Rico also fits the model of many third world countries which have developed political unionism during the early stages of development. Likewise the unions have followed the pattern observed by Walter Galenson in the labor movements of some developing countries:

. . . the leaders of the new unions are rarely drawn from the working class itself. They are almost always middle class in origin, either professional, or clerical workers, seeking to bring about radical transformation of society through the mass organization of the workers.<sup>43</sup>

The principal reason which can be advanced for leadership being drawn from outside the trade unions in Puerto Rico was their early affiliation to the AFL. This affiliation brought in the full-time, organizer-administrator, thus short circuiting the rise to leadership from the rank and file. In comparison, in the former British Caribbean islands, union leadership arose both from within and outside the trade unions.

### Labor Legislation

By the end of the second world war there were marked changes in the status of trade unions in the former British Caribbean colonies. Legislation had been enacted which



fostered the establishment of trade unions especially in those territories which were receiving assistance under the Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme. According to Roberts, "prior to 1930 legislation affecting trade unions was either antiquated, by British standards, or else it was non-existent."<sup>44</sup>

As we examine the legislation governing trade unions we need to determine the effectiveness of that legislation in allowing trade unions to fulfill the purposes for which they were established. Regardless of how we view their function in the western democracies, the principal reason for organizing trade unions is freedom of association. The International Labor Organization has recognized this and in 1948 established Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and the Right to Organize, which states in part that:

. . . workers and employers without distinction whatsoever, shall have the right to establish, and, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned, to join organizations of<sup>45</sup> their own choosing without previous authorization.

The following year the ILO passed another Convention, No. 98 dealing with the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining. This Convention provided that inter-alia, "workers shall enjoy adequate protection against acts of anti-union discrimination in respect of their employment."<sup>46</sup> While the Conventions do not make explicit reference to the right to strike, it is implicit that if the union is to promote and fulfill its interests, the right to strike and peaceful picketing are a necessary extension of the freedom of

association, and the right to bargain collectively. Therefore, a free trade union movement will be difficult to establish unless these fundamental rights are respected.

By the early 1950s the labor and industrial scene had changed dramatically from what it was in the 1920s. In addition to trade union legislation, Departments of Labor had been established in all the British colonies. These departments were given statutory powers of inspecting workplaces, enforcing factory and safety regulations, carrying out conciliation and mediation of labor disputes. In addition there was legislation governing the employment of women and young children, and provisions for workmen's compensation schemes.

In the aftermath of the Moyne Commission and the end of WWII, the framework of industrial relations in the Commonwealth Caribbean was clearly British oriented. Trade unions were recognized, collective bargaining sanctioned, but employers were not legally bound to recognize trade unions or to bargain collectively with them. This was purely voluntary on the part of the employers, although representational polls were usually conducted by the Ministries of Labor at the request of both parties. The results of these polls were then used to determine whether or not collective bargaining would be conducted by the parties concerned. The Ministry of Labor plays a prominent role in the conduct of industrial relations, and it is not unusual to find that collective agreements are sometimes negotiated from the outset under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor.

The exception to this system of voluntarism in industrial relations is Trinidad which in 1965 passed the Industrial Stabilization Act (ISA). This Act made collective agreements legally binding once they were registered with the Industrial Court (also established under the Act). The ISA was subsequently replaced by the Industrial Relations Act (IRA) of 1972.

The new IRA, similar to its predecessor was intended to deal with the problem of trade union registration, and the IRA brought this issue under the jurisdiction of an independent board, rather than leaving it up to the discretion of the Minister of Labor. According to the IRA a distinction is made between "interests" and "rights" disputes; strike action is allowed in interest disputes but not in rights disputes. Collective agreements are legally enforceable and there is a requirement that the agreement must be for a stated period and in addition all agreements must contain a procedure for settling grievances. Agency shops are allowed and victimization of workers for trade union activities is made illegal.

While the Commonwealth Caribbean was getting its industrial relations system organized according to the British model of voluntarism, Puerto Rico was embarking along the path of the complex and legalistic United States model adopted with the passage of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) [Wagner Act] in 1935. Federal legislation of the United States applies to Puerto Rico, unless a specific law explicitly excludes the island. If that law is ambiguous in its

application, the courts may be asked to decide on the question of its application, or the law may be amended in order to extend it to the island.

An early test of ambiguity came after the passage of the NLRA and it was as a result of a Supreme Court decision<sup>47</sup> that the law was found to be applicable to Puerto Rico. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) also expressed a concurring decision in a case arising in Puerto Rico.<sup>48</sup> But the Act only applies to workers producing goods for interstate commerce, including commerce with territories like Puerto Rico, and it excludes employees of governmental agencies and agricultural workers. Among other provisions the NLRA provides that:

Employees shall have the right to self-organization to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining, or other mutual aid or protection.<sup>49</sup>

However in 1940 the economy of Puerto Rico was predominantly agricultural, see Table 3:3, therefore the NLRA had little impact on the largest proportion of the employed labor force. In order to remedy this shortcoming, the Puerto Rico Labor Relations Act (PRLRA) was passed in 1945 and the issue of the agricultural worker was dealt with by simply defining an "employee" as "any employee" and excluding from the definition of employee only executives, supervisors, or persons employed in domestic service by parents or spouse. The PRLRA also created a Puerto Rico Labor Relations Board (PRLRB) which

Table 3:3

Employed Labor Force of Puerto Rico  
by Major Industrial Sectors 1940 and 1975  
(percentage of total employed labor force)

Sector	1940 %	1950 %	1960 %	1975 %
Agriculture Forestry Mining	45.0	36.4	23.2	6.6
Manufac- turing	10.9	9.2	15.1	18.6
Home Needlework	8.8	8.6	1.7	na
Construction	3.1	4.5	8.3	9.4
Trade	10.4	15.1	17.9	19.2
Transporta- tion, Communi- cations, Pub- lic Utilities	3.9	5.0	7.2	6.6
Services	14.3	12.9	14.0	16.3
Public Administration	2.3	7.6	11.6	20.5
Other Indus- tries includ- ing Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	1.2	0.7	1.1	2.4
Total Em- ployed labor force	100	100	100	100

Sources: Reynolds and Gregory, Productivity and Industriali-  
zation of Puerto Rico, p. 10; and Bureau of Labor  
Statistics, Department of Labor, Commonwealth of  
Puerto Rico, Special Labor Force Report No. 70-2E.

among other responsibilities was authorized to make, amend and repeal regulations necessary for carrying out the provisions of the PRLRA.

The passage of the PRLRA had immediate implications for the trade unions since it allowed them to bargain on behalf of employees of statutory corporations. During the period 1940-1945 public corporations involved in such fields as water, sewage disposal, electricity, public housing etc. were established. The law was amended to allow collective bargaining on behalf of the employees of these quasi-government corporations, and this of course extended the number of those employees who were eligible to join trade unions. However, by catering to the demands of certain strong labor organizations the amendment of the law led to the anomalous situation whereby employees of a governmental agency providing electric power had bargaining rights, while employees of the Parks Commission were denied such rights. This has led to a somewhat chaotic situation regarding collective bargaining, with the rationale for inclusion/exclusion being unclear.

Information about labor legislation in the French speaking Department of Guadeloupe and the former Dutch colony of Surinam is not readily available. However, the policy of the French government has been to extend to French Departments metropolitan legislation, and prior to 1939 a substantial proportion of the metropolitan labor legislation had been extended to Guadeloupe. According to the ILO the following

sections of the French labor code had been extended to Guadeloupe prior to 1939:

. . . parts of the French Labor code relating to apprenticeship contracts of employment, the protection of wages, family allowances, placement, minimum age for admission to employment, hours of work, prohibition of night work for women and young persons, holidays with pay, weekly rest, trade union rights, labor inspection, industrial health and safety, conciliation and arbitration, and workmen's compensation.<sup>50</sup>

Up to 1948 French metropolitan labor legislation relating to collective agreements had not been extended to Guadeloupe, but by the end of that year there were collective agreements in force on the island.

### Constitutional Advances

Following WWI there were signs of discontent with the level of constitutional development in the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Discontent arose out of dissatisfaction with crown colony rule and the arbitrary aspects of that system of government. Demands for reform became more vocal with the return of West Indian war veterans at the end of the war. These individuals had been involved in a war which was supposedly fought to preserve freedom and self-determination, yet upon their return home, they were denied the most basic freedom, that of participating in the electoral process.

A local coloured intelligentsia comprising doctors, lawyers, middle level civil servants, and teachers had been

developing, and it was this group which was becoming increasingly vocal in voicing its dissatisfaction with a system which gave whites practically all the political power. As a result of intensified demands for constitutional reform, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Hon. E. L. F. Wood (later Lord Halifax) visited the Caribbean colonies from December 1921 to February 1922. His mission was to investigate the demands and make recommendations around which future constitutional reform policy could be formulated.

The proposals submitted by Mr. Wood following his visit did not result in any dramatic change in the existing constitutional status of the colonies. Minor changes were recommended resulting in the election of a few members of the legislative council in Grenada, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Dominica. But he made it clear that the officials (i.e. the nominated members) must remain in the majority, so that the Governor would have the votes to override the unanimous objections of the unofficials whenever he considered this necessary.

The crux of the Wood Report was that colonial society in the British colonies was not yet developed to the point where it could conceivably govern itself responsibly. As a result there should be a prolonged period of cautious constitutional advance, but with the crown retaining complete control. Clearly constitutional advance and dominance of the crown were incompatible, increase in the former would automatically lead to decrease in the latter. The Wood Report



indicated a superficial attempt at understanding the underlying reasons for the demands for constitutional change in the colonies, and there was little indication of any serious attempt to deal with the basic problems in the region, leading to increased agitation. Although it is difficult to speculate, it is quite likely that if the Wood Report had been carried out in more depth, the disturbances in the early thirties may not have been as widespread or as violent as they were.

In retrospect constitutional advance which might have been achieved in the mid-1920s did not occur until the early 1940s. Although primarily concerned with social and economic problems, it was the Moyne Commission which made recommendations for constitutional advance in the colonies. The recommendations included greater participation by the people in the governmental process and an extension of the franchise.

In 1944 Jamaica was the first British Caribbean territory to have constitutional reforms implemented, which included universal suffrage and a wholly elected House of Representatives. But the Governor retained reserve and veto powers, and was Chairman of the Executive Council, a rudimentary cabinet comprising ten members, five drawn from the elected Lower House. By 1960 each of the former British territories included in this study had attained "internal self-government" i.e. adult suffrage, a largely elected parliament, and varying degrees of ministerial responsibility, similar to that achieved in Jamaica. The two outstanding cases were Belize and Guyana.

Belize achieved adult suffrage in 1954, but did not obtain full internal self-government until 1963. In the case of Guyana, the first election under universal adult suffrage was held in April 1953, but by October of that year the British government had suspended the constitution. The circumstances of that suspension will not be discussed here, but a good account of the events leading to the suspension will be found in Jagan and Thomas.<sup>51</sup> However, it should be noted that the PPP which won the 1953 elections in Guyana, was the first Marxist government to be elected to office in the British Colonial Empire. According to a White Paper issued in October 1953 the British government in order to "prevent communist subversion of the government and a dangerous crisis both in public order and in economic affairs"<sup>53</sup> decided to suspend the constitution, to give the Governor emergency powers, and to send British armed forces to support the police.

Elections were again permitted in Guyana in 1957 in which the PPP were once more victorious, and the British government agreed to grant internal self government after a further election to be held in 1961. In the 1961 elections the PPP repeated its victory at the polls, but the period 1961-1964 was clouded by ethnic violence and ideological conflict (this will be discussed later in this chapter). In 1963 a constitutional conference was convened in London to discuss independence and although no date was established for that event, it was agreed that elections would be held in 1964, after which a date for independence would be set.

But this time the electoral rules were changed at the insistence of the opposition parties in the Guyana legislature. Instead of having a "first past the post" or single member district, a system of proportional representation was instituted. In commenting on the proportional representation system, the Secretary of State for the Colonies had this to say:

The supporters of this system claim that since no one race constitutes a majority of the electorate, all parties will have to appeal for support to all races. In practice I doubt whether either the Indian or African party could, under its present leadership, hope to increase appreciably its following among the other racial groups. On the other hand I am satisfied that there is validity in the argument that in present circumstances, where no party commands an overall majority of the votes, proportional representation would be likely to result in the formation of a coalition government of parties supported by different races, and that this would<sup>54</sup> go some way toward reducing the present tension.

Britain had taken the unusual step of foisting a different electoral system upon the Guyanese people, against the wishes of the government which had been elected by a majority of the electorate. The argument of the Secretary of State that where no party commands an overall majority of the votes, proportional representation should be instituted, could have been applicable to many other colonial territories, and was really a flimsy justification for changing the electoral system.

We need to provide a brief comment on the circumstances leading to the Guyana "situation" since trade unions in Guyana had a significant role in the fall from power of Dr. Jagan.

When President Kennedy assumed office in 1961 he inherited an unstable political situation in Caribbean Basin countries. There was a dying dictatorship (Trujillo) in the Dominican Republic, the tyranny of Haiti's Duvalier could evolve into communism or anarchy, Fidel Castro had just taken over in Cuba, Jamaica's withdrawal from the West Indies Federation resulted in the collapse of the latter, and an election in Guyana had been torn by racial strife.

In 1953 when the PPP contested the first election in Guyana held under adult suffrage, the leaders of the party (PPP) Dr. Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham, indicated that they were not prepared to take the evolutionary road to development. Instead they employed the rhetoric of Marxism, and claimed to be revolutionaries. After the suspension of the constitution there was a split in the PPP, with Dr. Jagan retaining control of the PPP and drawing support mainly from the East Indian population, while Burnham formed the Peoples National Congress (PNC), drawing support principally from the African and other Creole population.

Jagan again won the elections in 1961, and although an avowed Marxist (he refused to deny that he was a communist), visited the United States seeking aid for industrial development purposes. The request for aid was denied and it was clear that the United States was seeking an alternative to Jagan in Guyana. The alternative was Forbes Burnham who although a Marxist, was said to belong to the non-communist left.

Upon his return to Guyana, Jagan put forward proposals for an economic development program in the country using domestic resources. The trade unions denounced the program and racial strife broke out. British troops had to be called in to restore order. In the meantime Burnham visited the United States in May 1962 and met with Arthur Schlesinger, who saw Burnham as the lesser of two evils, and Washington felt that it should throw its support behind him. Because of the unsettled situation in Guyana, the British government, most likely at the urging of the United States (President Kennedy visited Prime Minister Macmillan of Great Britain in June 1963) agreed to delay Guyana's independence until after the American elections.

In the fall of 1964 Britain announced that an electoral system based upon proportional representation would be instituted in Guyana. This was the culmination of the connivance between the U.S. and Great Britain to replace a radical force with a coalition which was anticipated at the time to be more moderate. New elections were held in December 1964 and the PPP received 45.88 percent of the vote (24 seats), the PNC got 40.5 percent of the votes (22 seats), and the United Force Party 12.41 percent of the votes (7 seats). Burnham was able to form a coalition with the United Force and thus became Prime Minister. With this election there was a band aid solution to the problem of a Marxist government in Guyana, and the country was thus prepared to move forward to the next constitutional step, independence. While Guyana

was having constitutional problems, Jamaica and Trinidad were granted independence in 1962, Barbados and Guyana followed in 1966, Grenada in 1974, St. Lucia in 1977, Antigua in 1980, and Belize not until 1981.

Constitutional advance in the French island of Guadeloupe was limited to achieving departmental status in 1946, and this has already been discussed. It does not appear that there is any movement actively advocating independence, but this should not be taken to imply that there are no voices of dissent on the island. It is just that at this time the benefits of close association with France clearly appear to outweigh the disadvantages associated with independent status.

Puerto Rico has not advanced beyond the Commonwealth status already discussed in Chapter 1. The principal political issue for the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments is linked to the conflict between those who wish to see Puerto Rico become an autonomous or independent state, and those calling for statehood for the island. This problem arises constantly and will obviously not be settled until there is a solution to these conflicting demands.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Surinam achieved independence in 1975, however in 1980 there was a military coup d' etat, but this did not result in any change in the constitution of the country. As this study concludes with developments up to 1980, conditions in Surinam since the coup will not be discussed.

### Industrial Conflict and Unionization

As we examine the growth of unionization it appears that we may justifiably link the expansion of the trade union movement with times when there is uncertainty. For example, in the United States, up to 1900 total union membership was less than one million. By 1920 following WWI membership had grown to 5.1 million. But by 1933 things looked grim for the labor movements, Professor George E. Barnett made the following comments to the American Economic Association that year:

I see no reason to believe that American trade unionism will so revolutionize itself within a short period of time as to become in the next decade a more potent social influence than it has been in the past decade.<sup>55</sup>

The prediction of professor Barnett was completely off the mark. During the period 1933-1945, a period during which the greatest intervention in the economy was WWII, union membership expanded at an unprecedented rate. By 1956 it had reached 18.5 million. There was also a major expansion during the Vietnam war, reaching 23.1 million by 1972.<sup>56</sup> In fact four times since 1900 union growth has occurred under wartime economic conditions viz. WWI, WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam war.

In the British Caribbean the period from 1935 to 1945 encompassed the worldwide depression and WWII. It was also one of the most unsettled periods in the modern history of these countries, with depression, social unrest and war involving the metropolitan power and its colonies. Yet this is

the period during which there was a meteoric growth in trade union membership.

According to the Orde Browne Report the trade union situation was as follows at the time of his investigation (1939).

- Barbados - Trade unions in the proper sense of the word non-existent at the present.
- Jamaica - Trade unions are of late appearance and are still far from firmly established, but they show signs of vigorous growth.
- Antigua - Trade unions at present non-existent.
- Trinidad - Trade unions have developed further in Trinidad than any other West Indian colony.
- Grenada - No registered trade union is at present in existence.
- St. Lucia - There are no registered trade unions in the colony.
- Guyana - Trade unionism is definitely established and has official recognition.
- Belize - Trade unions virtually non-existent.<sup>57</sup>

However, the accuracy of the Orde Browne Report is suspect, because according to a study carried out by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, "in 1939 there were in the British Caribbean 65 trade unions (59 registered) with 62,500 members."<sup>58</sup> While it is difficult to compare the early trade unions in the colonies to orthodox British or American unions, there is little doubt that employers did recognize the power of the union, once the right to strike had been given legal sanction.



The strength of the early trade union movement was also derived from the type of unionism "the blanket union" which allowed all workers to become members. Following the great depression there was a strong move toward industrial organization, and this was feasible in the British Caribbean since production was carried on by capital and labor, unlike for example British West Africa where agriculture was based upon peasant production.

The need for industrial organization became more urgent once the working class developed aspirations for a higher standard of living. However, it quickly became clear that in order to achieve those aspirations, it would be necessary to acquire a certain measure of political power from the colonial authorities. While the colonial government saw such changes as being evolutionary, the colonial subjects were prepared to use every means at their disposal to emphasize the need for urgent reform, and the means for doing so was through the trade unions, as the main working class movement in the colonies.

With the end of WWII the movement to end French colonialism in Africa and Indochina began, and a bloody and protracted war was later to be fought in Indochina and Algeria. But in the Caribbean colonies French colonial policy became more centralized. In 1946 these colonies were granted departmental status which brought them into even closer ties to metropolitan France. French citizenship was granted to the inhabitants of these islands, and there was the implication of theoretical

equality with the citizens in the metropolis as far as political rights were concerned.

Substantial benefits accrued to Guadeloupe due to its departmental status, and although there was little indication of overt nationalism, certain groups were advocating independence, while others were supporting continued departmental status. By 1948 there were active trade unions in Guadeloupe affiliated to the French General Confederation of Labor (CGT).

### The Industrial Infrastructure

With the close of WWII the United States emerged as the major economic force among the western allies. Japan and Western Europe began the task of rebuilding their economies and their industries. With aid through the Marshall Plan and a liberal currency system based on the Bretton Woods institutions, large scale credits were available for European reconstruction. By the end of the 1960s the developed market economy countries had rebounded and were able to increase their productivity levels on par with that of the United States.

While this rebuilding and reconstruction was taking place in the countries which had been involved in WWII or (as Beckford refers to it) the "second imperialist war"<sup>59</sup> another transformation was taking place in what was to become known as the Third World. The movement towards self-determination and independence gained momentum after the war. In 1941 Winston Churchill and President Roosevelt signed the Atlantic

Charter setting out certain principles which they felt would lead to a better future for the world after the war. One of those principles was the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.

It was declarations such as the Atlantic Charter and the San Francisco Charter which gave impetus to the movement towards decolonization. However, it later became clear that Roosevelt and Churchill did not attach the same interpretation to the Atlantic Charter. In September of 1941 in a speech at Guildhall, Churchill stated:

We did not become involved in this war for reasons of profit or expansion . . . . However I want to be clear: what we have we keep. I did not become His Majesty's Prime Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.<sup>60</sup>

But it was not long before British colonial policy became directed towards the liquidation of the empire. In 1948 the Labor Government announced that: "The central purpose of British policy is simple. It is to guide colonial territories to responsible self-government within the Commonwealth."<sup>61</sup> It should be noted that India, the largest colonial possession, was granted independence in 1947, but it was not until a decade later that Ghana would become the first African territory to gain independence. Within the next three decades Britain had disposed of most of its colonial possessions, although retaining some association with them in the form of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The French on the other hand decided that:

The aims of the civilizational work accomplished by France in her colonies rule out all ideas of autonomy and all possibility of development outside the French Empire; the eventual constitution even in a far off future, of self-government in the colonies is out of the question.<sup>62</sup>

By following this policy France became engaged in a bloody war in Indochina and Algeria. We find that a war effort, aimed at preserving self-determination principally in Europe, resulted in the collapse of colonial empires and the emergence of a multiplicity of independent states. As these independent states emerged along with their constitutions and national flags, there were plans or policies which would lead to rapid industrialization, and this was seen as the key to economic and social transformation.

Programs and policies based upon the strategies in the now industrialized nations were attempted in many of the newly independent states. It soon became clear that those policies would not be a panacea for the economic and social problems of the third world countries. In fact despite the "Development Decade" of the 1960s and 1970s, chronic poverty and economic and social destitution abounds in many third world countries.

The Caribbean Basin countries were no exception to these conditions, yet although all of the countries were within the United Nations classification of developing countries, many are in terms of per capita GNP in the upper range of the developing country classification. Table 3:4 shows per capita income and growth rates for countries included in this study, and some non-Caribbean countries for comparison.

Table 3:4  
Per Capita Incomes and Growth Rates

Country	GNP per capita U.S. \$ 1972	Average annual growth rate as a percentage of per capita GNP	
		1960-1972	1965-1972
Antigua	430	4.0	-0.6
Barbados	800	3.2	6.2
Belize	620	1.9	1.9
Grenada	420	4.1	5.0
Gaudaloupe	910	4.2	5.0
Guyana	400	1.4	1.3
Jamaica	810	3.1	3.9
St. Lucia	420	6.0	3.1
Puerto Rico	2,050	6.0	5.7
Surinam	810	5.7	4.7
Trinidad	970	2.8	3.6
<u>For Comparison</u>			
Canada	4,440	3.6	3.2
Britain	2,600	2.3	2.0
United States	5,590	3.0	2.0
Hong Kong	980	6.1	5.7
China	170	2.6	2.6
Kenya	170	3.6	4.1
India	170	1.1	1.4

Source: World Bank Atlas, 1974.

As these figures demonstrate people in the Caribbean countries are evidently better off than their counterparts in most third world countries. Yet we need to be extremely cautious in using these data to determine the real conditions in a country. In most cases, due to the pattern of income distribution, these figures are not good indicators of the level of living for the majority of the population. The sad truth is that these countries share with the rest of the third world, a high level of unemployment and under-employment. In those areas where labor force surveys have been undertaken, indications are that around 12 to 25 percent of those in the labor force are without regular jobs.

In discussing the industrial infrastructure, we will be examining four principal areas of industrial activity, agricultural, industrial, mining, and tourism. The main concern of economic policy in the Caribbean area during the post WWII period has been how to maintain a high level of economic growth. Emphasis has been placed on developing manufacturing industries, tourism, and mining (where this is feasible) in order to diversify the economy and reduce the dependence on the agricultural sector. But according to Sir Arthur Lewis in an address to the Board of Governors of the Caribbean Development Bank in 1972, this policy has resulted in the agricultural sector "dying" in many Caribbean countries as more and more people give up agriculture and migrate to the urban areas in search of employment.<sup>62</sup> In

fact the data appear to support Lewis' argument as Table 3:5 indicates.

Despite the decline pointed out by Lewis, some significant changes have been taking place in Caribbean agriculture. Most of the sugar plantations are now publicly owned, with small farmers providing the larger share of total production. On the other hand wage labor on the estates has been in decline falling prey to the pull of urban capital intensive industries which offer high wages, and good working conditions (in comparison to estate labor) to a small proportion of the urban labor force, but the importance of agriculture in the national economies of these countries remains quite high. In fact for the region as a whole agriculture accounts for about 10 percent of GDP, while providing employment for approximately 30 percent of the labor force.

In the case of the mineral sector e.g. bauxite in Jamaica, Guyana, and Surinam, and petroleum in Trinidad, revenues from these industries have often come to dominate the country's export sector, but have not resulted in the anticipated increase in employment creation. The industries are highly capital intensive and the product is exported in the primary or semi-primary state. Norman Girvan using Jamaica as an example has shown that:

. . . When we export 7 million tons of bauxite it is worth 18 million - the alumina content of this bauxite is however worth 75 million, the aluminium content of this bauxite 272 million, and as semi-finished metal products it is worth 650 million.<sup>64</sup>

Table 3:5  
 Agricultural Sector as a Percentage of Gross  
 Domestic Product (GDP) 1960-1980

Country	As Percentage of Total GDP			
	1960	1970	1975	1980
Antigua	18.0	3.0(1968)	8.0	7.0
Barbados	25.0	14.0	12.0	9.0
Belize	33.0(1962)	na	28.0	46.0
Grenada	39.0(1961)	20.0	29.0	26.0
Guadaloupe	24.3	12.0	na	na
Guyana	24.0	17.0	29.0	na
Jamaica	11.0	7.0	8.0	8.0
St. Lucia	34.0(1962)	22.0	13.0	13.0
Puerto Rico	10.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Surinam	13.0	na	9.0	11.0(1977)
Trinidad	11.0	3.0	3.0	3.0

Source: United Nations, Statistical Yearbooks, 1964-1981, New York: Statistical Office of the United Nations, 1964-1981; and United Nations ECLA, Economic Survey of Latin America Vol. II, Santiago, Chile: United Nations, 1984.



The employment potential of the mining sector is generally lost since the final product (aluminium) in the case of bauxite, is manufactured in the North American plants of the multinationals engaged in the mining operations in the Caribbean. In addition to the extraction of minerals, other export industries located in the mineral sector have also been developed.

Trinidad is the only Caribbean island with significant reserves of oil and gas, but refineries for imported crude oil have been established in Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, Aruba, Curacao, and St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. As in the case of bauxite, oil refineries utilize highly capital intensive processes. Considering the high rate of unemployment in the Caribbean Basin countries as a whole, development of oil refineries will not provide a solution to the chronic unemployment situation. In the case of Puerto Rico, despite a late start in the petroleum industry, by 1974 it was able to lure some of the biggest U.S. oil and chemical companies (Phillips, Union Carbide, Grace) along with the Dutch-British Shell Group to invest in the island. Of course Puerto Rico enjoys certain advantages over other countries in the area, it is much nearer to the U.S. market and is within the U.S. as far as import duties are concerned.

In order for these countries to really derive full benefit from the petroleum and bauxite industries, it would be necessary to also develop the satellite industries producing plastic, fibres, household chemicals, paints, etc. The real

problem with these capital intensive industries is that the high wage rates have raised the reserve price of labor, thus encouraging migration from the low paid agricultural industries to the urban areas in anticipation of earning higher wages.

Tied in with these new industries in the mineral sector is the policy of offering tax and other investment incentives in order to attract foreign corporations to establish manufacturing industries in the area. The pioneer in this program of "industrialization by invitation" was Puerto Rico with its "Operation Bootstrap". The basis for that program which began in the early 1950s was a very generous tax holiday for investors, low wages and free access to the U.S. markets. During the 1950s and early 1960s Operation Bootstrap was hailed as a huge success worthy of emulation by other Caribbean countries, and indeed most of the other countries eventually adopted this strategy of development. The policy was successful to the extent that there was an influx of foreign capital which resulted in the establishment of manufacturing industries.

As the pioneer we should examine the Puerto Rican experience in more detail in view of the following advantages over other Caribbean territories. Puerto Rico has a common currency with the U.S. offering investors security of investment, its goods can enter the U.S. duty-free, there are close political, economic and institutional links with the U.S. and it also receives large amounts of federal aid.

If we look at the rate of growth of GNP, then the Puerto Rican development program was a success, but the success or failure of a program needs to be examined in terms of its social and political impact. During the period 1950 to 1975 the population of Puerto Rico increased from 2.2 to 3.1 million, or by 40 percent. The working population increased from 1.3 to 2.1 million or 60.1 percent. On the other hand employment increased by only 24 percent from 600,000 to slightly less than 740,000. At the same time unemployment increased from 10 percent in 1950 to 20 percent in 1975.<sup>65</sup> From these figures it is evident that the program has been less successful than was expected, especially as far as net employment was concerned. In addition Puerto Rico began to be affected by competition from other countries, and became a less attractive location for foreign investment.

The result of this policy of industrialization by invitation has been mixed, there have been short term benefits, without the commitment to laying the base for real industrialization. In many instances, once the incentives expired and companies were required to pay local taxes, some simply moved their operations to other countries offering similar investment incentives.

Tourism is a relatively new industry, but one which appears lucrative to most Caribbean countries. It is highly developed in the larger Caribbean islands, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Cuba (prior to the revolution) but for some of the smaller islands, earnings from tourism forms an important

portion of their overall foreign exchange earnings, and of the economy as a whole. However, while tourism is important to the economies of most of the island territories it has not been as significant to the economies of the mainland countries of Belize, Guyana and Surinam.

Although tourism has its supporters there have also been strong critics of the industry. According to a World Bank study it results in:

. . . social tension, the alienation of land caused by movement of farmers into the tourist labor force, . . . the erosion of dignity and perpetualism of servitude involved in employment in the tourist sector.<sup>66</sup>

In addition just as the sugar industry is subject to the vagaries of the weather, so is the tourist industry subject to recessions in the developed economies, and to bad local publicity. The industry exists mainly for providing services to non residents. Likewise much of the earnings accrue to non residents. Again quoting the World Bank study:

The income benefits arising from the industry are, moreover, much smaller than they seem. This is the result of very high leakages of earnings from tourist dollars, as expressed in terms of import costs of inputs used in the industry, repatriation of profits on foreign capital, interest payments on foreign loans, and the cost of wages to expatriate management personnel.<sup>67</sup>

These findings have been substantiated by Richards from a study on tourism in Antigua. He found that:

While gross foreign exchange earnings are substantial, net earnings are less impressive. A breakdown of tourist expenditures in 1963 indicated that 49 percent accrued as local incomes, 10 percent as

government revenue, and 41 percent was spent on imports. . . . a good part of local incomes accrue to non-nationals who repatriate some of it. . . . the first round foreign exchange leakage is around 41 percent.<sup>68</sup>

One of the main problems of the tourism sector is that it has become an enclave within the Caribbean economy. Linkage between the tourism and other sectors of the economy are weak and this is particularly true in the case of agriculture. According to the World Bank study:

Not even Jamaica with its highly developed agricultural base has been able to produce, market, and distribute a significant quantity of food supplies for hotels on a regular basis.<sup>69</sup>

While the industry will probably remain controversial, with the development of linkages to other sectors of the economy, this could result in greater acceptance by the public in general.

### Components of Industrial Conflict

The strike is the most obvious manifestation of industrial conflict. Kerr has pointed out, in addition to a variety of forms of conventional strike action that:

. . . conflict with the employer may also take the form of peaceful bargaining, and grievance handling, of boycotts, of political action, of restriction of output, of sabotage, of absenteeism, or of personnel turnover.<sup>70</sup>

As a society moves toward a higher level of industrialization, the machinery of society becomes complicated and the

components more interdependent. The strike phenomenon also undergoes an evolution due to technological progress, and while there are passive expressions or minor forms of strike activity, at the other end of the scale, there are also violent expressions of industrial conflict involving social, political, and economic structures.

In the past the tendency in the literature was to focus on one type of index when considering strike activity. That index was usually based upon gross strike frequency or mandays lost, adjusted by size of the work force. An example of this is Kerr and Siegel's 1954 study in which they used a single index of strike activity "strike proneness," based on the number of mandays lost through strikes, and the volume of employment. The use of a single index to define strike proneness operationally was criticized by Wallace. He pointed out that according to his own research, the results are different, if different measures of interindustry strike behavior are regressed on indicators of the social and physical isolation of the workforce.<sup>72</sup>

The strike data used in this study are based on those published by the ILO, using three components of industrial conflict: number of strikes, number of workers involved, and number of mandays lost. These data are given on an annual basis for economy wide totals, and also for nine different sectors of economic activity. In their research on strikes, Shorter and Tilly, Forscheimer, and Knowles, have used these components in addition to employment data to generate the

following three strike dimensions; size (strikers per strike), duration, (mandays lost per strike) and frequency (strikes per 1000 civilian wage and salaried workers).<sup>73</sup> Britt and Galle<sup>74</sup> used these components (substituting for employment data, number of workers employed in an industry) to generate four measures of industrial conflict. Let

WKRS = the number of workers employed in an industry

WS = the number of work stops from strikes, walk-outs, and lockouts

WI = the number of workers involved in work stops

MDI = the number of man-days idle from work stops.

These measures are then used to produce the following indices:

Volume of conflict =  $(MDI/WKRS)(1000)$

Proneness to conflict =  $(WS)$

Extensivity of conflict =  $(WI/WS/WKRS)(1000)$

Intensity of conflict =  $(MDI/WI)$

The four component indices above are then used to investigate strike activity index relationships. In their findings Britt and Galle claim that their paper:

. . . demonstrates the viability of decomposing the overall measure of industrial conflict (volume of conflict) into theoretically distinct dimensions. . . Our<sup>75</sup> analysis suggests possible paths of future research.

Forchheimer on the other hand sees the number of days lost as the most comprehensive indication of the strength of labor disputes in a country, during a specified period.<sup>76</sup> According to his study if we call:

the number of disputes  $F$  (frequency)

the number of workers involved  $W$

the number of days lost  $L$

Then  $W/F$  stands for the average magnitude of disputes which we may call  $M$ .  $L/W$  = the average duration (or perseverance) of disputes called  $P$ .  $L$  will be three dimensional:  $L = F.M.P.$  or we may say:

Volume = Frequency x Size x Duration.

Bringing this down to the components:

Number of Mandays lost = No. of Stoppages x No. of workers involved/No. of stoppages.<sup>77</sup> We can therefore use each of these measures for cross time and cross country analysis, with the dimension, number of days lost, giving the strength of the movement. Then  $F$ ,  $M$ , and  $P$  are the components of that strength.

As we examine the index, volume of conflict, we need to recognize that the data we are working with have certain limitations, and may not be as precise as we would desire. For example, the usefulness of mandays lost could be enhanced by having data on the total labor force, or number of employees in the industry in which the strike occurred. Does the working day vary, is there a five, six or seven day work week? But these data will not be uniform on a cross-national basis, or even on an industry wide basis, therefore we have to use the existing components which other scholars have also accepted. The analysis using these components and indices will be carried out in Chapter 6.



Political Power and Industrial Conflict

Shorter and Tilly in their study of strikes in France have portrayed the strike as an instrument of working class political action. They see the strike as an extension of working class participation in the political process. If we accept their analogy, do we deny that strikes are "tests of economic strength" and agree that the real antagonists according to the workers, are the political authorities, rather than the employers? We would argue that there is no clear yes/no answer to this question.

Union movements in the U.S.A. are good examples of "business unions" interested primarily in the defense of rank and file interests. In northern Europe the unions are more class oriented, and most likely are linked to a political party, with a social or christian democratic ideology. Unions in the Latin countries of Europe tend to be affiliated to communist parties. According to Kendall<sup>78</sup> one of the reasons for these close links between the unions and the political parties in many European countries, is that trade unions are of fairly recent origin and were preceded by the political parties. The parties therefore had a strong role in the formation of the unions, and continue to play an influential role in the affairs of the trade unions. These unions have been broadly classified as welfare unions, being concerned not only with the welfare of their own members, but also with the "good" of society in general. One example of this is

the "social contract" negotiated by the British Trade Union Congress with the British government after the 1974 elections. This contract dealt with industrial issues of concern to the rank and file union member, but it also involved broader governmental social policy. The General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) was preoccupied with old age pensions, and vigorously pursued this issue, in the light of the social contract. As a result there was a substantial rise in the level of old age pensions, a result which was undoubtedly influenced by the stand taken by the TGWU.

Trade union development in Europe has an important bearing on trade unionism in the countries covered by this study, since all these countries were once colonies of a European power, viz. the British, French, Dutch and Spanish. Union development in Caribbean countries is a product not only of colonialism, but other influences such as the establishment of U.S. military bases on some of the islands during WWII, communism, socialism, catholic radicalism, and unions in the United States.

The Caribbean has been an exceptionally creative area for the development of new forms of trade unionism, and these countries have been exceptionally creative in utilizing various influences to develop trade unions which were suitable to their colonial situation. However in Britain there was no trade union affiliation among rival political parties, while in most economies of British colonial origin the opposite was true. As we have pointed out before in this study, early

trade unions in the colonies were striving for employment opportunities, and wages which would provide bare necessities for a minimal standard of living. The master/servant relationship and the regulatory system was designed to perpetuate management control over the working class.

Demands from the unions for increased wages and an improved standard of living were seen as a redistribution of wealth, which was not to be tolerated. The unions quickly recognized that since they had limited economic power, attaining political power would be necessary if there was to be meaningful change in their economic and social condition.

It is at this point that the union movement spawned political parties, which started off as local organizations, but later mushroomed into nationalist political movements. But the nascent political organizations were not yet strong enough to exert the power of coercion over the ruling authorities, so they remained closely allied with the trade unions which provided their power base.

We need to place this development in the proper perspective of Caribbean colonialism, as these trade unions and political parties did not just develop spontaneously. When the British colonized India and Africa, cultural continuity was maintained in those areas, there was no large infusion of population. The colonial master was a visitor, they never intended to settle the land. To the indigenous population it was clear who was the exploiter and the exploited.

In the Carribbean the pattern was different since the population in these countries was not indigenous, and consisted of masters and slaves. With emancipation the relationship became master and servant. It is interesting to note that in Jamaica for instance, the Master and Servant law which was enacted in 1838 was still the fundamental law governing the relationship between employer and worker up to 1974, the year it was repealed, twelve years after the country became independent.

The masters who in the case of the British colonies were mainly white British settlers were the main beneficiaries of the system. Many of the expatriates came to live in the colonies, they were not by any means transients. In comparison to the situation in the African colonies the process of exploitation was less visible because the white plantocracy could claim to be Jamaican, thus the transfer of wealth and resources back to Britain was less obvious to the casual observer, and also more justifiable.

The goals of the political organizations were therefore to raise the standard of living of the working class, while the trade unions provided the crucial link between the working class (the peasants), and the nationalist political leaders. Due to this relationship an economic downturn presents the most opportune time for the workers to rally "en masse" against the "system". But despite the latent demands in the minds of the political entrepreneurs for political economic change, in the early years of this relationship, we find that

the economic demands had a tendency to overshadow political nationalism.

In Jamaica when Bustamante formed the JLP as an extension of the BITU, the party's major platform was high wages and better working conditions for the workers. Bustamante saw the problem as an economic one, rather than in the broad context of colonial exploitation. Manley on the other hand founded the PNP as a socialist party, also with trade union affiliation, but supporting the premise that there should not only be a challenge to the local economic power structure, but the overall system of colonial exploitation. For the people of Jamaica when the two philosophies were placed before the electorate in the first elections under adult suffrage, the choice was for the JLP and its demand for higher wages, rather than the anti-colonialist stand of the PNP.

If we compare the views from British colonial Africa, and that from the Caribbean, the former saw their problem in political terms, and the necessity of a political solution. The latter, to a great extent saw an economic problem which necessitated an economic solution. This of course was a reaction to the local white employer group (the local bourgeoisie) who were seen in the Caribbean as exploiters. The task for the political leadership was therefore to convince the working class (educate the working class) that by gaining political independence, there would be the opportunity for putting forward a broad program of social and economic reform. The important goal to be achieved here was that the masses must

realize that the gains to be achieved from the politico-trade union organization will be more beneficial than any purely economic benefits derived under the colonial master/servant relationship.

At this point it was important that the political organizations were able to unite the trade union movement in order to exhibit the show of support necessary to obtain some changes in the constitutional status of the colonies. Of course unity is next to impossible where there are rival unions supporting rival political parties. But agreement for the common good in the face of the colonial exploitation is feasible. Therefore despite local rivalries, the parties found it possible to present a "united front" in order to achieve the final goal of independence.

With the achievement of independence, the rivalries and patterns of confrontation will re-establish themselves. In fact in the post independence period there are signs of a gradual shift to the business type of trade union in the Caribbean. This tendency is no doubt the result of maturation of the political process in the overall governmental system of the independent state.

### Summary

This chapter has dealt with some of the important elements among the various factors leading to the development of political unionism in the countries being examined in this study.

Our discussion of political trade unionism began with the emancipation of the slaves, starting in the British colonies in 1838. This is the key to the formation of trade unions, political parties and any other organizations which are based upon freedom of association in these countries. A labor movement like other organizations in society is influenced by tradition and history in the country or region in which it develops. In the case of the Caribbean that background is colonialism, slavery and exploitation. Plantation society in the Caribbean was based upon a slave mode of production i.e. production was carried out by a class of land owners who owned not only the land, but the means of production and the workers (slaves) as well.

According to the report of the West India Royal Commission, when Africans were brought to the Caribbean as slaves:

. . . no attempt was made to substitute any kind of social organization for the somewhat elaborate tribal codes of the areas whence they were brought. The benefits of education, and the institution of marriage were discouraged, and on emancipation a large number of persons were left to shift for themselves without the support of traditions of self-help or mutual cooperation.<sup>9</sup>

Production from the plantation was totally dependent upon a foreign market (usually in Europe), and there was only minimal economic exchange between the plantations as they were all producing the same good. In effect therefore the plantation was a total institution, providing for all the needs of the slaves, controlling them from birth (or date

of acquisition) to death, and like the prison or the asylum it transformed all those who entered its gates.

In this chapter we develop a realistic picture of plantation society, because the life of a slave was one of total oppression which often led to rebellion among slaves, and on the plantations. In a study of industrial conflict among the descendants of those slaves, we discern a tendency to resistance in the employment relationship, and against the social and political norms in a society which even one hundred years later was not remarkably different from that of 1838.

Resistance and conflict was not new to the slave or the society in which they were held captive. There are numerous accounts of slave rebellions in the Caribbean, one of the most notable being the rebellion of the slaves in Haiti which led to the independence of that country from France in 1804. The Maroons of Jamaica are also an example of rebellious slaves who fled the plantations and established their own settlement in the mountains of Jamaica.

With emancipation, slavery as a legal institution ended, but the structure of the society which had supported that method of organization of labor did not change. In the one hundred years between 1838 and 1938, the slave plantation economy had become a capitalist plantation economy, and the former slaves and their descendants had evolved into a peasantry, and an estate worker/wage labor class.

In order to ensure an adequate supply of wage labor for the estates, it was in the interest of the estate owners to



prevent the ex-slaves from owning land. Thus many of the large estates remained intact after emancipation.

As far as political influence of the masses was concerned, this was negligible since the majority of the population was denied the franchise in the British colonies. On the other hand in the French colonies by their policy of centralization and association, French citizenship was granted to their colonial subjects along with the franchise. The Dutch did not grant the franchise to Surinam until 1948, but by 1900 the Puerto Ricans could elect members to the Lower House of their Assembly, although effective control of the island remained in American hands.

The great depression therefore became the straw which broke the camel's back. The industrial conflict and in some instances outright riots were the result of the colonial policy of exploitation, a demand for more representation by the masses in the government of their countries, and improvement in the economic conditions of the masses.

In the absence of the franchise it was difficult to establish political parties, but with the passage of liberal trade union legislation, the trade unions became organizations in which almost anyone could participate. They were also the rallying point for the dispossessed workers and peasants against the poor state of the economies in these countries and the inequities in the political system.

The passage of the CD&W Act in 1940 was instrumental in ensuring that trade unions became firmly established in

the British Caribbean. Encouragement was also given to trade union development in Surinam and Guadeloupe, but to a lesser extent than in the British colonies. In Puerto Rico trade unions were allowed to develop, but as in the U.S. their effectiveness was linked to the passage of the NLRA in 1935. However, in all the territories there were close ties between the trade unions and the fledgling political parties, particularly in the period after the mid-1930s. The trade unions became highly politicized in their demands for not only economic benefits, but also political and social advancement for the colonized population of these countries.

With the strengthening of the trade union movement through more liberal legislation and regulation, and the emergence of political parties based upon militant trade unionism, constitutional advances were implemented in the British colonies. Departmental status was granted to Guadeloupe in 1946, and political advances were also implemented in Surinam.

Following WWII and the constitutional advances being implemented in the British Caribbean territories, Crown Colony government was replaced by a representative system which gave responsibility for domestic affairs to the elected representatives of the people. These representatives, drawn from the newly formed political parties, began to direct their energies towards economic development. It was felt that government stimuli in this area was necessary. The stimulus in many instances arose out of "Development Plans and the Formento Program in Puerto Rico," better known as Operation Bootstrap.

The basic policy for economic development was industrialization by invitation, whereby incentives were given to attract foreign capitalists to establish manufacturing plants in these countries. This policy was to a certain extent successful, as there were large American and Canadian capital inflows in expanding bauxite mining in Jamaica, Guyana and Surinam, as well as petroleum in Trinidad. There was also expansion of the tourist industry (construction of hotels by international hotel chains) and the establishment of branch manufacturing plants.

However, many of these operations were capital intensive, they were primarily foreign owned and most of the inputs had to be imported, including the skilled manpower to operate and manage these industries. The goals of the development plans and the policies of the governments were that the economies would show an increase in average and real incomes, provide jobs for the unemployed, and new entrants to the labor force. While there was overall economic growth, for the masses of the people employment opportunities were limited, and in many instances employment was a promise for the future.

Race and class differences tended to be reinforced in the new enterprises, with whites (at the top), brown/mulattoes (middle) and blacks at the bottom of the hierarchy, indicating little change from the early colonial years. This chapter also points to the anomalous situation of a people almost going full circle. In the middle of the late 19th century emancipation from slavery, one hundred years later the

emergence of mass parties with a trade union base opposing colonial rule and demanding change in the political, economic and social structure of the colonies.

With the end of WWII these goals began to be achieved, constitutional changes were implemented leading to independence, and a transfer of state control to nationalist politicians. The economic benefits which many had anticipated with decolonization did not materialize. Despite political freedom, the economies became firmly wedded to the imperialist system and the masses saw little benefit from all the "development" that was going on. Herein therefore were the seeds of another crop of mass conflict in the post independence period, directed not at the colonial masters, but the neocolonialists and a newly established local bourgeoisie, a high salaried managerial elite, and corrupt politicians.

### CHAPTER THREE: FOOTNOTES

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>4</sup>See: Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report of Conference on the Close Association of the British West Indian Colonies, Part II, Col. No. 218 (London, 1948), p. 139.

<sup>5</sup>See: O. W. Phelps, "Rise of the Labor Movement in Jamaica," Social and Economic Studies Vol. 9(4) 1960. See also West India Royal Commission Report, Cmd. 6607, London: HMSO, 1945.

<sup>6</sup>See: House of Commons Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 5th Series Vol. 328, 923 (Nov. 3, 1937); Vol. 331, 1045 (Feb. 9, 1938); Vol. 1529 (Feb. 14, 1938); Vol. 1868 (Feb. 16, 1938); Vol. 326, 331 (July 7, 1937); Vol. 1241 (July 14, 1937); Vol. 331, 1530 (Feb. 14, 1938).

<sup>7</sup>See: Howard Johnson, "Oil, Imperial Policy and the Trinidad Disturbances, 1937," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, Vol. IV, No. 1 (October, 1975) for an analysis of Trinidad's oil supply to Britain during WWII.

<sup>8</sup>See: House of Commons Parliamentary Debates, Hansard, Vol. 332 (1938) Col. 797.

<sup>9</sup>For further information see House of Commons Parliamentary Debates, Hansard Vol. 332, 766 (Feb. 1938).

<sup>10</sup>Granville St. John Orde Browne, Labor Conditions in the West Indies, Cmd. 6070. London: HMSO, 1939.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, pp. 23-31 and 39-50.

<sup>12</sup>Lord Sydney Oliver, "The Truth about the West Indies," The Nineteenth Century and After.

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<sup>17</sup>John LaGuerre, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>19</sup>See: United States Tariff Commission Report 151, Second Series: Commercial Policies and Trade Relations of European Possessions in the Caribbean Area, Washington, D. C.: 1943, p. 311.

<sup>20</sup>J. C. de la Roche, "Tension in the French West Indies," Foreign Affairs, April 1943, p. 564.

<sup>21</sup>Paul Blanshard, Democracy and Empire in the Caribbean: A Contemporary Review, New York: Macmillan, 1947, p. 274.

<sup>22</sup>Earl Parker Hanson, Puerto Rico: Ally for Progress, Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1962, p. 75.

<sup>23</sup>Morton J. Golding, A Short History of Puerto Rico, New York: New American Library, 1973, p. 128.

<sup>24</sup>See: Victor Clarke et al., Puerto Rico and its Problems, Washington, D. C.: The Brookings Institution, 1930.

<sup>25</sup>See Edward B. Lockett, The Puerto Rican Problem, New York: Exposition Press, 1964, pp. 100-101.

<sup>26</sup>Note: From 1898 to 1934 Puerto Rican affairs were administered by the Bureau of Insular Affairs set up in the War Department. In 1934 the administration was moved to the Division of Territories within the Department of the Interior.

<sup>27</sup>Sakari Sariola, The Puerto Rican Dilemma, Port Washington, N. Y.: Kennikat Press Corp, 1979, p. 105.

<sup>28</sup>C. L. R. James, "The Birth of a Nation," in Susan Craig (ed.) Contemporary Caribbean Vol. I, Maracas, Trinidad and Tobago: The College Press, 1981, p. 12.

<sup>29</sup>Eric Williams, "Slavery in the Caribbean," in Trevor Munro and Rupert Lewis (eds.) Readings in Government and Politics of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica: University of West Indies, 1971, p. 20.

<sup>30</sup>See: West India Royal Commission, Report, Cmd. 6607, London: HMSO, 1945.

<sup>31</sup>The Colonial Development and Welfare Act, Chapter 40 of 1940.

<sup>32</sup>See House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 408 H. C. 5th Series, Col. 550.

<sup>33</sup>See: Aston Chase, A History of Trade Unionism in Guyana 1901 to 1961, Demerara, Guyana: New Guyana Co. Ltd., 1964.

<sup>34</sup>Brinsley Samaroo, "The Trinidad Workingmen's Association and the Origin of Popular Protest in a Crown Colony," Social and Economic Studies, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1972, pp. 211-212.

<sup>35</sup>See: In the Spirit of Butler: Trade Unionism in Free Grenada, St. Georges, Grenada: Fedon Publishers, 1982, p. 34.

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<sup>43</sup>Murray Edelman, "The Conservative Political Consequence of Labor Conflict" in Gerald D. Sommers (ed.) Essays in Industrial Relations Theory, Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1969, pp. 174-175.

<sup>44</sup>Walter Galenson (ed.), Labor and Economic Development, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1959, p. 7.

<sup>45</sup>B. C. Roberts, op. cit., p. 260.

<sup>46</sup>See: ILO, Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87), ILO Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>47</sup>See: ILO, Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), ILO Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>48</sup>See: Puerto Rico v Shell Oil Company (302 US 253).

<sup>49</sup>See: In the matter of Ronrico Corporation and Puerto Rico Distilling Company (53 NLRB No. 160).

<sup>50</sup>See: 49 Stat. 449 (1935), Sec. 7.

<sup>51</sup>ILO, Labor Policies in the West Indies, Geneva, Switzerland: ILO, 1952, p. 276.

<sup>52</sup>See: Dr. Cheddi Jagan, The West on Trial: The Fight for Guyana's Freedom, London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1966 and C. Y. Thomas, The Rise of the Authoritarian State in Peripheral Societies. Monthly Review Press, 1984.

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<sup>58</sup>Royal Institute of International Affairs, The British Caribbean: A Brief Political and Economic Survey, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 13.

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<sup>63</sup>Sir Arthur Lewis, Statement at the Second Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Caribbean Development Bank, April, 1972, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup>Norman Girvan, et al., "Unemployment in Jamaica," readings in the Political Economy of the Caribbean, Jamaica: New World Group, 1971, p. 272.

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<sup>70</sup>Clark Kerr, Labor and Management in Industrial Societies, Doubleday, 1964, p. 171.

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<sup>72</sup>See: Richard A. Wallace, Factors Affecting Strike Decisions, Ph.D. Dissertation, New School for Social Research, 1972.

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<sup>74</sup>David Britt and Omer R. Galle, "Industrial Conflict and Unionization," American Sociological Review, Vol. 37, 1972, p. 48.

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<sup>76</sup>Forchheimer, op. cit., p. 220.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>78</sup>W. Kendall, The Labor Movement in Europe, London: Allen Lane, 1975, p. 22.

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INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN DEVELOPING  
SOCIETIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Volume II

By

Whitfield Edmund Constantine Tillet

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## CHAPTER 4

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT

The political activities of trade unions in colonial territories have been important because of their effect in supporting and in many instances being the moving force behind the demands for political independence. Despite their political functions, expectations did not end with the achievement of independence. That was only the first stage of a three stage process, the second being increased economic growth, and the third, the effect on shaping the relationship between government, the political parties and the trade union movement after independence.

This Chapter will be more concerned with the second of the three processes mentioned above, i.e. increased economic growth, and the effect of industrialization on the nature and extent of collective action arising out of the employment relationship. I will also be examining changes in the shape of strikes over the period covered by this study, the effect of price changes of certain commodities on strike activity, and the potential for political repercussions.

#### Industrialization and Collective Action

According to Goldschmidt, " Every society is an organized entity . . . New technological practices are disruptive to



such entities."<sup>1</sup> Industrialization and new or improved technologies tend to go hand in hand and generally result in new patterns of behavior in the society utilizing the technology. This is a study which focusses upon industrial conflict and we posit that such conflict must have occurred in an industrial or industrializing society. Shorter and Tilly clarify this point in their statement that:

We are attempting to single out the strike itself as a distinctive form of collective action, . . . No doubt concerted work stoppages date back as far as organized work itself. But that form of work stoppage we call the strike only became a standardized and frequent form of collective action in the western countries with the industrialization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>2</sup>

The process of industrialization gives rise to labor problems, and in many instances there is considerable resistance from those who will be most affected by the changes, especially where these seriously alter deeply held values. To many industrialization means the introduction of machinery, factory organization and urban employment. But it is important especially in dealing with third world countries, that the concept be extensive enough to encompass large scale agricultural production and rural industries.

If we look at the capitalist mode of production which was a result of the industrial revolution in Great Britain, we can also view the rise of the labor movement, as a corollary to that development. The role of the trade union in modern society has traditionally been accepted as a response to the capitalist mode of production, and the process of industrialization. Commons pointed out that "The labor movement is always

a reaction and protest against capitalism."<sup>3</sup> Perlman saw trade unions as an effort by workers to acquire a measure of control over jobs within the capitalist order.<sup>4</sup> In summing up the traditional views G.D.H. Cole was of the opinion that:

The labor movement has . . . in all developed countries, the same form . . . It is the child of modern capitalism, out of the industrial revolution.<sup>5</sup>

The above views are based upon the assumption that industrialization arises principally under a capitalist mode of production. But industrialization also takes place in a variety of cultural settings, and this may determine the type and extent of the problems which occur during the process. In instances where there is a class or caste structure, this will obviously affect the recruitment of the labor force. But an even more important effect on the form which industrialization will take arises where there are nationalist aspirations in areas under colonialism.

The traditional analysis of industrial conflict has suggested that such conflicts directly relate to the struggle between capital and labor. Yet how do we explain those conflicts in instances where only a small proportion of the labor force is unionized?

Perhaps we should examine not only the inherent differences between capital and labor as a source of industrial conflict, but also the problems of developing a committed labor force, and the social and economic changes which confront society during the course of industrialization. In the context

of this study the focus is upon labor-capital conflict, as the dominant source of industrial unrest. The political, economic, and social aspirations of a colonized society are a secondary source of such conflict, while industrialization and economic growth with their implied demand for the development of a committed labor force and its concomittant social and economic disruptions are a third source of labor conflict.

In 1949 Raul Prebisch published his well known treatise "The Economic Development of Latin America and its Problems" in which he argued the case for industrialization in Latin America. At about the same time W. Arthur Lewis was involved in a similar undertaking, publishing in 1950 an article entitled "Industrialization of the West Indies." Lewis felt that the need for industrialization arose out of the unfavorable land/population distribution, and stated that:

The case for rapid industrialization in the West Indies rests chiefly on overpopulation. The islands already carry a larger population than agriculture can absorb, and populations are growing at rates of 1.5 to 2.0 percent per annum. It is therefore urgent to create new opportunities for employment off the land.<sup>6</sup>

Lewis posed an argument that overpopulation in the West Indies allowed a comparative advantage in labor intensive industrialization. His advice was that the West Indies should seek to develop labor intensive manufactures for export to the metropolitan markets. But this would necessitate investment capital which was not available locally, resulting in the need for participation by foreign investors. This model

became known as "Industrialization by Invitation," already mentioned in Chapter 3.

Prebisch on the other hand argued the case for action by the independent states of Latin America which had greater control over the whole process of monetary and fiscal policy, access to international financial markets and planning for industrialization. In the case of the Caribbean, at the time Lewis was putting forward his proposals, the countries in the region were still under colonial rule. While there were aggressive demands for economic improvement indicated in the riots of 1937-1938, this was overshadowed by the call for political autonomy, which was seen as the only effective means of initiating change in the economic and social status of the masses.

Within a decade of Lewis' writings, the British colonial territories in the Caribbean were on the verge of attaining full political autonomy. Jamaica was the first to become independent in 1962. However by 1964 scholars of Caribbean political economy were pointing out that:

One of the more striking features of West Indian development is, that the progress made towards political independence has not been accompanied by paralld advances in the economic field . . . West Indian territories are still regarded as outstanding examples of dependent economies.

As in the case of Operation Bootstrap in Puerto Rico, industrialization by invitation in the British Caribbean territories was failing to make a significant impact on the unemployment problem. There was little indication that the

program was building the dynamics for economic growth, especially in the light of the political reality of independence. With independence it was expected that the economies would exhibit a lesser degree of external dependence. But a policy of industrialization by invitation would simply perpetuate foreign economic influence and this was anathema in the light of the new political status of the Caribbean territories.

The nationalist political leaders were preoccupied with a conscious need to reduce external economic dependence, and regional economic integration was seen as a viable alternative. In 1965 Demas published "The Economics of Dependence in Small Countries with Special Reference to the Caribbean."<sup>8</sup> This study chronicled the failure of the Caribbean economies to maintain self-sustaining economic growth; the problems of high unemployment and the smallness of the domestic market. Demas felt that the ability of small countries to transform their production structure and thus sustain economic development was restricted by their size. For the Caribbean, economic integration was proposed as a viable solution to the problem of external economic dependence.

In August 1969 the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) was established with the following objectives: to broaden domestic markets through the elimination of trade barriers; to promote coordinated and sustained economic development by the optimum use of available human and other resources; and to ensure that the benefits of free trade were equitably distributed among member states.

As far as the other countries in this study are concerned, it was at first intended that they would also be eligible to join CARIFTA. However, it was quickly recognized that membership by states outside the Commonwealth would present insurmountable problems. Guadeloupe was part of France's Overseas Departments, Surinam was a member of the Tripartite Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was tied to the political and economic system of the United States. Later Dr. Eric Williams, Prime Minister of Trinidad in addressing his followers at the "University of Woodford Square," said that:

We talked to Surinam, and Surinam said we don't want any association with Puerto Rico, that's an American colony; we talked to the French and the French said we are not willing to go into any association because Puerto Rico means the American State Department; and we talked to Puerto Rico and they said we don't want to get into any arrangement with Martinique because that means President deGaulle.

CARIFTA therefore continued as an association of Commonwealth Caribbean states, but the experience pointed to the next stage in regional integration, i.e. a broader based and more concrete organization. At their 1972 annual meeting, the Heads of Government agreed that CARIFTA should evolve into a new organization, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which would further promote economic development of the member countries, and the region as a whole.

CARICOM was formed in 1973 after the CARIFTA partners had agreed upon the areas in which they would cooperate.

The agreement known as the Georgetown Accord was signed by Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad. The governments of Belize, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent agreed to become members by May 1, 1974, after which CARIFTA would cease to exist. With the establishment of CARICOM there was a strengthening of regional ties through the establishment of a common external tariff, a uniform system of fiscal incentives for industry, double taxation and tax-sparing agreements, and the formation of a Caribbean Investment Corporation. The latter was specifically designed to funnel equity funds to the less developed member states. There are also other non-economic areas in which cooperation has been established e.g. health, education and cultural activities, as well as consultations to harmonize the foreign policies of the independent states.

While the Commonwealth Bloc was attempting to advance the level of their association through the establishment of CARICOM, the non-commonwealth countries in this study premised their plans for industrialization upon their links with the various metropolitan countries. Surinam was associated with the European Economic Community (EEC) through Part iv of the Treaty of Rome, while Guadeloupe, a French Department was incorporated into the EEC based upon Article 227 of that Treaty.<sup>10</sup>

Under the CARIFTA and later the CARICOM agreements, manufacturing and industrialization policies in general, took on a more regional scope. As we saw from Table 3:5 there

had been a gradual decline in the agricultural proportion of GDP. Despite policies intended to encourage industrialization, in some instances starting in the late 1950s, there was little evidence of any dramatic changes in manufacturing, e.g. as a percentage of GDP. But Table 4:1 indicates that some countries have been able to sustain or increase the level of manufacturing as a percentage of GDP over the period 1950-1980, while there are also indications of a decline in manufacturing over the same period.

The level of manufacturing activity during the decade of the 1950s can be attributed to fiscal incentives under the industrialization by invitation program. It was during this period especially in the larger Caribbean countries that many foreign firms established subsidiaries to take advantage of the incentives being offered. While fiscal measures by the governments to stimulate industrialization did not result in the anticipated bonanza, a number of industries were established, essentially geared to import substitution.

Despite the increase in investment in Caribbean economies by MNCs, the industrial relations system in the Commonwealth Caribbean countries remained virtually unchanged from the late 1930s to the early 1960s. This is surprising considering that these countries had adopted the industrialization by invitation program as a means of stimulating industrial development, and this resulted in the establishment of subsidiaries of North American Corporations, which were accustomed to a more legalistic system of industrial relations.



Table 4:1

Manufacturing as a  
Percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)  
(1950-1980)

<u>Country</u>	Manufacturing as Percentage of GDP			
	<u>1950-60</u>	<u>1960-70</u>	<u>1970-74</u>	<u>1975-80</u>
Antigua	n.a.	n.a.	-3.4('73-'75)	7.7
Barbados	14.0	10.8	10.0	6.2
Belize	n.a.	n.a.	13.4	3.6
Grenada	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Guadeloupe	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Guyana	11.4	12.2	12.9	n.a.
Jamaica	15.2	16.5	17.5	-6.6
St. Lucia	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3.5
Puerto Rico	9.5	9.5	8.5	5.3
Surinam	8.9	9.7	6.9	10.7
Trinidad	23.2	20.9	16.2	3.6

Source: World Bank, World Tables (2nd Edition 1980), Baltimore, MD, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980; and U. N. Statistical Yearbooks 1974 and 1982, Geneva: ILO 1974 and 1982.

At this point we should place this development program in its proper perspective in order to understand the extent of the influence of the international labor movement on the domestic trade unions in the Caribbean. The industrialization program commenced in the 1950s during the height of the Cold War and the United States (along with other western powers) was interested in containing the 'communist menace' in order to preserve their international security interests. For the United States that security would be achieved by shaping an external environment in which the political and social values of institutions in those countries were conducive to U.S. interests. Two ways of achieving this were through the involvement of the U.S. Corporations (economic investments), and through U.S. influence in the international trade union movement.

As far back as 1946 the AFL supported the establishment of the Inter-American Confederation of Workers (CIT) as an alternative to the World Federation of Trade Union's (WFTU) affiliated regional organization, the Latin American Confederation of Labor (CTAL). By 1949 the British Trade Union Congress (TUC) was no longer affiliated to the WFTU, and the TUC was instrumental in the creation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

Both the AFL and the CIO became affiliated to the ICFTU and they began to stress self-determination for colonial territories. In 1957 the AFL in publishing a "Bill of Particulars" emphasized that the ICFTU should act as the "foremost champion

of the peoples fighting for their national independence."<sup>12</sup> In addition to supporting the struggle against colonialism the AFL and the CIO were also making strong statements against communist influence in the trade union movement in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

When the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT) was founded, it was seen as an organization "dedicated to wiping communist and fascist influence from the labor movements of the western hemisphere."<sup>13</sup> There is also evidence that the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) became increasingly involved in the activities of ORIT. This interest extended to the expanding mineral industries in Latin America and the Caribbean (copper in Chile, iron ore in Venezuela, bauxite in Guyana and Jamaica). But many of the pronouncements of the USWA had a familiar anti-communist ring, which was not surprising in view of the fact that this was the height of the cold war period. At times there appeared to be more cold war rhetoric than genuine concern for the economic security of the workers in the trade unions affiliated to ORIT.

By 1954 the National Workers Union (NWU) of Jamaica represented all workers in the bauxite-alumina industry in that country (the industry was owned and operated by American and Canadian aluminium MNCs). According to Steel Labor the USWA newspaper, the workers of Jamaica requested aid from the ICFTU. These "workers" were of course members of the NWU employed in the bauxite/alumina industry in Jamaica. The USWA

represented aluminium workers in the USA and Canada and the inference was, that they were the logical union to render assistance to their 'brothers' in Jamaica.<sup>15</sup> Thus began the close association of the USWA with the NWU, one of the largest trade unions in Jamaica.

The relationship between the USWA and the NWU clearly had more important ramifications than purely trade union solidarity. Due to the political nature of the trade unions in the countries included in this study, close involvement by foreign organizations in the local trade union movement had the potential for becoming implicated in domestic politics. This included possibly having some influence on government policy, if and when the party supported by a particular trade union succeeded in forming the government. A concrete example of such foreign influence was the crisis in Guyana following the electoral victory by the PPP in 1961. Foreign trade union groups with covert support by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) provided financial and material support to anti-PPP interests intent on destabilizing the Marxist government of Dr. Cheddi Jagan.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to involvement from the international trade union movement, Corporations investing in these countries were interested in having an industrial relations climate with which they were familiar. American firms were especially interested in fostering the U.S. system of industrial relations. Eaton<sup>17</sup> points out that in Jamaica the first substantive discussion of American industrial and labor relations

procedures were aired at a Board of Inquiry into disputes between unions in 1950. In discussing representational polls, a representative of Reynolds Aluminium Company strongly advocated US labor relations practices in dealing with representational disputes. The subtle message was that US firms preferred to deal with trade unions which operated in a similar manner to those in the US. By implication, this also meant that American capital would be wary of investing in countries which had not developed the means to deal with representational conflicts between trade unions.

Along with the issue of representational disputes, the question of political unionism also arose at the hearings before the Board of Inquiry in Jamaica, but this was not unique to Jamaica. Political unionism was seen as a source of instability among unionized workers, a view which was echoed by a report from a World Bank Mission to Jamaica. The report indicated that problems could arise in Jamaica because of the political nature of the trade union movement. It went on to point out that the level of production could be strongly affected by strike rates, and that private foreign capital would be attracted to Jamaica only if the country could establish a reputation for orderly settlement of labor disputes.<sup>18</sup>

As mentioned earlier in this study the policy of industrialization by invitation was one which had become the common economic development strategy for most Caribbean countries in the 1950s and 1960s. Trinidad was no exception and after independence in 1962, the government felt it was necessary

to maintain a favorable investment climate, if it was to continue to attract foreign capital. One of the most important considerations was that the work force be tranquil and compliant. This was important because in the post independence period there was a sharp increase in the number of work stoppages, strikes and industrial disputes.

The results of the Trinidad elections of 1946 and 1950 indicated that there was no cohesive, nationalist party able to draw support from the labor movement, as we have seen occurring in Jamaica. The most significant party with support from organized labor was the Butler Party (named after its leader T. U. B. Butler, a militant trade unionist of the 1930s) which drew support mainly from the Oilfields Workers Trade Union.

The 1950 election gave the Butler Party the largest single group in the legislature, but no member of the party was chosen to sit on the Executive Council (a colonial form of cabinet). This constitutional maneuvering by the colonial Governor led to the demise of Butler and his party. It was in this setting, almost a political vacuum that we saw the emergence of the Peoples National Movement (PNM) under the leadership of Dr. Eric Williams in 1956.

The PNM had predominantly urban roots, and was more easily identified with the urban petty bourgeoisie which was mainly Black. While the party did not establish overt union affiliation, it was able to obtain the support of leaders of working class organizations, many of whom were Black, and also union

members. The absence of trade union support for the PNM was of course due to fragmentation of the labor movement and a lack of political cohesiveness among the various unions. It was also the intention of the leadership of the PNM to avoid becoming involved with 'old guard' politicians who had been discredited in the public mind, or to make deals with either ethnic or economic interest groups. The charismatic personality of the party leader Dr. Williams was sufficient to create the mass support which is the dream of all political leaders.

Without close ties to the labor movement, the PNM developed an independent attitude in dealing with the trade union movement, being somewhat antagonistic toward the more militant elements of the movement. As the party was not linked to any particular union group, it was able to isolate the aggressive elements in the larger but less militant unions by coopting the leadership, through the systematic use of patronage. It is ironic that one of the most militant unions, the Oilfields Workers Trade Union (OWTU) was also the dominant union in the sector of the economy accounting for about one-fifth of GNP, two-thirds of merchandise exports, and one-quarter of central government revenue.<sup>19</sup> While the government was prepared to tolerate a certain level of militancy in the trade unions, any indication of an attempt to unify these groups would be intolerable.

In 1965 such an attempt was made, the All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factory Workers Union (ATSEFWU) called a strike

which was aimed at removing what was considered to be corrupt leadership. The workers of the ATSEFWU (who were predominantly East Indian) turned to the OWTC (with mainly Black membership) for representation. Unity between these two unions and by implication two different racial groups was unacceptable to the government, and its response was swift and decisive.

A state of emergency was declared and an Industrial Stabilization Bill was hurriedly rushed through both Houses of Parliament, and passed with undue haste. The new Industrial Stabilization Act (ISA) revolutionized industrial relations in Trinidad. An industrial court was established to adjudicate industrial disputes, and to set the rate of wage increases to be granted in those cases over which it had jurisdiction. There were rules for determining the scope of bargaining units and for designation of unions as sole bargaining agents in the respective units.

The Act also included the idea of union representation on an industry basis, thus removing the possibility for the establishment of 'blanket unions' as were found in most of the Commonwealth Caribbean. A list of "essential industries" was delineated, and a trade union could not represent workers in more than one essential industry. One of the clear results of the Act was to frustrate working class solidarity, especially unity between the oil and the sugar workers. The PNM was able to exert sufficient influence over the rank and file oil workers for them to reject any involvement of their union in the sugar workers struggle. The unseen hand of patronage



was at work, and this became evident when a number of union leaders who supported the ISA were later rewarded with public appointments.

It was not until the mid-1970s that the oil and sugar workers were able to form an alliance with the United Labor Front (ULF) which could politically threaten the PNM, by winning ten seats in the 1976 general election. But the alliance was a fragile one and by 1977 the ULF had lost the support of the oil workers. This was evident in the 1980 elections, as the ULF suffered significant losses, even in the presumed safe constituencies.

Guyana was not remarkably different from the other Caribbean territories as far as industrialization and industrial conflict were concerned. As a colonial territory British policy for economic development emphasized the expansion of agricultural production in the form of a large scale plantation export sector. Foreign capital inflows were desirable and these would be derived through the maintenance of close links between the colonial plantation sector and the metropolitan market. Another popular area of colonial economic development policy was population control, and despite a relatively low population density, a family planning program was introduced in Guyana.

The objective was that the plantation owners would continue to be the beneficiaries of any improvements in the economy, especially the export sector covered by colonial preferential trading arrangements. This policy resulted in massive

unemployment, and discontent was intensified among those who suffered from an increase in destitution. But the colonial view persisted that industrialization was not feasible, a view totally rejected by nationalist leaders who had been at the forefront of the independence movement. Here again the Puerto Rican model was being treated as the example that the country had the capacity to sustain a certain level of industrialization.

With independence in 1966 the first Development Plan (1966-1972) was produced embodying a development strategy designed to make the country attractive to foreign investors. there were provisions for industrial parks, transport facilities, fiscal incentives, and other infrastructural enticements. At the outset this policy did result in the establishment of plants by MNCs, which assembled prefabricated imports, or were "screwdriver technology" type of industries. With the small domestic market, the plants were not able to utilize their full output capacities, resulting in high costs of production.

However, Guyana did not have access to the US domestic market which was for example, available to Puerto Rico, and this further limited the potential export market. The plan had to be abandoned in 1970, since the manufacturing sector became stagnant, while agriculture had been ignored in favor of the move toward rapid industrialization.

In February 1970 four years after independence Guyana was declared a "Cooperative Republic." According to the Prime

Minister "cooperative socialism" would be established through a system of cooperative ownership of the means of production, thus evolving into a "socialist revolution." The following year a program of nationalization of foreign interests began with the purchase of the Demerara Bauxite Company (DEMBA), a subsidiary of the Canadian bauxite transnational ALCAN. Over the next five years these nationalizations would include commercial, manufacturing, communications, transport, and agricultural companies.

The 'coup de grace' in this program was the nationalization of the British firm Booker McConnell in May 1976. This firm played an overwhelming role in the economy of Guyana, indeed the country was often dubbed as "Bookers Guyana." Predating British acquisition of the colony, Bookers owned six sugar estates, and was involved in the production of liquor, molasses, and rubber, while also having large investments in shipbuilding and commerce. The firm produced 85 percent of Guyana's sugar, providing 40 percent of its exports, 30 percent of the GNP, 35 percent of the foreign exchange, and employed 13 percent of the work force.<sup>20</sup>

These nationalizations undoubtedly had an important bearing on the state of industrial relations and industrial conflict after 1976. Together with the state enterprises established prior to 1970, the newly nationalized companies were controlled by the Guyana State Corporation (GUYSTAC) of which the Prime Minister was "Chairman of the Board." According to Chandisingh:

At the end of 1976 the state was responsible for 80 percent of the gross domestic product, private enterprise for 10 percent, and cooperative ownership for 10 percent.<sup>21</sup>

With state control of such a large proportion of economic production, one of the pillars through which that control was being consolidated was the control of jobs. It is reported that the Prime Minister once said that "If I fire you, you remain fired,"<sup>22</sup> clearly indicative of the limited opportunities for employment available outside the public sector. In addition to its extended influence over employment the broadened state sector also allowed extensive influence over the trade union movement, since technically the government was now the largest employer of labor in both the traditional public sector, and the newly established state corporations. By the early 1970s the PNC was in control of the labor movement through the MPCA, the union in the sugar belt, and the GMWU (Guyana Mineworkers Union), which represented labor in the bauxite areas. The PNC also controlled the Public Service Union, in addition to the Guyana Teachers Association, and these were sufficient for PNC domination of the TUC delegates conferences.

Political parties in Guyana are built around the country's ethnic cleavages, race is one of the factors which strongly influences party affiliation. Race is also an important factor in determining trade union membership, since sugar and rice production is dominated by East Indians, union membership in these two industries is predominantly East Indians who

support the PPP. Chandisingh reported that the PNC sought to establish fundamental changes in the form of the state and in the type of rule as follows:

- (1) The bureaucratization of the political process;
- (2) the attempt to marginalize the opposition PPP and to destroy the WPA [a left wing opposition group formed in 1974];
- (3) the blurring of the distinction between the PNC and the state, and the attempt by the PNC to usurp and occupy all the political action space in Guyana;
- (4) the narrowing of democracy
- and (5) the use of organized violence.<sup>23</sup>

Once the PNC was able to consolidate its control, thus ensuring the institutionalization of a virtual dictatorship in Guyana, we need to examine its effect on the economy and industrial conflict. According to the Inter-American Development Bank's annual report for 1981, Guyana's GDP per capita (in US dollars at 1978 prices) fell from \$625 in 1970 to \$603 in 1979, a decline of 3.52 percent in ten years.<sup>24</sup> Between 1970 and 1980 the output from the nationalized bauxite industry declined at an average annual rate of 3.8 percent, while sugar registered a decline of 0.6 percent over the same period. Rice production showed a decline in the annual rate of growth from 2.4 percent in 1970-75 to 0.9 percent in 1975-80. During the period since nationalization there is an indication of falling output in three of the country's main productive sectors.

This deteriorating economic situation has led to changing levels in the standard of living of the masses in Guyana. In the 1960s the Trades Union Council was affiliated with AIFLD and ORIT with ultimate links to the American AFL-CIO.

By the mid-1970s the TUC had severed its connections with those organizations. In fact since 1976 the GAWU has been recognized as the official union in the sugar belt, replacing the MPCA, thus ensuring PNC control of the workers and their organization. The PNC also discouraged unions under its control from maintaining international links. This latter policy meant that many unions could not obtain the support of the international trade union movement for local strike action, as they were able to do in the past.

At this point it is necessary to point out that the form of the state in Guyana is unique among the countries included in this study. According to the doctrine of the "paramountcy of the party," the party has been elevated to sovereignty over the state, and Rule 21 of the PNC constitution establishes the party leader as sovereign over the party; this results in the party leader being paramount over the government and the state. The PNC has therefore forged its independence from popular support by strengthening the armed forces, reinforcing its control over the public service, and of course by maintaining its influence over the various state corporations which manage the nationalized industries and undertakings.

With this scenario in mind, it is clear that the PNC (the government) would view with disdain any semblance of opposition to its rule or policies. The method of dealing with strikes was a show of force, by calling out the army to break the strike. In 1975 the army was used to harvest sugar cane in an attempt to break a sugar strike, while the following

year the police arrested strike leaders who were challenging PNC candidates in a representation election at one of the main bauxite towns. With the state sector expanded to about 80 percent of the economy by 1978, there was little indication that this challenge had any bearing on the intensity or the bitterness of strike activity. In fact the antagonism between the state and organized labor in Guyana appears to have increased with expansion of state capitalism in that country, as the data will show.

The changes we have examined in Guyana were indicative of what was occurring in the Caribbean territories in the 1970s. During the decade of the 1960s political parties in the Commonwealth Caribbean gave little indication of support for any particular brand of political ideology. The PPP in Guyana was of course an exception, but they were supposedly "contained" by the action of the colonial power in instituting unwarranted electoral reform. In the 1950s and 1960s there was the emergence of a social democratic ideology, and a working-class peasant based populism, the former advocated and led mainly by British educated middle class individuals, while the latter developed out of the trade union movement.

By the mid 1970s most of the Commonwealth Caribbean territories had attained independence, and this allowed greater flexibility in developing economic policies, as well as political ideologies. The 1970s were also a period of restricted economic growth in the region of which the rising costs of petroleum, and its by-products contributed in no small measure.

In seeking an alternate route to economic prosperity, it was felt that political ideologies should play a stronger role in defining the type of economic policies which should be followed. Being independent, these states were also able to pursue associations with other third world countries in areas where their common interests would be served. As those third world states adopted non-capitalist methods of development e.g. giving the state an increased role in economic management, these models had an impact on Commonwealth Caribbean states. In addition there were new ideological currents flowing through many third world states which had become disillusioned with western capitalism and its liberal democratic ideals.

In the decade of the 1970s the social democratic ideology of the 1950s and 1960s gave rise to Marxist/Lennist ideology and this was evident in Guyana, Grenada and Jamaica. The new ideology also led to higher levels of state intervention in these economies, with Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, and Trinidad being prime examples, although the latter did not reflect the leftist ideology of the other countries mentioned. In Antigua, Barbados, and St. Lucia the level of state intervention in the economy was low, while populist trade union/peasant based political parties were dominant.

The other countries in this study are part of the non-English speaking Caribbean. Politics in Surinam in the 1960s and up to 1975 when independence was achieved, was more Surinam oriented than ideologically bound. Political parties were



more concerned with survival, taking into consideration the strong divisions based on ethnicity, race and religious differences. In the post independence period there have been indications of a developing leftist socialist ideology but with little indication of a link between ideology and the country's economic policy. Economic development in Surinam has always been centered around Dutch economic aid. In 1980 there was a military coup and policies have since changed, but this study will not be concerned with post 1980 developments in that country.

Puerto Rico is the country with the most developed industrial economy, and a stable liberal democratic political system. It is also closely linked politically and economically with the United States, and the ruling political groups have been more to the center of the ideological continuum, than to the left or right.

It is safe to say that all the countries included in this study have a democratic political structure, or are liberal democracies, based on the rule of law and a pluralist power structure. But as third world countries, there has been increasing state intervention in their economies, and this includes the area of industrial relations. Increased governmental intervention in the latter has been the result of government's new role as a major employer.

With the changing role of the state in the industrial relations system we expect that the form and frequency of strikes would indicate some change in the countries covered

by this study over the period 1960-1980. The data show that there has been an increase in the number of industrial conflicts while in the post WWII period increasing union membership has strengthened the trade union movement. As indicated before, there were changes in the political status of most of the countries being examined, leading to increased bureaucratization and state control of the economy. The next section will examine these changes and illustrate those involving strike activity by looking at the shape of strikes.

#### Changes in the Shape of Strikes

Shorter and Tilly have used the shape of strikes to indicate changes in strike activity in the case of strikes in France.<sup>25</sup> In their analysis they present strike activity in a three dimensional format. The first dimension is the average duration of strikes, and they use the median duration to avoid the distorting effect which one long strike could have on the mean.<sup>26</sup> The second dimension represents the number of strikers, mean strikers per strike is the statistic.<sup>27</sup> They point out that with these two dimensions we can construct a rectangle whose length represents median duration, with its height representing mean strikers (size) and the area giving us the man days taken up by the strike.<sup>28</sup>

In Figure 4:1 strike (a) is a long but small, strike (b) is short but large, and strike (c) is both long and large.<sup>29</sup>

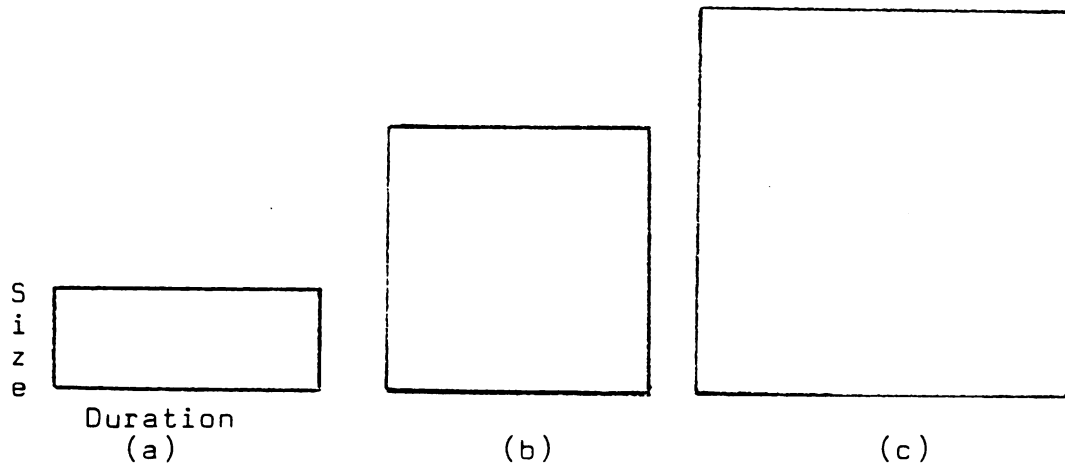


Figure 4:1

## The Shape of Strikes

According to Shorter and Tilly there is need for a third dimension in order to present aggregate strike activity, and that is the number of strikes per 100,000 workers in the appropriate segment of the labor force. This will turn the rectangle into a solid as in Figure 4:2.<sup>30</sup>

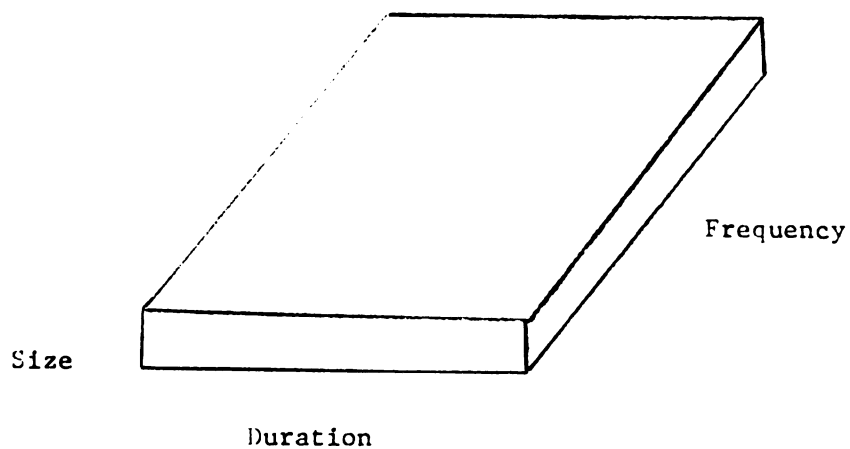


Figure 4:2

## The Shape of Strikes - Three Dimensional

This is essentially the model which will be used in this section to indicate how the three dimensional box has changed over time in the countries included in this study. The data on industrial conflict have been taken from the United Nations Yearbook of Labor Statistics and include information on the number of strikes, number of strikers involved, and man-days lost. Annual data are reported for economy-wide totals, and for ten separate sectors of economic activity.

Hibbs in his study of ten advanced industrial societies has held that:

. . . since strikes rarely occur in the agriculture sector, and those that do are not recorded with great accuracy, it is sensible to exclude agriculture from international comparisons.<sup>31</sup>

Likewise he has argued that the mining sector should also be omitted "because of the character of labor capital relationship in that industry."<sup>32</sup> In coming to this conclusion he supports his view by referring to the argument of Kerr and Siegel with reference to "the well known political leftism of miners."<sup>33</sup>

While these arguments may be true for advanced industrial societies, they should not be applied to most third world countries. In the latter, agriculture and where existent, mining are generally the leading economic sectors. In the Caribbean for example sugar has been the principal export commodity for centuries in many of these countries, and to omit industrial conflicts in that industry from this investigation would have a deleterious effect on the overall study.

We therefore propose to include industrial conflict in these two sectors throughout this study. However it will not be possible to compare changes in the shape of industrial conflict across industries since those data are not available for all the countries.

Aggregate strike activity in the Shorter and Tilly model is represented by number of strikes per 100,000 workers in the appropriate segment of the labor force. Due to the overall low population levels of the countries in this study, aggregate strike activity will be represented by number of strikes per 1,000 workers.

The period of two decades covered by this study is relatively short, and we do not expect to see profound changes in the form and frequency of industrial conflict in the countries being examined. Yet during this period there have been economic and political changes which undoubtedly had a bearing on the level and intensity of industrial conflict.

Countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean entered the 1960s facing an unusual challenge in the field of employment. Population growth, especially those of working age had to be checked by substantial emigration to the United Kingdom. But in 1962 under the Commonwealth Immigration Act that outlet was severely restricted through the institution of a quota system, and other regulations on the entry of colonial subjects into the United Kingdom. In Surinam and Guadeloupe, Dutch and French colonies respectively the emigration outlet to their respective metropolitan territories remained available, and

was used extensively. The Puerto Ricans have been able to migrate to the United States, and emigration has therefore been an important factor in the economies of Caribbean territories.

In the decade 1953-1962, that is, just prior to the start of the independence era among British colonies, considerable economic progress was achieved by most of the Commonwealth Caribbean territories. As Table 4:2 shows, the average annual rate of growth of GDP was generally about 6 percent per annum for the countries indicated. However by 1962-63 the expansion of the 1950s had begun to decline, due to changes in the demand for the principal exports i.e. bauxite, petroleum, sugar, citrus and bananas.

Despite a fall in the overall level of economic growth there was still a reasonable rate of economic growth, and the crucial economic problem was the question of dependency versus self-reliance. This was a particularly urgent issue for countries such as Jamaica and Trinidad which had attained independence in 1962. Caribbean economies had been called the most 'open' in the world.<sup>34</sup> An open economy is one in which there is a high ratio of imports/exports to GDP, and according to the IDB, Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, and Trinidad are four of the six most open economies in Latin America. This problem, to which we have alluded before is that most Caribbean economies are open to the impact of economic forces which are outside of their control, and in fact outside the Caribbean area itself. Many of these countries still rely

Table 4:2

Commonwealth Caribbean: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at Factor Cost  
1953-1962 (Millions of US \$ at Current Prices)

<u>Years</u>	<u>Jamaica</u>	<u>Trinidad</u>	<u>Barbados</u>	<u>Guyana</u>	<u>Belize</u>
1953	298.8	223.7	41.0	103.9	na
1954	335.2	238.2	41.2	113.1	14.8
1955	382.0	276.1	47.5	113.1	15.8
1956	443.9	322.2	48.7	122.3	17.8
1957	537.4	382.0	59.7	132.2	na
1958	556.4	416.7	56.7	125.2	20.9
1959	594.0	462.7	59.7	128.2	21.4
1960	646.3	499.8	62.1	141.7	na
1961	684.1	550.4	68.1	na	na
1962	707.1	586.8	71.5	na	na

Source: UN, Economic Commission for Latin America, Economic Surveys, Santiago, Chile  
ECLA, 1953-1964.

on the export of two or three commodities, and the boom-and-bust cycles of the international economy are able to critically affect the cost of imports and foreign exchange earnings from exports.

The expansion of the early 1960s in the Caribbean region was curbed by anti-inflation measures instituted in the western industrialized countries in the latter part of that decade, and by 1970 there was an indication that these countries were heading into a recession. With the advent of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), and the dramatic rise in the price of oil in 1973, Caribbean countries saw their economies dealt a crushing blow. Prices of petroleum and petroleum based products were in an upward spiral, while prices for Caribbean commodities fell to a new low.

This economic situation resulted in Caribbean nations turning to multilateral lending agencies such as the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank for assistance. IMF loans usually carried stringent conditions designed to reverse economic policies viewed as faulty by the Fund, especially if those policies indicated socialist underpinnings. Jamaica provides a good example of this. The PNP government of Jamaica in the 1970s was a pro-socialist government. With rising oil prices and declining bauxite markets the government was forced to turn to the IMF for assistance.

According to Norman Girvan et al, the Fund wanted "not just the usual austerity measures, but a complete overturn of the Manley government's economic program."<sup>35</sup> These measures



included a 30 percent currency devaluation, J\$180 million in new taxes, the lifting of price controls, and a reduction in real wages of approximately 25 percent.<sup>36</sup> Such measures strongly affect the working class, leading to increased prices and a deterioration in social services. An offshoot of these falling standards of living is of course strikes and other forms of unrest among workers. Conditions deteriorated to the point where elections had to be called in 1980 and the ruling PNP government was defeated.

While in theory assistance from agencies such as the IMF should have no strings attached, in practice that aid is highly politicized. At the IMF and the World Bank, the United States of America holds 19 percent and 22 percent respectively, of the votes, and this is often sufficient to influence the vote of other members to the US side. For example the Reagan Administration has been largely successful in having the IMF deny aid to Nicaragua and Grenada, the latter prior to the US invasion. According to the Wall Street Journal, the current US administration had a "hit list" of five countries, three of which were Caribbean Basin countries, viz., Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada.<sup>37</sup> It is clear that foreign aid is highly politicized, depending on how and under what conditions that aid is given. In Jamaica by 1977, 18 percent of the workforce was unemployed with many more underemployed.<sup>38</sup>

Despite heavy United States capital investment in Puerto Rico under Operation Bootstrap, unemployment which stood at 12-14 percent in the mid-1960s, had risen to 20 percent by

1975. As the tax exempt status of the transnational corporations expired, there was a change in the type of investment. The labor intensive light industries of the 1950s gave way to petroleum refining and petrochemical investment from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. After the rise in oil prices in 1973 these industries went into a slump, giving way to a new round of investment from chemical and pharmaceutical companies in the late 1970s.

The price paid by Puerto Rico for this investment was the abandonment of the agricultural sector, with the result that today 90 percent of the food consumed in that country is imported. By 1975, 50 percent of the population was receiving food stamps. The Puerto Rican model of development turned out to be a formula for further dependency, rather than development.

The decade of the 1960s ushered in a radical transformation of the economies in Commonwealth Caribbean countries, and visible economic and political advances in the other Caribbean territories. With the British giving up political control in the case of the former group, North American firms were eagerly moving in to take advantage of a diminished British presence, and the available cheap labor, in conjunction with a stable source of raw materials. The multinationals left little doubt in the minds of those in control of these newly independent countries that low wages and labor peace were a prerequisite for their continued presence. In effect

there was a trade off of the old colonial dependence on Europe, for a new economic dependence on North America.

With this economic background let us examine the strike profile of the five countries mentioned earlier in this discussion over the period 1960-1979. Figure 4:3 presents a graph of the five year average of the number of industrial conflicts over the period. Most striking is the remarkable increase in the number of strikes in Jamaica between 1970-74, and 1975-79.

Jamaica found itself in a deteriorating economic situation shortly after the PNP came to power in 1972. The following year there was the start of the unprecedented rise in oil prices, coupled with a decline in sugar prices and production due to poor weather conditions.<sup>39</sup> Between 1972 and 1980 sugar production fell from 4 million to 2.7 million tons. Bauxite which provided up to 35 percent of the foreign exchange plummeted 32 percent between 1974 and 1976.<sup>40</sup> There were numerous reasons for the fall in bauxite production, but detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this study. However, two events occurred which led to a reduction in Jamaican bauxite production. The PNP government instituted a new method of taxing the aluminium companies which controlled the industry in Jamaica. The new levy was based on the selling price of the aluminium ingot, rather than the cheaper price of the raw bauxite but the response of the aluminium companies was to reduce the amount of bauxite imported from Jamaica. American aluminium companies reduced their imports of Jamaican



bauxite by 30 percent, while imports from Guinea were more than doubled. In fact bauxite production is gradually being reduced in the Caribbean while production in Brazil, Australia, and Guinea is being increased.

The government attempted to deal with the significant balance of payments problem through external borrowing. But such borrowing did not lead to improvement in the rate of economic growth, and the economy produced declines in GNP of -2.6 percent in 1973, -6.9 percent in 1976, -4.0 percent in 1977, and -2.0 percent in 1978.<sup>41</sup> By 1980 the country's foreign debt was said to be J\$1.7 billion.<sup>42</sup> The Jamaican economy was experiencing chronic deterioration, plagued by high inflation, escalating unemployment, inter-party political violence leading to gang warfare, and high rates of labor unrest. As a result of this volatile situation, the PNP which won a landslide victory at the polls in 1976, suffered an unprecedented defeat in the elections of October 30, 1980. The JLP won 51 of the 60 seats in the House of Representatives.

In Puerto Rico the period 1970-74 produced the highest average number of strikes. Back in the mid-1950s with the economic expansion initiated through Operation Bootstrap Puerto Rico became a haven for offshore industries. In order to deal with this issue of the runaway shop, international unions from the mainland US also set up locals in Puerto Rico.

By 1963 there were 26 international unions established in the island, increasing to 30 in 1972. In 1970, 20 percent of the Puerto Rican labor force had been organized (compared

to 22.6 percent on the US mainland for the same year). Interestingly 29 percent of agricultural workers were also unionized, while in the US the NLRA does not cover agricultural workers. However, even in the years of rapid industrial expansion, the growth of jobs in manufacturing was never sufficient to offset declines in other sectors.<sup>43</sup>

While there was an increase in union membership, the Puerto Rican labor movement was sitting on a fragile foundation. Raiding, inter-union rivalry, and jurisdictional disputes led to chaos in the movement. In 1979 for example the NLRB conducted 130 union representation elections, and about one third of these involved inter-union raiding or decertification attempts.<sup>44</sup> The Bacardi Rum plant is a good example of the difficulties confronting trade unions in the island. Since 1951 when the plant was first organized, only once was an incumbent union able to negotiate and renew a labor contract.

There was also another issue which although unsubstantiated, was able to gain support and further divide the labor movement. The argument was made that the sole purpose of the US international union activity in Puerto Rico was to discourage the movement of plants from the mainland to the island. It was said that this was done through threats by the unions of imposing mainland wage and conditions of service in their contracts.

As in the other Caribbean countries Puerto Rico was badly affected by the international economic crisis of the 1970s.

Because of these new economic conditions, companies which had established plants in the island during the 1940s and 1950s to take advantage of low wages and tax exemptions, began to transfer their operations to more attractive havens, e.g. Haiti. This resulted in a high rate of unemployment and also a decline in the level of union membership. Part of the reduction in union membership was also due to changes in the labor force itself. According to the Puerto Rican Bureau of Labor Statistics the level of unionization fell by one percent annually throughout the decade of the 1970s. In 1953 the labor force participation rate was 53 percent, falling to 45 percent by 1960, and even lower to 42 percent by 1977. In that year the minimum wage provisions of the US Fair Labor Standards Act were extended to Puerto Rico, allowing Puerto Rican workers to enjoy the same minimum wage prevailing in the United States.

With high unemployment, the fall in the labor participation rate and the extension of the minimum wage to the island, we had a formula for declining unionization, and an increase in the level of unemployment. Figure 4:3 confirms this by indicating that there was a marked decline in the average number of strikes from 90 between 1970-74 down to 39 between 1975-1979.

The French department of Guadeloupe enjoys the benefits of close association with the metropole. Compared with other Eastern Caribbean countries, per capita income is high. The island's economy functions on the basis of subsidies from

France and the purchase of French goods. The close links with France also eases unemployment in the department by allowing Guadeloupeans to migrate to France, generally to fill low wage, unskilled jobs. But this is not a satisfactory solution, and with the decline of the sugar industry, unemployment is becoming chronic.

The international economic crisis beginning in 1974 has led to increased unemployment and a rise in agitation for independence from France. In 1970 the Union of Agricultural Workers (UTA) was formed and it became a very militant group initiating strikes over wages and other demands. This was a union of sugar cane cutters and small farmers, basically a united peasants group which took on the plantocracy and the older French based unions. By the mid-1970s the UTA became the catalyst for the formation of a pro-independence federation, the General Union of Guadeloupean Workers (GUGW).

With the appearance of the GUGW the union movement took on a more political flavor, and a pro-independence rhetoric. Figure 4:3 shows an increase in the average number of strikes in the period 1975-1979 and this is indicative of a higher level of militancy among organized labor.

Let us now look at changes in the shape of strikes in the countries shown in Figures 4:4 - 4:7. As mentioned earlier it was not expected that upon examining the shape of strikes over a period of two decades, we would find that they had become an entirely different type of phenomenon in that relatively short period of time. In fact if we look at the shapes



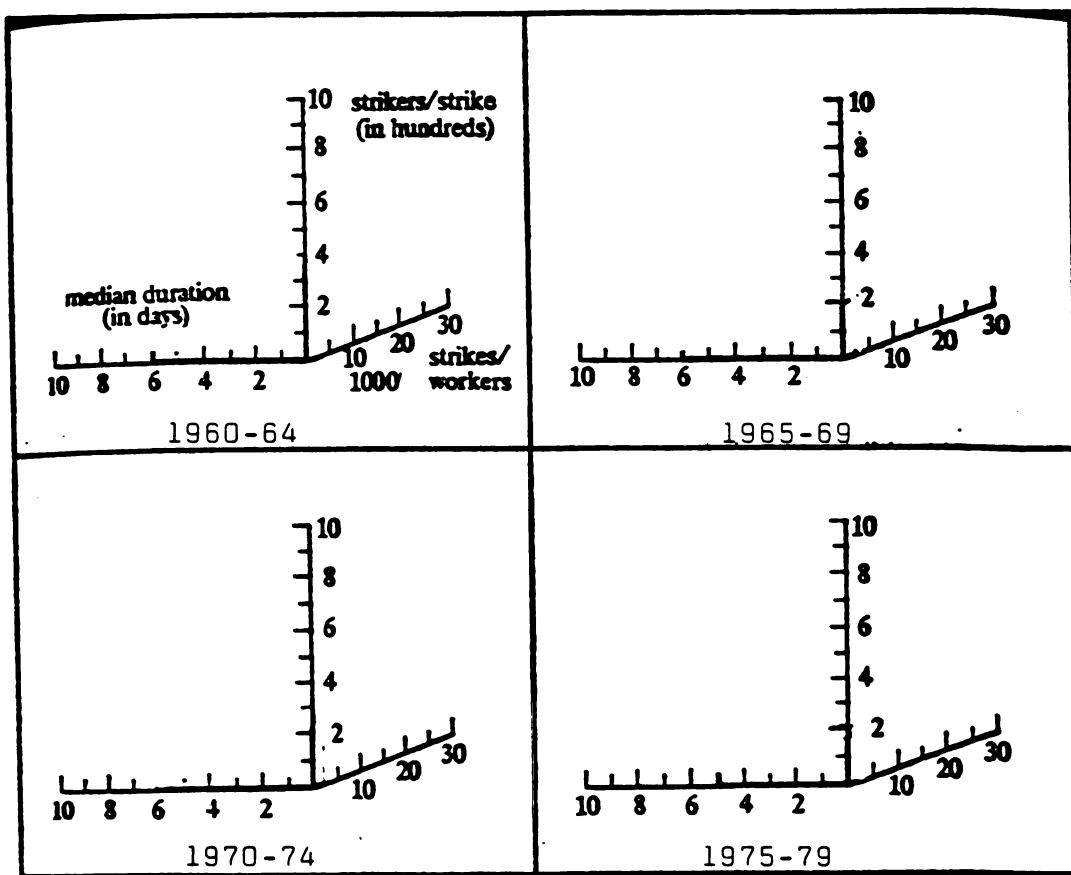


Figure 4:4

Guadeloupe: Shape of Strikes 1960-1979

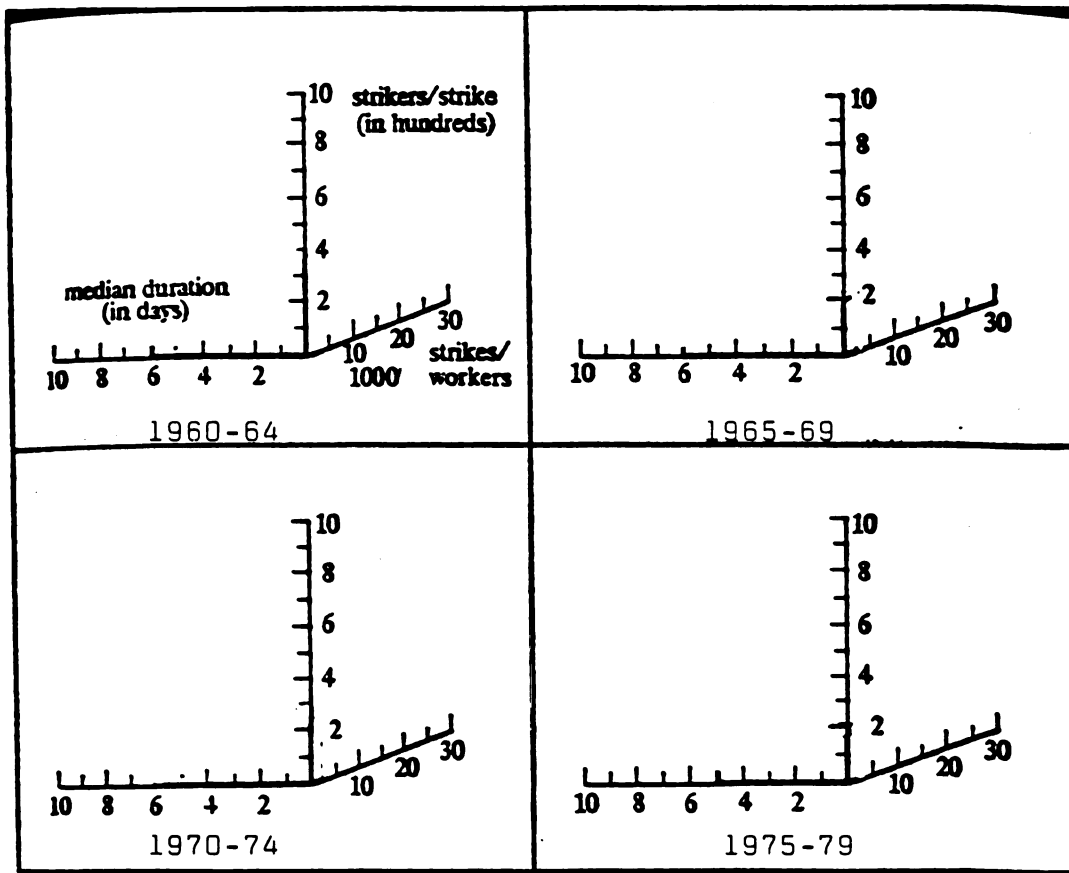


Figure 4:5

Jamaica: Shape of Strikes 1960-1979

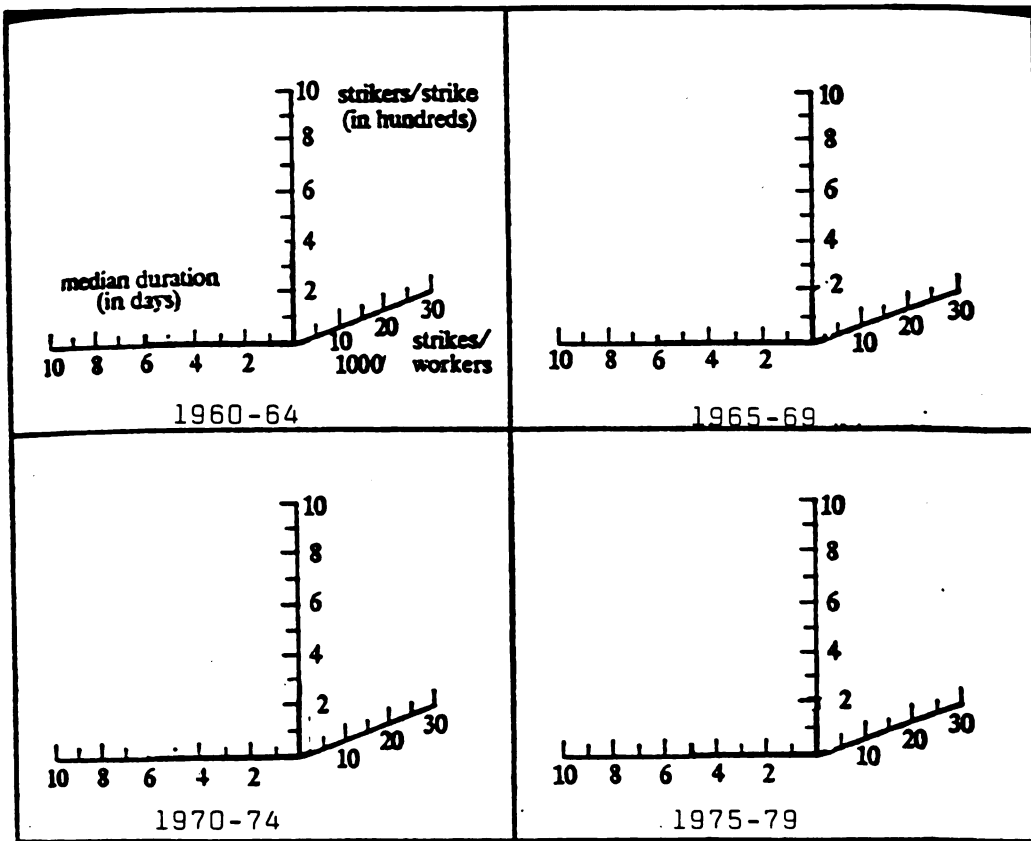


Figure 4:6

Puerto Rico: Shape of Strikes 1960-1979

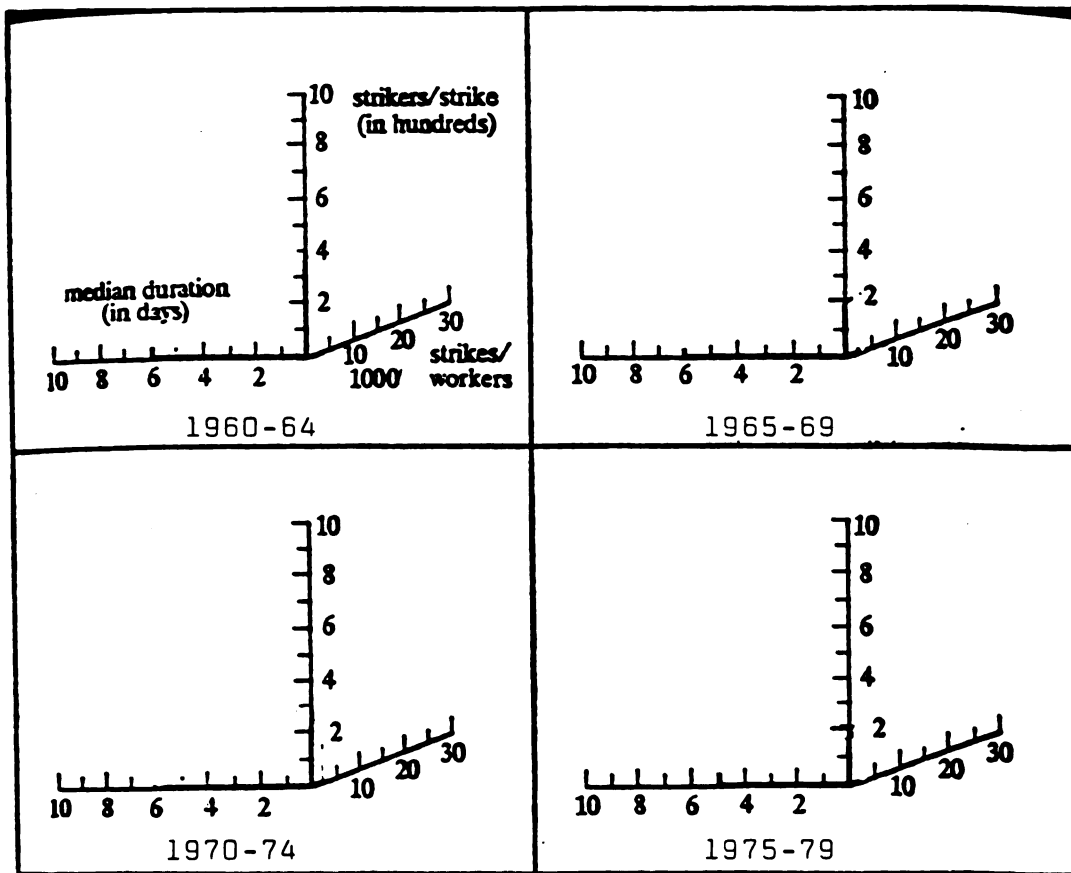


Figure 4:7

Surinam: Shape of Strikes 1960-1979

in Figures 4:4 - 4:7 we can hardly determine a clear pattern of changes in the shapes. Is there a reasonable explanation for this?

Jamaica became independent in 1962, Surinam obtained its independence in 1975, the other two countries Puerto Rico and Guadeloupe are not independent. During the 1960s the US economy was experiencing one of the its longest periods of expansion. This expansion and the ongoing cold war led to a demand for a long term reliable supply of critical raw materials. US multinationals therefore invested extensively in the mineral economies of the neighboring Caribbean, e.g. bauxite mining in Jamaica, Guyana, and Surinam.

Back in 1948 Puerto Rico had initiated its Operation Bootstrap which brought extensive US investment to the island. While this program was largely successful in expanding industrialization (by 1980 there were over 2,000 US owned plants manufacturing goods for the mainland market),<sup>45</sup> migration served as a safety valve to release the overflow of unemployed workers. But manufacturing did not provide sufficient jobs in the 1950s and 1960s to offset unemployment resulting from the decline in agriculture. According to the New York Times, the number of Puerto Ricans living in the US is estimated to be 2 million, compared with the islands population of 3.2 million.<sup>46</sup> In both Jamaica and Puerto Rico there was increasing industrialization in the 1960s and a decline in the overall dependence on agriculture. Table 4:3 gives a good indication

Table 4:3

Puerto Rico: Employment by Economic Sectors  
for Selected Years ('000)

<u>Item</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>Rate of Increase 1960-1979 (%)</u>
Labor force	625	680	765	872	978	56.4
Employed:						
Agriculture	124	107	68	49	38	-69.4
Manufacturing	91	112	132	133	160	75.8
Government	70	74	118	171	189	170.0
Other	258	311	368	385	420	62.7
Unemployment	82	76	79	134	171	108.5
% Unemployed	13.2	11.2	10.3	15.4	17.5	32.5
Labor Force Participation Rate %	45.2	44.8	44.5	42.3	43.0	- 4.8

Source: Junta de Planificacion, Estado Libre Asociado de  
Puerto Rico, Informe Economico Al Gobernador, 1976-  
1979.

of the change in the Puerto Rican economy over the period 1960-1979.

Table 4:4 shows the growth in GNP and personal income over the period 1960-1979. Puerto Rico is a good example of a country which has experienced remarkable economic growth, high increases in personal income but has also experienced increasing rates of unemployment, and a falling labor force participation rate. Fortunately there is the possibility of immigration to the US mainland, and the significant infusion of US federal transfer payments. According to one source in 1982 total federal disbursement to the island was US\$4.4 billion (more than the combined budgets of Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad).<sup>47</sup> Of this amount \$2.8 billion was in the form of federal transfer payments to individuals, a third of that in the form of food stamps.<sup>48</sup>

As we look at these two countries there are indications of some unusual forces at work which have an important bearing on the level of industrial conflict. There is increasing industrialization resulting in displacement of rural subsistence farmers and those engaged in agriculture, many of the displaced agricultural workers become the urban unemployed. In the case of Puerto Rico the possibility of failed expectations leading to urban unrest was tempered by the availability of US federal transfer programs mainly food stamps.

The change in the shape of strikes in Puerto Rico bears out the findings that the industrialization process did not result in any large scale creation of jobs in manufacturing.

Table 4:4 Puerto Rico: GNP (millions of U.S. \$), GNP Per Capita,  
and Personal Income Per Capita 1960-1979

Item	Year				
	1960	1965	1970	1975	1979
GNP	1,676	2,764	4,688	7,136	9,998
GNP per capita	716	1,076	1,729	2,332	2,959
Personal Income per capita	587	866	1,384	2,225	2,934

Source: Junta de Planificacion, Estado Libre de Puerto Rico: Informe al Gobernador,  
1976.



Indeed in the 1970s the labor movement was divided and corrupt, and the strikes reflect a pattern which would be expected in an economy at the earliest stages of industrialization. That is, the strikes tend to be long and narrow rather than broad and short, as in the more advanced industrial economies. According to Shorter and Tilly the modern shape of industrial conflict is short, moderately frequent and broad.<sup>49</sup>

On examining the shape of strikes in Jamaica over the period 1960-1979, up to 1974 the pattern is similar to Puerto Rico, strikes are of increasing duration and quite narrow, again reflecting the early stages of industrialization. But in the five year period 1975 to 1979 there is a clear change in the strike profile, duration has decreased, the frequency has increased, although the size has also decreased i.e. fewer strikers per strike. However, these changes occurred during a period of increasing economic decline, and a high level of political unrest and urban violence. Trade unions in Jamaica are also more cohesively organized in support of one or the other of the two principal political parties.

Domestically the Jamaican economy was suffering from high unemployment, escalating inflation, increasing urbanization and low productivity in agriculture. Added to this the strong democratic socialist stand taken by the PNP government both at home and internationally only served to antagonize the United States government fearful of the spread of the socialist virus throughout the region. Efforts to destabilize the Jamaican economy became evident.<sup>50</sup> The opposition JLP

and its trade union organization the BITU seeking to win the next general elections, took advantage of the volatile situation, and a fall in the popularity of the PNP for its own political gain. In Jamaica between 1972 and 1980 real income fell by 25 percent, while the cost of living rose by 320 percent. By 1980 net foreign exchange reserves stood at minus J\$900 million, a fall of 1014 percent, real investment fell by 65 percent, and unemployment went as high as 31 percent in October 1979.<sup>51</sup>

We should note however that the unrest in Jamaica arises principally out of partisan politics and the extensive use of clientelism by the party in power, rather than out of a revolutionary dynamic, and the class struggle. Political patronage has always been at the cornerstone of Jamaican politics and was exercised by both the JLP and PNP regimes. Problems (including violence) arise when this tradition is implemented with excessive vigor. Munroe points out that according to PNP doctrine, "it is the duty of every party member to see the PNP people get work . . . out of every ten make it six PNP and four JLP."<sup>52</sup>

Despite the high level of violence, JLP versus PNP supporters, this is functional to the political system. By 1974 violent crimes were up to 50 percent over the 1960-61 crime rate (and many of these were political vendettas) in addition to the high rates of labor unrest and strikes.<sup>53</sup> These factors therefore contributed to the change in the shape of Jamaican strikes, arising from a combination of an economy torn apart

by the flight of capital, high oil prices, IMF austerity programs, and the unavailability of international loan capital.

Strikes in Guadeloupe over the period 1960-1979 have exhibited the shapes one would expect in an economy that is quickly industrializing. However the economy of Guadeloupe is principally agricultural and service oriented. As a department of France, the island is theoretically a part of France and the inhabitants are French citizens. Guadeloupe is in a similar position to France as Puerto Rico is to the US, with the citizens being the beneficiaries of French social assistance programs, and a high level of subsidization of the economy. This has led to what many have referred to as a "borrowed paradise" citing for example the high GNP per capita of US\$3,940 in 1980 for an island which had a balance of trade deficit with its largest trading partner (France) of -\$2,680 million French francs in 1980.

With increasing expansion of the service sector and the establishment of some light industries the strike profile has taken the shape of an industrializing economy. During the period 1975-1979 there was an increasing number of strikes, of fairly long duration, but involving decreasing numbers of workers.

Surinam which became independent from the Netherlands in 1975 is highly dependent on the operation of the bauxite industry, which although providing 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange employs only about 6 percent of the workforce. The largest sector of the economy is engaged in agriculture,

and services, and the shape of strikes has hardly changed since the 1960s.

### Industrial Conflict and Commodity Prices

Sugar cane has been grown in the Caribbean for centuries, according to Deer it was introduced to Hispaniola (now the Dominican Republic) by Columbus on his second voyage to that island in 1493.<sup>54</sup> Since that time the history of the Caribbean islands has been inextricably linked to the sugar industry. Sugar cane became the main agricultural crop and the principal means of livelihood for a large proportion of the population of these countries.

Prior to emancipation sugar production was characterized by a slave mode of production, and emerged as the classic monocrop culture which was the raw product for refinement and sale in the metropolitan markets. The structure of the sugar economy tied it forcefully to European capitalist mercantilism, selling the raw material to Europe and being forced to import most of its necessities from the same source.

The link between Caribbean sugar and European markets has continued up to the present time. After the end of WWII St. Lucia, Grenada and Antigua ceased producing sugar (although small amounts are produced for local consumption) for the export market. During the period covered by this study extensive sugar industries were still active in Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad. The industry has been on the

decline in Guadeloupe, e.g. in 1952 there were twelve sugar factories, but this had been reduced to four by 1980. In Surinam sugar fell to second place behind rice production among agricultural output.

The Puerto Rican sugar industry was the second largest in the Caribbean in the 1950s, but production decreased from 1.2 million tons in 1952 to just over 100,000 tons in 1980. This reduction has been linked to a fall in productivity in the Puerto Rican sugar industry, and increased production on the mainland United States. According to Hegelberg:

. . . in Florida the average farm labor costs per short ton of raw sugar declined from \$35.58 in 1946-50 to \$29.84 in 1966-70, in Puerto Rico they rose from \$42.29 to \$55.70.<sup>53</sup>

In order to emphasize the importance of sugar production to the Caribbean, and the extent of its production as a share of the world production, let us look at the following two tables. Table 4:5 shows production figures for the countries mentioned earlier.

Caribbean sugar production in 1976-1980 was just about twice the pre-WWII output, yet it was only about 13 percent more than the 1951-55 production. The table also shows a continuing decline in sugar production since the 1950s. Table 4:6 indicates that information on a percentage basis. We note from this table that Caribbean sugar production as a percentage of world production has been declining since the 1950s. When beet sugar production is taken into account that decline is even more significant.

Table 4:5

Centrifugal Sugar Production:  
Annual Averages for Selected Five-year Periods  
('000 tonnes of raw sugar)

<u>Territory</u>	<u>1934-35</u>	<u>1951-55</u>	<u>1956-60</u>	<u>1961-65</u>	<u>1966-70</u>	<u>1971-75</u>	<u>1976-80</u>
Barbados	123	176	172	178	173	118	117
Guadaloupe	52	100	137	181	161	122	96
Guyana	192	242	299	312	344	335	308
Jamaica	104	330	376	472	443	376	299
Leeward/ Windward Islands	63	89	88	68	40	26	39
Puerto Rico	839	1,118	942	905	594	266	207
Trinidad	140	162	186	234	227	199	158
Caribbean Producers	4,799	8,467	8,822	8,521	8,805	8,384	9,560
World Production	14,525	22,091	27,200	32,464	38,753	45,121	53,343

Sources: International Sugar Council 1963; International Sugar Council/Organization 1963;  
Food and Agriculture Organization 1971.

Table 4:6

Percentage Share of Caribbean Sugar  
Industries in World Production

<u>Territory</u>	<u>1938-39</u>	<u>1951-55</u>	<u>1956-60</u>	<u>1961-65</u>	<u>1966-70</u>	<u>1971-75</u>	<u>1976-80</u>
Caribbean percent of World cane sugar	33.0	38.3	32.4	26.2	22.7	18.6	17.9
Caribbean percent of World beet & cane sugar	19.5	22.9	18.9	15.0	13.0	11.0	10.9

Source: Calculated from sources for Table 4:5.

However despite the fall in production indicated by the tables above, sugar is still an important agricultural product in the Caribbean region. In 1972 according to a World Bank Report:

The share of sugar exports in the agricultural exports of countries, and in their total exports ranged from 98 percent and 41 percent respectively for Barbados, to 45 percent and 5 percent respectively for Trinidad.<sup>56</sup>

The importance of the sugar industry also has a bearing on the employment pattern in the region. While providing jobs for a large proportion of the labor force in the territories which produce sugar, the industry has been plagued by labor shortages. In Belize for example, labor is obtained from the neighboring republics, viz. Mexico and Guatemala, to harvest the sugar cane. On the other hand while Barbados imports labor from other islands to overcome a shortage at harvest time, there is migration from the island to Puerto Rico and the southern United States to do the same job which the migrants would not perform at home.

A relatively high proportion of the labor force in these countries is still employed in the sugar industry, and sugar workers are highly unionized, both factory and field workers. Wage settlements often have strong social and political overtones and disputes usually arise over wages. This is due to the influence on the sugar workers demands of the high wage sectors of the economy e.g. tourism and mining.



We now turn to an examination of the relationship between industrial conflict and fluctuations in sugar prices. While this determination may appear to be simply a question of statistical analysis, due to the nature and varieties of sugar prices, it turns out to be a difficult task. Since 1951 British Caribbean countries were allowed to sell fixed quantities of sugar to the United Kingdom at a negotiated price under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement (CSA). Based upon this agreement there was an Overall Agreement Quota (OAQ) and a Negotiated Price Quota (NPQ). The OAQ was the maximum quantity of sugar which a country could export annually under the agreement. The NPQ was that part of the OAQ for which a negotiated price was paid, the balance was sold at world market price, plus a small preferential tariff.

At its inception the CSA allowed the Commonwealth Caribbean an NPQ of 640,000 long tons, and this was increased to 725,000 long tons in 1965, where it remained until 1974. With Britain's entry into the European Common Market (EEC), the CSA was superseded in 1975 by Protocol No. 3 of the Lome' Convention, which covers sugar sales by the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP). Under the Convention, ACP states can supply up to 1.4 million long tons of sugar per annum to the EEC. The guaranteed market for each country was based upon the amount of sugar exported to the EEC during the year July 1975 to June 1976. The guaranteed annual purchases from the Commonwealth Caribbean under the Lome' Convention is

409,100 tonnes of sugar (white value), and the quota for some of the larger producers is as follows:

Jamaica - 118,300 tonnes

Guyana - 157,700 tonnes

Trinidad - 69,000 tonnes

We will examine sugar exports from these three countries and also look at the data on sugar prices in order to determine whether there is a relationship between fluctuations in strike activity and the incidence of industrial conflict in those countries. However, broad analysis of these data are complicated by the fact that the overall world trade in sugar is really quite distorted since most of it is carried on under special arrangements, generally negotiated price quotas. But of principal concern to us in this analysis are the US sugar quotas, the Commonwealth Sugar Agreements (CSA) and agreements with the EEC under the Lome' Convention. These are the principal markets for sugar produced in these countries.

### Strike Activity and Price Changes

There are a variety of prices used in the world sugar trade covering sugar in various stages of production, e.g. raw, refined, bagged or in bulk. Price also depends on the market in which the trading takes place. Prior to the end of 1974 the four important markets in the international sugar trade were the US (accessible on a quota basis), the USSR

(guaranteed market for Cuban sugar, price unavailable), Great Britain (accessible to Commonwealth producers under the CSA) and the free market.

Since 1975 the US has become part of the free market and the CSA was replaced by the Sugar Protocols of the Lome' Agreement. With this in mind then the two most important markets where sugar is traded outside the preferential agreements are London and New York, and trading prices in these markets are quoted corrected for freight, insurance, f.o.b. and stowed Greater Caribbean Ports. The ISA daily price is one of the best indicators of the world free market price for sugar, although this is mainly a market for residual quantities of sugar.

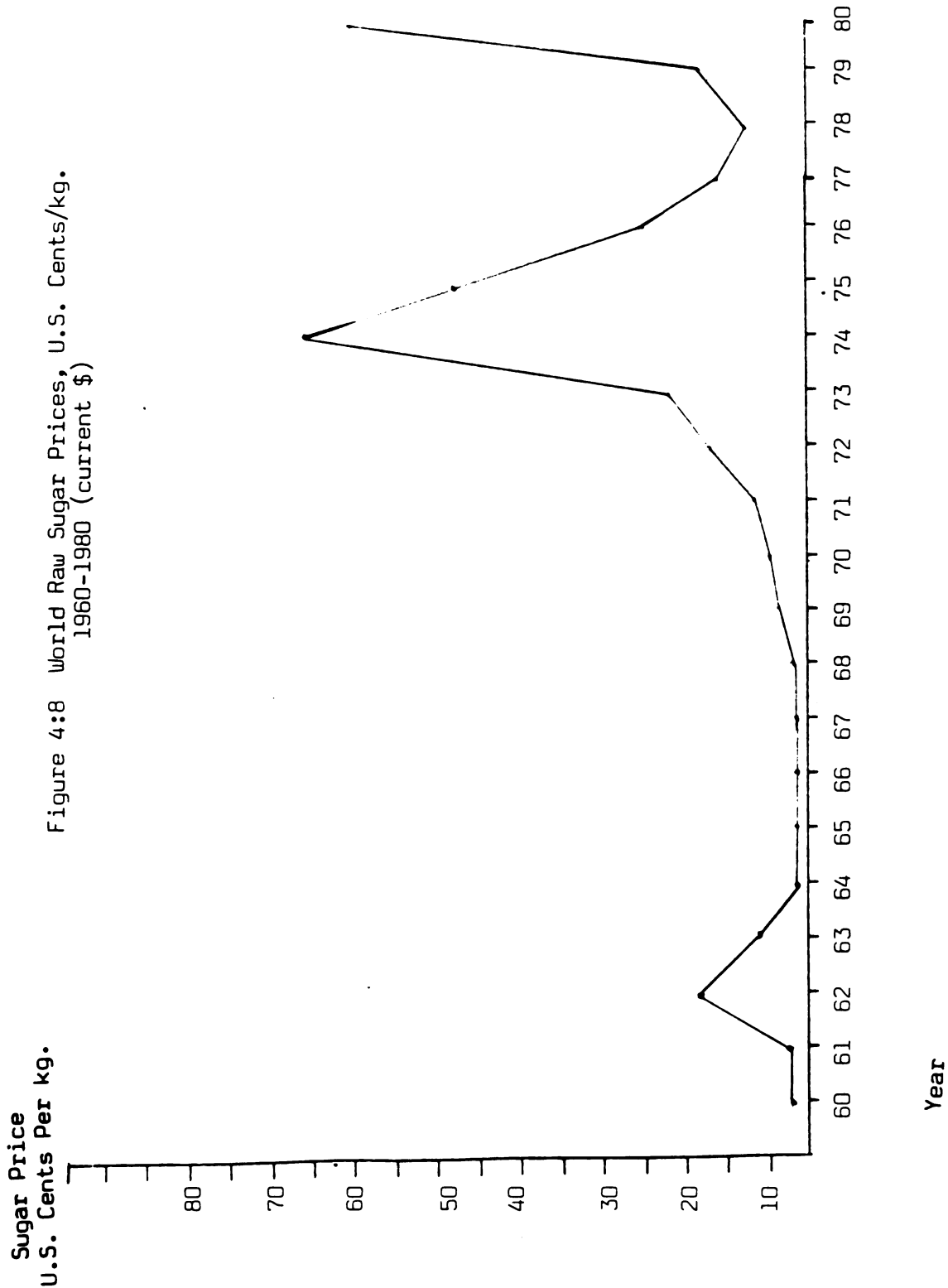
Table 4:7 shows the remarkable volatility of sugar prices. For example between 1970 and 1974 prices increased over 700 percent. Figure 4:8 makes this even more graphic as we can clearly see the steep rise between 1973 and 1974, and a corresponding fall in prices between 1974 and 1978. There is little doubt that the fluctuations in sugar prices can play havoc with an economy which is dependent upon the export of sugar for a large proportion of its foreign exchange earnings.

But price fluctuations breed price fluctuations and the sugar crisis of 1973-1975 which caused prices to sky rocket can be traced to the low prices which followed the highs of 1962-63. These were the years when both Europe and Cuba had poor sugar beet and sugar cane harvests, respectively.

Table 4:7  
World Sugar Prices (US cents per kg.)

<u>Year</u>	<u>World Raw</u>	<u>London Raw</u>
1960	6.92	7.85
1961	5.95	7.08
1962	6.13	7.17
1963	18.39	19.69
1964	12.72	14.15
1965	4.45	5.93
1966	3.99	4.89
1967	4.23	5.27
1968	4.19	5.18
1969	7.06	7.98
1970	8.11	9.52
1971	9.92	11.09
1972	16.03	17.90
1973	20.83	24.01
1974	65.39	70.35
1975	44.91	48.17
1976	25.49	27.56
1977	17.90	20.30
1978	17.20	19.60
1979	21.30	24.17
1980	63.20	67.76

Source: World Bank, Commodity Trade and Price Trends,  
Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University  
Press, 1982, p. 65.



There are two principal reasons for the marked instability of sugar prices. First only a very small amount of the sugar produced is actually traded. For example during 1974-1976 world production of sugar was 82.3 million metric tons, while world sugar exports were only 21.6 million metric tons.<sup>57</sup> The proportion of overall production which is exported has in general declined during the post-war years, from a high of about 40 percent in the 1950s, it was down to approximately 25 percent in the 1970s. This is based upon a shift in the geographical distribution of consumption patterns, toward increasing Third World consumption of sugar. Increased sugar supplies are required to satisfy the demands of newly established processed foods and soft drink industries.

The second point has already been alluded to, i.e. the fact that only a proportion of the sugar exported is actually traded on the "free market." But as indicated before, this situation has changed with the US cancellation of its preferential arrangements for importing sugar. It is important to note that about 75 percent of the world's sugar exports are sold on the free market, and this makes the free market quite narrow. Referring to the example above, of the 21.6 million tons exported in 1974-1976, about 15 million tons were sold through the free market. With the market being so narrow, too much sugar sends prices tumbling, while too little pushes them up dramatically.

However, by looking at the data in Table 4:8 we can determine that sugar exports have been declining in all three

Table 4:8

Quantity of Sugar Exports by Country  
1963-1979 ('000 metric tons)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Guyana</u>	<u>Jamaica</u>	<u>Trinidad</u>
1963	278	400	196
1964	238	424	197
1965	317	431	216
1966	283	414	173
1967	298	358	163
1968	301	390	206
1969	356	307	205
1970	283	298	180
1971	342	303	177
1972	305	280	192
1973	229	265	149
1974	307	274	176
1975	289	254	111
1976	300	209	158
1977	230	217	140
1978	285	199	103
1979	268	191	88

Source: United Nations, Yearbook of International Commodity Statistics, 1984, UNCTAD, and FAO Production Yearbooks, Rome: UN Food and Agricultural Organization.

countries. In Guyana exports peaked in 1969 and have declined ever since. Likewise in Jamaica since 1964 exports have been gradually falling. In the case of Trinidad which has been a smaller producer than Guyana or Jamaica the peak year for exports was 1965, and since then there has been a drastic fall in sugar exports.

This decline in sugar exports is indicative of the extent to which Caribbean economies have attempted to reduce their dependence on that commodity. Yet despite this reduction in sugar exports, and sugar production, in Jamaica sugar workers constitute the island's largest workforce. In Guyana the sugar industry has been nationalized and the state owned Guyana Sugar Corporation is the country's largest employer. While Trinidad is not a large exporter of sugar, for many years the sugar industry was the largest employer of labor, and the biggest foreign exchange earner for the economy of Trinidad. This has changed since the rise in the price of petroleum in 1974, and sugar has been overtaken by the petroleum industry as the principal foreign exchange earner.

In all three countries the sugar industry has been brought under state control, but while production is in local hands, little has changed in the marketing of the product. It is still sold in the same markets, in some instances utilizing the marketing services of the former owners. The industry has little control over the price at which its product is sold, since this is determined in London or New York, and



in Europe through negotiations with the EEC under the Sugar Protocol of the Lome Convention.

The income of workers in the sugar industry has in general been lower than that of workers in other sectors of the economy. At the outset the industry utilized free "slave labor," and after the abolition of slavery it depended upon the availability of the large pool of cheap labor. The production of sugar has always been labor intensive, demanding a large amount of unskilled labor, which has been readily available. Working on the sugar estates is comparable to working in the coal mines in this country, families spend most of their lives working for the sugar industry, and the children usually follow in their parents footsteps, although the latter has been changing in recent years.

As a predominant sector of the economy, the sugar industry has also been highly unionized, with the unions playing a strong role in the politics of the respective countries. In 1979 the leader of the largest union in the sugar industry in Trinidad was also leader of the opposition in the Trinidad Parliament, and the 'sugar-vote' has consistently been the determining factor in the election of representatives from Central Trinidad to Parliament. Likewise in Guyana the sugar workers have been well organized, and participate as an active political force in the country since the 1950s. In Jamaica the sugar workers formed part of the militant BITU and have been involved in the political support of the JLP, the political party to which the BITU is affiliated.

The scenario which has now developed is that of an industry which is highly unionized, by unions which are politicized, producing a commodity whose sales price fluctuates in a most unpredictable manner. Initially this would point to an industry which is likely to have industrial relations problems. Figures 4:9 to 4:11 demonstrate the trend of sugar prices on the world market, and the corresponding trends of total strikes and strikes in agriculture. Data on strikes in the sugar industry were not readily available. But except in Guyana where rice production is also unionized, the sugar industry is the principal unionized industry in the agricultural sector.

The figures indicate that strikes tend to follow the fluctuations in sugar prices. But we cannot make the determination that changes in the number of strikes are due to the volatility of sugar prices. However, from our knowledge of the behavior of unionized workers, when the price of the product increases, unionized workers will seek to have wages, salaries and benefits adjusted accordingly. Failure to achieve these goals could result in industrial conflict, and this frequently occurs.

Of course the issue of industrial conflict and its relation to fluctuations in the price of sugar has been further complicated by nationalization of the sugar industry. In 1976 Guyana nationalized the sugar industry, placing it under the management of a state corporation. The Trinidad sugar industry consists of two companies, Caroni (1975) Limited

Figure 4:9 Guyana: World sugar Price (ISA) U.S. Cents  
Per kg. and Strikes Per Annum

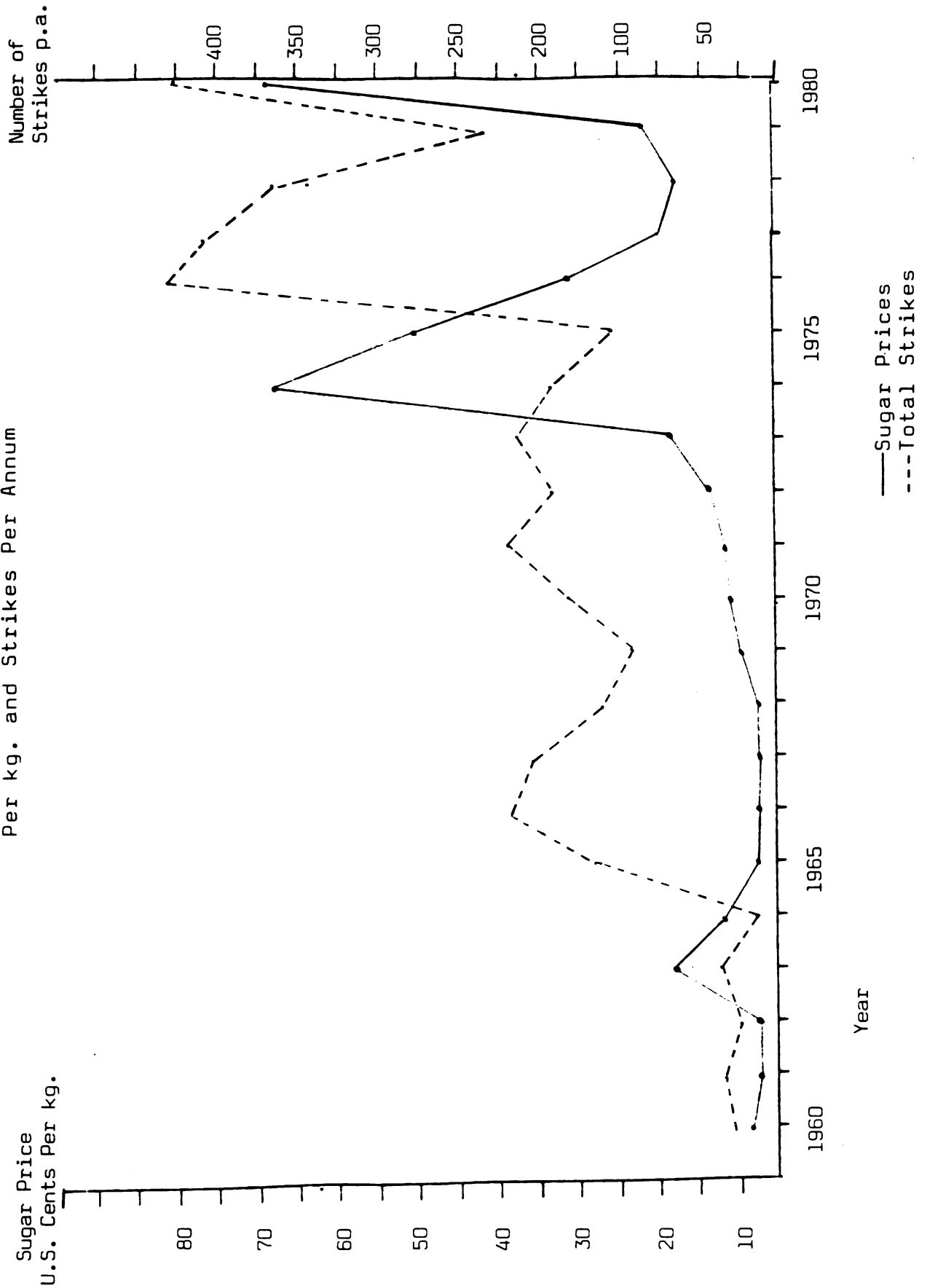


Figure 4:10 Jamaica: World Sugar Prices (ISA) U.S. Cents  
Per kg. and Strikes Per Annum

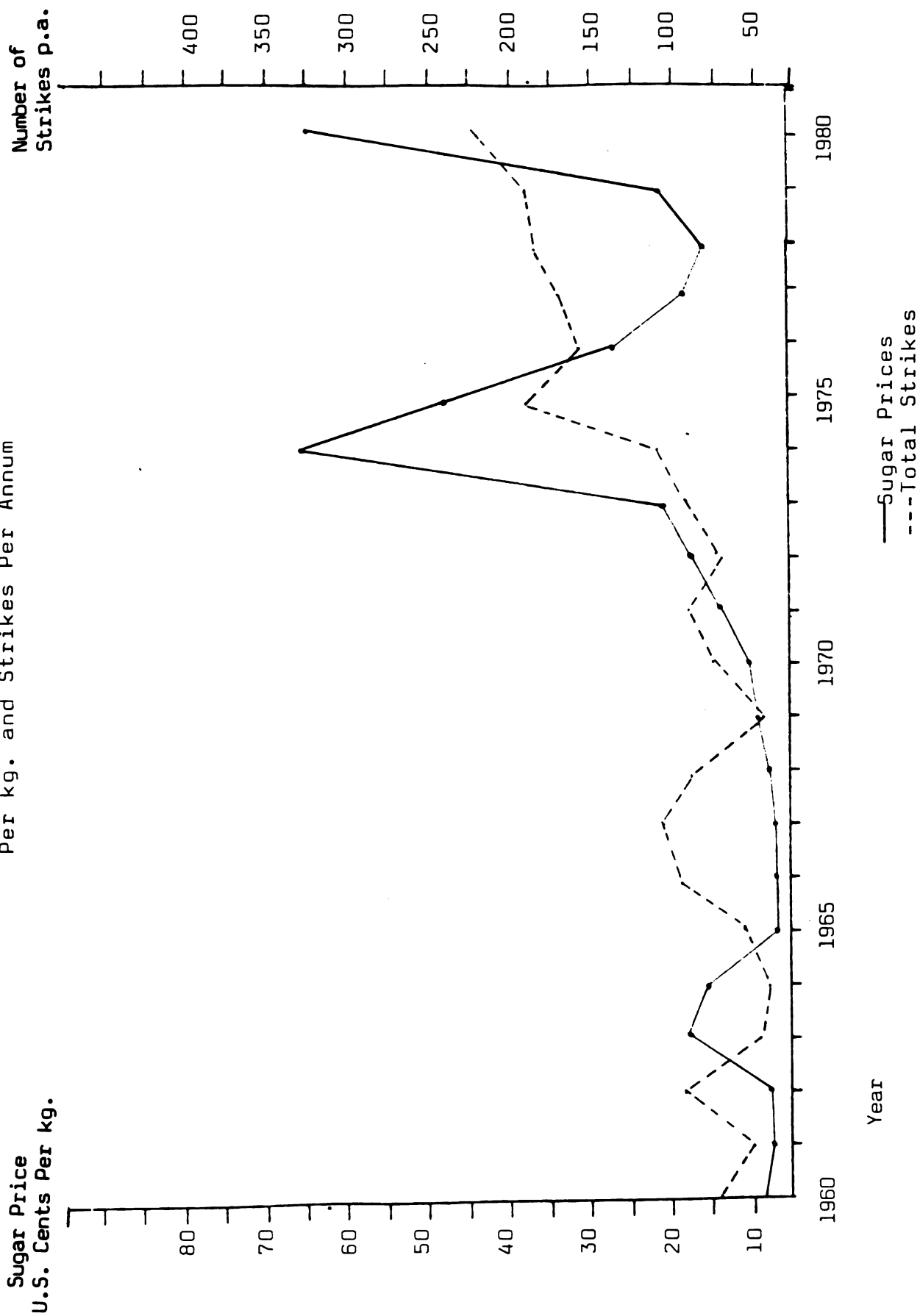
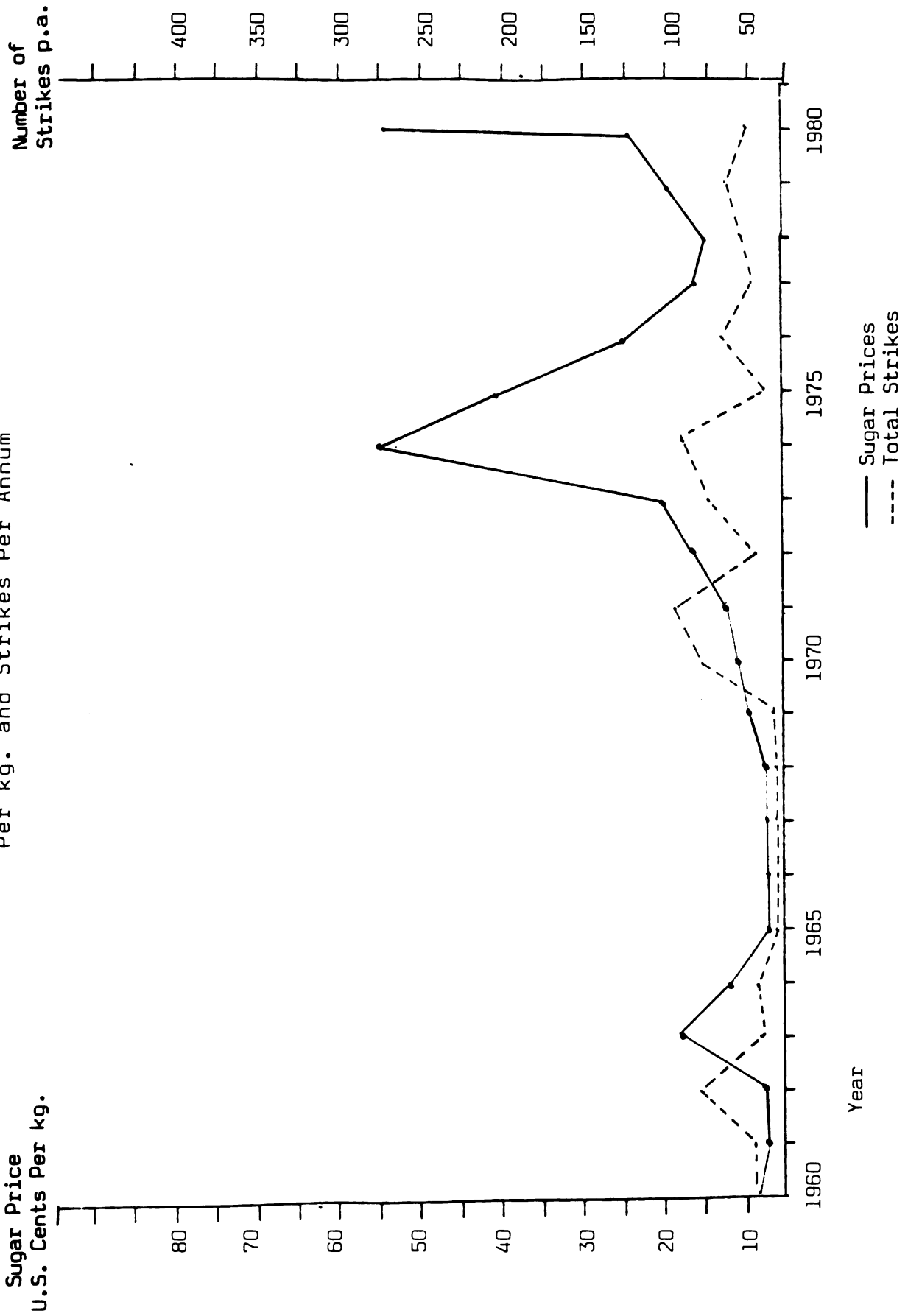


Figure 4:11 Trinidad: World Sugar Price (ISA) U.S. Cents  
Per kg. and Strikes Per Annum



and Orange Grove National Sugar Corporation Limited. Both companies are wholly owned by the Government of Trinidad. The latter was acquired in 1968, while the former was partially acquired in 1970, with full takeover occurring in 1975.

With state control of the industry and the politicized nature of the trade unions representing sugar workers, conflicts may occur which have little bearing on the price of sugar. On the other hand industrial conflict occurring in the industry may be more a response to the nature of the political regime in power.

In Guyana the sugar industry presents a good example of this problem. The Guyana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) affiliated to the PPP, controlled the workers on the sugar estates, while the MPCA was recognized as the bargaining agent. The PNC government refused to recognize the GAWU's demand for recognition, despite the fact that MPCA officials could only visit the estates with government escorts. The government's (PNC) principal concern in the sugar industry was to neutralize its political opposition. However, in 1970 even the Sugar Producers Association (SPA) indicated that it would have been prudent to recognize the GAWU.

By 1969 the government recognized that a new policy for dealing with the GAWU was necessary. There was an increase in overall strike activity from 126 in 1969 to 190 in 1971. The country began to experience grave economic difficulties, and was desperate for additional revenues. One way to generate these revenues was through increased sugar production, since

the projection for sugar prices was good, and in fact there was a marked increase in sugar prices during the early 1970s. The price explosion actually began in 1973 and the PPP/GAWU saw the opportunity to gain the recognition it had long desired in the sugar industry, in addition to securing appropriate economic benefits for the workers.

In December, 1975 after a thirteen week strike a poll was taken to determine which union had the workers' support, and the GAWU won 98 percent of the vote. The government in its strategy of developing a state capitalist model of accumulation was able to play the workers against the company for as long as was politically feasible. The company was blamed for non-recognition of the GAWU while at the same time the government was demanding a larger share of the profits (surplus) for its treasury, in order to fulfill its socialist platform. If the workers continued to be militant then coercive power e.g. the armed forces could be used to break the strikes. During the 1975 sugar strike the army was brought in to harvest the sugar cane in an attempt to break the strike. In 1977 the government used volunteers from the "Peoples Militia" and the staffs of Public Corporations in its attempt to break the strike, claiming that it was a political strike.<sup>58</sup>

The 1976 nationalization of the sugar industry had the support of both the PPP and the PNC (the governing party). In exchange for its support and pledge to end strike action in the industry, the PPP wanted 'a place' in the government, and the latter were prepared to use the GAWU to force the

governments hand towards this goal. By 1977 there were no indications that the PNC was prepared to accommodate the PPPs demands, and Guyana experienced the longest strike in the history of the sugar industry. The strike lasted 133 days and the now state-owned sugar corporation GUYSUCCO hired 6,000 scabs to break the strike, using the police and the army to protect the strike breakers.

The sugar industry in Guyana has always been a political battlefield with the sugar workers being used by both political parties. Due to the issue of non-recognition of the GAWU the industry was constantly plagued by industrial conflict resulting simply from the necessity of the GAWU flexing its muscle in support of the workers' struggle for better working conditions. Strike frequency is a good indicator of the level of industrial relations problems in an industry.

In Guyana the sugar industry has the highest level of industrial disputes in the country, see Table 4:9.

While the level of strike activity in Guyana's sugar industry may appear to be an extreme example, we need to recognize that sugar workers in general throughout the Caribbean have been militant especially when organized. Their militancy arises from the pivotal role of the sugar production in these economies, and the role of the state which in many instances has been to protect the sugar companies against the workers. In Guyana this has continued even in the post-nationalization period supported by legislation designed to restrict strike



Table 4:9

Lost Work Time in Guyana's Industry  
Due to Sugar Industry Strikes

<u>Year</u>	<u>% of total industrial work stoppage occur- ring in sugar industry</u>	<u>% of total mandays lost in industry due to sugar industry strikes</u>
1960	75	na
1961	82	90
1962	76	na
1963	76	na
1964	49	9
1965	56	75
1966	54	57
1967	58	19
1968	61	86
1969	71	65
1970	63	85
1971	67	37
1972	73	50
1973	80	72
1974	83	92
1975	81	95
1976	82	95
1977	85	97
1978	80	96
1979	72	43
1980	82	90

Source: Clive Y. Thomas, *Plantations, Peasants and State*, Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, and ISER, Mona, Jamaica, 1984, p. 80.

activity. We also saw a similar pattern in Trinidad with the passage of the Industrial Stabilization Act.

### Summary

Even in developing market economies there are complex economic and technical forces which are potential sources of tension and industrial conflict. Job security, the price of labor, conditions of production and service may all lead to overt conflict in the form of a strike. With economic development we expect increased industrialization and it is postulated that strikes should peak during the early stages of industrialization.<sup>59</sup>

In a study of the United States, Edwards found that there was no tendency for strike activity to decline.<sup>60</sup> While this study covers a much shorter period than that by Edwards, there has been no indication of a decline in industrial conflict in the countries we are examining.

The need to enhance industrialization has also increased the role of government in the economy, the industrial relations system, and the trade union movement. In many instances the role of government has been to protect the interest of foreign capital investment. The state is much more central in the development process in developing countries, than in industrialized countries. Its role in the trade union movement generally goes back to the pre-independence period when the

popular support of the political parties aspiring to office was to be found in the trade union movement.

Once independence was achieved (in all the countries in this study except Puerto Rico and Guadeloupe) the relationship between political parties and their affiliated trade unions changed. Prior to independence labor unrest was accepted as a tool in the struggle for self-determination. But in the post independence period it was seen as a threat to internal order, the level of productivity, and most important the anticipated level of investment from overseas. According to Gladstone in many Third World countries:

. . . strikes were considered a luxury that a developing country could not afford . . . collective bargaining as traditional trade union instruments could no longer be countenanced.<sup>61</sup>

In the countries in this study we find that there has been closer regulation of strike activity, but there is no evidence to indicate any attempt at centralizing the trade union movement under one union organization, subject to control by a single political party. In fact a one party state has not developed in any of the countries in this study with the exception of Grenada. However, with the assassination of Maurice Bishop, the Prime Minister, and the US invasion of the island in 1983, the political situation has returned to a parliamentary democracy.

With increasing industrialization there is the extended influence of MNCs on the domestic trade union environment. Many of these firms based in North America prefer the

industrial relations climate to be similar to that in their home country, and they make every effort to foster the development of such a system. The government in some of the recipient countries also made every effort to be as accommodating as possible, by implementing cosmetic changes in their industrial relations systems, but in effect there really has been no revolutionary change.

As a result there has not been any marked influence on strike activity, and this is indicated by our examination of the changes in the shape of strikes over the period. The four representative countries we chose to examine have indicated very limited change in the shape of strikes over the period covered by the study. There have been marked changes in the number of strikes, however in viewing the three-dimensional shape, the change is somewhat insignificant if we are seeking a generalized pattern of change.

While the shape of strikes may not have changed markedly, data when plotted on a graph indicates an increase in strike activity in periods when there was an increase in the price of the principal export agricultural commodity, sugar. While we cannot claim a causal link between increased strike activity and increased sugar prices, sugar is the only commodity which was a common export in the three countries examined.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: FOOTNOTES

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<sup>2</sup>Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, Strikes in France, London: Cambridge University Press, 1974, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>John R. Commons, "Labor Movement," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. vii, p. 682.

<sup>4</sup>Selig Perlman, A Theory of the Labor Movement, New York: Macmillan, 1928.

<sup>5</sup>G. D. H. Cole, A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, 1789-1947, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1948, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>W. Arthur Lewis, "The Industrialization of the British West Indies," Caribbean Economic Review, May, 1950, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>Alister McIntyre, "Some Issues in Trade Policy in the West Indies" in N. Girvan and O. Jefferson (eds.), Readings in the Political Economy of the Caribbean, Mona, Jamaica: New World Group Ltd., 1964, p. 165.

<sup>8</sup>William Demas, The Economics of Development in Small Countries with Special Reference to the Caribbean, Montreal: McGill University Press, 1965.

<sup>9</sup>A public square dubbed The University of Woodford Square where public meetings were held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

<sup>10</sup>Eric Williams, "Speech at Woodford Square, Port-of-Spain, April 22 1965." The Nation, Vol. 7, No. 32, April 30, 1965.

<sup>11</sup>See United Nations, Treaty Series, Vol. 298, p. 65.

<sup>12</sup>J. P. Windmuller, American Labor and the International Labor Movement 1940-1953, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964, p. 243.

<sup>13</sup>See, Steel Labor, December 1951, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>See, Steel Labor, April 1953, p. 6; and USWA Proceedings of the 7th Constitutional Conference, 1954, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup>See, Steel Labor, April 1957, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup>See, D. Pearson, "US Faces Line Holding Decision," Washington Post, May 31, 1964: 24; N. Sheehan, "CIA Men and Strikes in Guyana Against Dr. Jagan," New York Times, February 22, 1972: 3; and Ashton Chase, A History of Trade Unionism in Guyana 1900-1961, Guyana: New Guyana Co., 1964.

<sup>17</sup>G. Eaton, "Trade Union Development in Jamaica," Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 8, No. 182, 1962, p. 621.

<sup>18</sup>See, IBRD, The Economic Development of Jamaica.

<sup>19</sup>See, IBRD, Employment in Trinidad and Tobago, World Bank, 1973, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup>See, I. Litvak and C. Maule, "Foreign firms: Social costs and benefits in developing countries," Public Policy, Spring 1975, p. 172; and "Farewell to Bookers Empire," Caribbean Contact, March 1976, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup>Rajendra Chandisingh, "The State, The Economy, and The Type of Rule in Guyana: An Assessment of Guyana's Socialist Revolution," Latin American Perspectives, Vol. X, No. 4, 1983, p. 68.

<sup>22</sup>See, Latin American Bureau, Guyana Fraudulent Revolution, London: Latin American Bureau (Research and Action) Ltd., 1984, p. 56.

<sup>23</sup>Chandisingh, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>24</sup>See, Inter-american Development Bank, Annual Report 1981.

<sup>25</sup>See, Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, Strikes in France, 1830-1968, London: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>31</sup>Douglas A. Hibbs, Jr., "Industrial Conflict in Advanced Industrial Societies," The American Political Science Review, Vol. 70 (4) 1976, p. 1034.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 1034.

<sup>33</sup>See Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel, "The Interindustry Propensity to Strike - An International Comparison" in A. Kornhauser, R. Dubin, and A. Ross (eds.) Industrial Conflict, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954.

<sup>34</sup>See, Inter-American Development Bank, Economic and Social Progress in Latin America: The External Sector, IBD 1982, p. 24.

<sup>35</sup>See, Norman Girvan, Richard Bernal, and Wesley Huges, "The IMF and the Third World: The Case of Jamaica 1974-1980," Development Dialogue (1980), p. 13.

<sup>36</sup>See, Ibid., pp. 125-127.

<sup>37</sup>Wall Street Journal, May 18, 1983, "US Charged with Bias in IMF Votes."

<sup>38</sup>See Jat R. Mandle, Patterns of Caribbean Development: An Interpretative Essay on Economic Change, New York: Gordon and Breach, 1982, p. 61.

<sup>39</sup>See, US Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Caribbean Nations: Assessment of Conditions and US Influence, Report of a Special Study Mission to Jamaica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and the Guantanamo Naval Base, January 3-12, 1979, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979, pp. 8-9.

<sup>40</sup>See, US Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Sub-Committee on Inter-American Affairs, Economic and Political Future of the Caribbean: Hearings, 96th Congress, 1st Session, July 24 and 26, and September 20, 1979, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979, p. 41; also Keesings Contemporary Archives, July 1979, pp. 29746-48.

<sup>41</sup>See, US Central Intelligence Agency, National Assessment Center, Non-OPEC LDCs: External Debt Positions ER80-10030, Washington, D.C.: 1980, p. 13.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>43</sup>US Department of Commerce.

<sup>44</sup>Peter Huegel, "A donde va el movimiento obrero Puertoriqueno," Mundo Obrero, April 1980, pp. 16-17.

<sup>45</sup>See, US Department of Commerce, Economic Study of Puerto Rico, December, 1979.

<sup>46</sup>See, New York Times, July 3, 1983.

<sup>47</sup>See, Puerto Business Review, March, 1983.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, "The Shape of Strikes in France 1830-1960," Comparative Studies in Society and History, 13(1), 1971, p. 75.

<sup>50</sup>S. Keith and R. Girling, "Caribbean Conflict: Jamaica and the US," NACHA, Vol. 12, No. 3, 1978, pp. 3-36.

<sup>51</sup>Fitzroy Ambursley, "Jamaica: From Michael Manley to Edward Seaga," Fitzroy Ambursley and Robin Cohen (eds.), Crisis in the Caribbean, Heineman, 1983, p. 85.

<sup>52</sup>Trevor Munro, The Politics of Constitutional Decolonization: Jamaica, 1944-1962, ISER 1972, p. 93.

<sup>53</sup>US Government Printing Office, Area Handbook for Jamaica, Washington, D.C.: 1976, p. 280.

<sup>54</sup>Noel Deer, The History of Sugar, London: Chapman and Hall, pp. 116-117.

<sup>55</sup>G. B. Hegelberg, The Caribbean Sugar Industries: Constraints and Opportunities, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University, Antilles Research Program, 1974, pp. 120 & 149.

<sup>56</sup>Sydney E. Chernick, The Commonwealth Caribbean, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 134.

<sup>57</sup>Jos de Vries, The World Sugar Economy, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1980, pp. 4 & 11.

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<sup>59</sup>See, Clark Kerr, J. T. Dunlop, F. H. Harbison, and C. A. Myers, Industrialism and Industrial Man, London: Heineman, 1962.

<sup>60</sup>P. K. Edwards, Strikes in the United States, 1881-1974, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981, p. 51.

<sup>61</sup>A. Gladstone, "Trade Unions, Growth and Development," Labor and Society, Vol. 5, 1980, p. 56.



## Chapter 5

### THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

In a study of industrial conflict we cannot ignore the role of international economic relationships. As noted in the previous chapter, in the case of production and marketing of sugar, the developed countries play a significant role in the economics of sugar and the dependence of sugar producing countries on the western developed nations. We cannot take the international system for granted, since many third world countries are not immune to the influence of the international markets which dictate commodity prices.

Yet if an attempt is made to explain relationships between political systems using aggregate data we run the risk of being confronted with Galton's problem. However as Lijphart has indicated, Galton's problem raises the issue of the independence of cases in comparative research, and he suggests that the researcher use the comparative method that involves a smaller number of cases, rather than more statistical studies.<sup>1</sup> In this study where international relationships are indicated, the variables will be measured at the national level, thus avoiding the need for more systematic solutions to the functions of internal and external determinants of national behavior.

As indicated in Chapter 2 there has been an ongoing debate over the relationship between the level of economic development and the incidence of industrial conflict. Many scholars in the field tend to agree that strikes will increase during the period of early industrialization. Ross and Hartman were the earliest proponents of this thesis.<sup>2</sup>

With increased industrialization the argument goes in the opposite direction i.e. that there will be a reduction in strike activity. According to the liberal point of view, in late industrialization there is a decline in unionization which results in a lower incidence of strikes. Dahrendorf has argued that with increased skill levels, the workplace becomes more mobile, thus reducing the homogeneity in interests, leading to a more individualistic career outlook, rather than depending on group solidarity.<sup>3</sup> This tends to enhance industrial peace.

On the other hand the radical perspective contends that industrialization produces a shift on power resources favorable to the labor movement and working class mobilization. Rising standards of living allow workers to contribute more time and energy to the labor movement. In addition workers expect these standards to continue improving, since their aspirations are always on an upward spiral. Britt and Galle in examining the variations in the size of industries and industrial conflict concluded that:

larger industries tend to be associated with somewhat more frequent and shorter strikes than smaller industries.<sup>4</sup>

The strongest argument of the radicals concerns the distribution of political power which they claim is not evenly distributed between capital and labor. Since business interests are generally accepted as being more influential on the state, than labor, it is felt that the latter has no alternative but to settle any disputes with management through the strike. Turner writing in 1921 asserted that:

Capital is often able, by means of the profit it obtains from the product, to finance itself over a long period of waiting through a strike or lockout, or unemployment . . . . It has the money to tempt capable men from the service of labor to that of capital. It usually has the control of the government and<sup>5</sup> consequently the advantage of police protection.

This statement is as applicable today in many instances to the industrial relations situation in the advanced industrialized countries, and moreso in many developing countries. The inference of equality arises from the fact that organized labor can resort to the "strike weapon" as a means of enforcing a decision making process, but the employer still retains ultimate power and authority.

As we examine the industrialization - strike relationship it is necessary to analyse the data on industrial conflict in order to have some understanding of the incidence of strikes in a situation of increasing levels of economic development. Studies which utilize data on industrial conflict to explain the employment relationship have been criticized as well as supported by scholars in the field. Walker, for example states that, "Industrial strife is a surface symptom of more

fundamental characteristics of rule making . . . in a given industrial relations context,"<sup>6</sup> and this view is supported by Dunlop. For an opposite point of view, Stearns has considered the strike as "the most revealing index of the situation and outlook of actual workers."<sup>7</sup>

While strike data have sparked discussions over their use or misuse, the most important questions regarding those data relates to the problem of validity and reliability, and these two issues are discussed below.

Validity is the question of whether the data actually measure what they set out to measure. However this should be clarified by explaining what strike statistics are supposed to measure. Should strike data include all disputes, or should they exclude disputes of a political nature? Are all workers to be counted, or only those who are allowed to strike? Is any stoppage of work to be classified as a strike? The answers to these questions will differ between countries, and over time. We therefore need to look more closely at operational measurement error, rather than seeking totally compatible answers to the questions raised above.

First we deal with the charge that for cross-national comparisons the data lack completeness and representativeness, thus violating the first criterion of validity, that of completeness of the data. It should be clear to most observers that due to obvious limits on observational resources, some nations may record fewer strikes than others. The criteria by which an event is determined to be a strike also varies

from country to country. For example illegal and/or unofficial strikes may not be recorded in some countries. There have also been instances where manipulation or even suppression of strike information have been raised, especially in cases where political protests have arisen.

In examining these differences in reporting and compilation of strike data, it becomes clear that there may well be no country in which the strike statistics are a complete sample of the universe of industrial disputes. However Ross and Hartman in dealing with these questions of strike data limitations concluded that, ". . . the dissimilarities in methods and definitions in strikes accounting, do not preclude meaningful analysis."<sup>8</sup>

We also need to look at the homogeneity, or degree of equivalence of strike statistics in discussing the question of validity of such data. Again we turn to Ross and Hartman who point out that, "To consider all strikes as homogeneous occurrences stands in the way of enlightenment."<sup>9</sup> While we can identify each strike by the same measures viz. number of workers involved, duration, and man days lost, we cannot say e.g. that a strike which lasted ten days was twice the size of one lasting only five days. The important point is that it is difficult if not impossible to determine the equivalence between a strike of teachers at the local school, and one of Teamsters truckers hauling parts for an automobile plant.

Yet in the final analysis there are clear similarities between the decision to strike, the workers involved, man-days lost and the duration of the strike. These operational measures are tools for our analysis, and thus bring the necessary equivalence to strike data, which enables social scientists to analyze, and explain industrial conflict.

There is also the issue of the reliability of the data on industrial conflict, and here the determination is whether the measuring instruments we are using perform the same way every time. The evidence shows that this is not the case, reporting systems are different, resource allocations vary and this affects the number of officials available to record and verify reports of industrial conflict. But if the effect of these discrepancies in measurement remains constant over time, or if there is random impact on the overall data, we can accept these data as being reliable.

There are undoubtedly some measurement errors in the strike data, however this should not prevent us from using these data to compare trends over time. That is, provided we recognize that these studies of comparative strike activity must be treated with caution.

### Data

Data on industrial conflicts in all countries included in the study as reported in the ILO Yearbooks of Labor Statistics for the years 1960 to 1979. The ILO data have three

basic components: number of strikes, number of workers involved, and man-days lost. These data are reported on an annual basis for economy wide totals, and also for nine separate sectors of economic activity.

The argument has been made that since strikes rarely occur in the agricultural sector, (and those that do are not recorded with great accuracy) we should exclude agriculture from international comparisons.<sup>10</sup> While this reasoning may be an acceptable basis for analysis of industrial conflict in the industrialized nations, it must be rejected as a premise upon which to base the analysis in this study. Agriculture has always been predominant in the national economies of the countries in the Caribbean in general. Although in recent years the importance of agriculture in the economies of the countries has been in decline, it still remains one of the major sources of employment, income, and foreign exchange.

It is also relevant to note that agriculture has been a highly unionized sector with a record of militant trade unionism, and intense conflicts between labor and management. To omit the agricultural sector from this analysis would be to significantly reduce the usefulness of this study, in its investigation of political trade unionism in the Caribbean Basin countries.

According to the literature on industrial conflict there are also two broad categories which are believed to influence industrial conflict, the state of the economy and the political system. The level of economic growth is measured by the gross

national product (GNP), and GNP per capita. These data are obtained from the World Bank tables. This measure is an acceptable predictor of the concentration of capital, the expansion of the white collar sector, and other changes which are linked to economic growth.

However GNP as a measure of development has come under harsh criticism since it is not a good indicator of the distribution of goods produced, and likewise it does not differentiate between the various types of goods produced. It is the distribution of goods rather than the overall gross production which is important, and an example of this was Pakistan. According to Griffin and Khan:

Until recently Pakistan was widely acclaimed for its rapid growth of output per head. It was less widely recognized abroad however that the growth was accompanied by an increase in the number of poor people and a decline in their living standards . . . the fact of growing inequality, has led to intense political controversy, to attempts by East Pakistan to achieve regional autonomy, and finally to the declaration of an independent Bangladesh.<sup>11</sup>

Despite these criticisms, GNP is quite adequate as an indicator of the level of industrialization, since it does measure gross production rather than overall "economic development." As an indicator of the latter, the criticism is justified. Due to the perceived inadequacy of GNP in measuring economic development, it is usually supplemented with certain social indicators which help to deal with the distribution problems of GNP.



Scholars have suggested that indicators such as literacy rates, hospital beds per capita, levels of nutrition, and energy consumption per capita help to lessen any discrepancies from the distribution problem of GNP. But use of these indicators also present difficulties for the researcher, principal among them are the availability of the data, and measurement error in those data, which might be even greater than those in the GNP statistics. Consideration also has to be given to the relative value of these indicators to the research in which they are used, and the selection of specific indicators. However in view of Jackman's statement below, only GNP per capita will be used to measure industrialization.

Choosing a measure of economic development is more straightforward: We have taken energy consumption (expressed in million metric tons of coal equivalents) per capita. Other measures available in the main data set such as Gross National Product per capita, or Gross Domestic Product per capita would have yielded the same results as these three variable are highly intercorrelated ( $r > .98$ ) that they can be considered theoretically and empirically equivalent.<sup>12</sup>

Industrial conflicts generally have a political element, and in the case of the countries in this study it is felt that political variables should also be examined. However some countries claim to exclude industrial conflicts which are mainly or totally political from their conflict statistics. There are also no data which lists industrial conflicts as political or non-political, moreso over the period covered by this research.

It is also necessary to examine the level of political development attained by the countries included in the study. As the question of whether or not a country is independent is qualitative rather than quantitative, a dummy variable will be used, (1 - independent territory, and 0 - non-independent territory).

The argument has been made that organizational strength is the key prerequisite to strike activity. In order to test this argument we will examine trade union membership. However in dealing with data on trade union membership we must heed the warning of Professor John Windmuller, and proceed with caution:

Membership figures given out by international trade union bodies must be regarded with caution because they are subject to a certain amount of inflation. This is often the result of inaccurate reporting by affiliates which for reasons of prestige . . . are led to exaggerate their own strength. . . . international organizations are compelled to accept the claims of their affiliates even if known to be inaccurate because it would be politically inexpedient to question them.<sup>13</sup>

The final independent variable to be included in our analysis is the level of social mobilization. We will argue that a country which has a labor force with a relatively high literacy rate, a high level of urbanization and non-agricultural labor force will experience strikes which are longer in duration than countries which are less socially mobilized. Theories of social mobilization are based on the work of Karl Deutsch who differentiated between economic development and social mobilization as follows:

Social mobilization is something that happens to large numbers of people in areas which undergo modernization, i.e. where advanced, non-traditional practices in culture, technology and economic life are introduced and accepted on a considerable scale. It is not identical with the process of modernization as a whole, but it deals with one of its major aspects, or better, with a recurrent cluster among its consequences.<sup>14</sup>

Deutsch also points out that the patterns of socialization and behavior develop, and these result in a higher level of political involvement. He states that:

In whatever country it occurs, social mobilization brings with it an expansion of the politically relevant strata of the population . . . . The growth in numbers of these people produces mounting pressures for the transformation of political practices and institutions.<sup>15</sup>

With a higher level of political awareness due to social mobilization, political demands begin to emerge. We therefore postulate that this was the situation in the Caribbean when the disturbances of the 1930s were taking place. The examination of social mobilization by scholars in the field has resulted in differing conclusions. The Feierabends found a strong positive relationship of socio-economic change with political instability ( $r = .66$ ) for 84 countries from 1948 to 1965.<sup>16</sup> Hibbs on the other hand concluded from a sample of 108 countries that there was no relationship between social mobilization and mass protest or internal war. But he found that one cause of political separatism was social mobilization.<sup>17</sup>

In a study titled "The Workshop" Jackman and Boyd, *inter alia*, examined the hypothesis that, social mobilization should increase the probability of collective protest, and that multi-partyism should generate higher levels of collective protest. Their measure of social mobilization consisted of the "sum of the percentage of the labor force in non-agricultural occupations in 1966, plus the estimated percentage of the population that is literate in 1965."<sup>18</sup> To measure strength of party systems, the researchers used the "percentage of the vote" cast for the winning party in the last election held before the date of independence, as reported in Morrison et al (1972, p. 103).<sup>19</sup>

After analyzing the data, they reported that:

It is clear that the effects of social mobilization and party strength are in the hypothesized direction in all the six regressions reported . . . . In addition the estimated effects of social mobilization are all more than twice their standard errors.<sup>20</sup>

These findings lend support to the use of social mobilization as an independent variable in examining the duration of industrial conflicts.

### The Hypotheses

Various schools of thought agree on the thesis that there is a tendency for industrial conflict to increase during periods of early industrialization. This is based on the premise that there is rural to urban migration resulting in social dislocations affecting both caste and class ties which

supported the former social order of the migrants. Kerr et al have pointed to the impact of industrialization on the social order as follows:

The discontent of workers, reflected in the disruptive forms of protest, tends to be greatest in the early stages of industrialization, and tends to decline as workers become more accustomed to industrialization. The partially committed industrial workers with strong ties to the extended family and village, unaccustomed to urban life and to the discipline and mores of the factory, is more likely to reflect upon revolt<sup>21</sup> against industrial life than the seasoned worker.

As a country advances economically workers tend to develop more stable behavior in their new industrial environment. The economy therefore appears to be a factor which influences the level of strike activity. In addition it also has a bearing on the ability of labor to organize workers, and the political climate between management and labor.

But there have been some doubts about the argument that strike activity peaks during the early stages of industrialization. In the US for example there has been no indication that strike activity has declined, although the country can be classified as a post-industrial state. According to Edwards:

The outstanding feature of US strike levels has been their long term constancy with measures of worker involvement and duration showing no general upward or downward trend.<sup>22</sup>

While it is difficult to compare levels of strike activity in different countries, we can compare trends, or the relative changes over time. This allows us to determine the countries

which have been experiencing the fastest increase in strike activity over time.

There are other problems which have to be taken into account in utilizing the data set available for this study. For example dealing with year to year variation in strike activity when the calendar year is the only unit of analysis that is available. In many of the countries in this study agriculture is, or has been the dominant economic sector, and this consisted principally of growing sugar cane to produce sugar. The sugar industry is a seasonal industry, and industrial conflicts follow a different pattern in comparison to full time factory employment. However the data are not available to carry out alternative types of analyses arising from these points.

With these reservations in mind the following four hypotheses will be examined in the next chapter:

Hypothesis 1. The greater the level of union organization the higher the level of industrial conflict.

Hypothesis 2. Countries with high levels of economic attainment will experience increasing levels of strike proneness.

Hypothesis 3. The level of union membership should be positively correlated with strike proneness.

Hypothesis 4. Industrial conflict will increase with higher levels of decolonization.

## CHAPTER FIVE: FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See Arend Lijphart, "The Comparable Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," Comparative Political Studies, Vol. vii (July 1975), pp. 171-172.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur Ross and Paul T. Hartman, Changing Patterns of Industrial Conflict, New York: Wiley, 1960, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup>See Ralf Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959.

<sup>4</sup>David W. Britt and Omer Galle, "Structural Antecedents of the Shape of Strikes: A Comparative Analysis," American Sociological Review, Vol. 39, 1974, pp. 649-650.

<sup>5</sup>Jennie McMullin Turner, "Joint Control" in John R. Commons et al., Industrial Government, New York: Macmillan, 1921, pp. 396-405.

<sup>6</sup>Kenneth F. Walker, "Strategic Factors in Industrial Relations Systems," IILS Bulletin, No. 6, June 1969, p. 199.

<sup>7</sup>Peter N. Stearns, "Measuring the Evolution of Strike Movements," International Review of Social History, 19 (1), 1974, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>A. M. Ross and Paul T. Hartman, Changing Patterns of Industrial Conflict, New York: Wiley, 1960, p. 184.

<sup>9</sup>Ross and Hartman, *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup>See Douglas A. Hibbs, Jr., "Industrial Conflict in Advanced Industrial Societies," American Political Science Review, Vol. 70.

<sup>11</sup>K. Griffin and Azizur Rahman (eds.), Growth and Inequality in Pakistan, London: MacMillan, 1972, p. 204.

<sup>12</sup>Robert W. Jackman, "On the Relation of Economic Development to Democratic Performance," American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 17, August 1974, p. 616.

<sup>13</sup>John P. Windmuller, The International Trade Union Movement, The Netherlands: Kluwer, Deventer, 1980, p. 61.

<sup>14</sup>Karl Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," American Political Science Review, Vol. 60, p. 495.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 498.

<sup>16</sup>Ivo K. Feierabend, Rosalind L. Feierabend, and Betty Nesvold, "The Comparative Study of Revolution and Violence," Comparative Politics, 5 April 1973, p. 423.

<sup>17</sup>Douglas A. Hibbs, Mass Political Violence, New York: John Wiley, 1973, pp. 72-73.

<sup>18</sup>Robert W. Jackman and William A. Boyd, "The Workshop; Multiple Sources in the Collection of Data on Political Conflict," American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 23 (2), p. 448.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 448.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 450.

<sup>21</sup>Clark Kerr et al., Industrialization and Industrial Man, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1960, p. 30.

<sup>22</sup>P. K. Edwards, Strikes in the United States, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981, p. 51.



## CHAPTER 6

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### The Trend of Industrial Conflict

The high point in Caribbean labor history was the period 1935 to 1938, prior to this trade unions had been poorly organized, and in many of these countries they were non-existent. But the labor movement in the Caribbean was born out of this period of turmoil. The result was an embryonic movement nurtured by a desire to promote economic, social and political change even if this resulted in a militant movement.

It was not long before trade union leaders recognized the value of trade unions organized for political activity. Some of the early (post 1938) trade union leaders in the former British Caribbean territories went on to become outstanding statesmen in the region once they achieved political office. The political parties which developed as offshoots from these trade unions were generally labeled labor parties, although their platforms had almost no specific bias towards labor, except that they drew their support from the labor unions.

Some of these parties took on a social democratic ideology which was due to the background of the party leaders, many of whom were British educated and from the middle class. The Peoples National Party in Jamaica, the Democratic Labor Party, and Barbados Labor Party in Barbados, the Peoples

National Movement in Trinidad, the Peoples Progressive Party in Guyana and the Peoples United Party in Belize are examples of parties with a social democratic leaning. The other alternative was the working class, peasant based populist parties like the Antiguan Labor party, the St. Lucia United Workers Party, the Grenada United Labor Party, and the Jamaica Labor Party. An unusual outcome among the latter group was that despite being labeled "labor" parties, they were generally to the right of the political spectrum, and could be called conservative parties.

An excellent example of conservative labor parties is the Jamaica Labor Party. During the party's first period in office (1944-55) it was strongly opposed to the British Labor government's proposal to nationalize the Tate and Lyle sugar corporation which totally dominated Jamaican export agriculture at that time.<sup>1</sup> In order to counter the JLP-BITU's conservatism the Trade Union Congress (TUC) was formed with close links to the PNP, but by 1959 the PNP ties with the TUC went sour. The result was the formation of the National Workers Union as the industrial arm of the PNP.

Throughout the period since independence in 1962 the JLP has always stood for free enterprise and a more dependent capitalist development platform, reminiscent of the 1950's and 1960's. Despite its early beginning as a party to champion the causes of the poor and the working class, the party gradually evolved into one which was perceived as favoring the 'big man' a Caribbean synonym for the wealthy and upper

classes.<sup>2</sup> This was of course confirmed after the JLP won the 1980 elections and initiated a complete reversal of the PNP's policy of social democracy to one of free enterprise allowing the free play of market forces in the economy. However the economic development strategy of the current JLP government as in the past has not resulted in tangible benefits for the masses, particularly its supporters in the BITU, and this could well lead to a rift between the party and its working class base of support.

This is one of the dangers in the political party/trade union alliance. The party must deliver on its promises or it will face organized opposition which could lead to a loss at the polls. On the other hand in countries where the trade union movement is weak e.g. Belize, or where political parties have not been closely aligned with the trade unions (Trinidad), there have been fewer changes of government. In Belize the Peoples United Prty (PUP) won all the elections since the country achieved internal self-government in 1963; its first defeat was in December 1983. Since achieving independence in 1962, the Peoples National Movement (PNM) has been the only party elected to form the government in Trinidad.

While the necessary data are not available to examine the basis for this phenomenon, it could be that party members tend to vote the ticket whereas trade unionists despite their affiliation to a particular party are more concerned about the union, and thus play the pivotal role in toppling the

government. Table 6:1 shows the alternation of power among Commonwealth Caribbean countries.

Guyana has been omitted from the above tabulation mainly because elections in that country are held under a proportional representation system rather than a simple plurality as in the other countries listed in the table. It is therefore difficult to compare the results of elections in Guyana with results in the other Caribbean countries. Also according to Stone:

In the case of Guyana, a liberal-democratic state was gradually converted into a militarized leftist-socialist regime by the governing party . . . the liberal-democratic system was corrupted to maintain one-party rule.<sup>2</sup>

Table 6:1 shows that there are two groups of countries within the Commonwealth Caribbean, those with competitive party systems which have been dominated for years by one party (Antigua, Belize, Trinidad), and those with a strong two party system where the parties alternate quite regularly in forming the government. It is among this latter group that there is a strong trade union movement, with unions closely aligned to the political parties.

A similar comparison could not be carried out for the three non-Commonwealth territories in this study viz., Puerto Rico, Surinam and Guadeloupe. Although there is labor support for the various political parties in Puerto Rico, trade union alignment with a particular party tends to be weak and is more comparable to labor support for the Democratic Party

Table 6:1

Alternation in Power Among Commonwealth  
Caribbean Political Parties

<u>State</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>No. of Terms</u>
Antigua	Antigua Labor Party	6(1951-71; 1976- )
Barbados	Barbados Labor Party	3(1951-61; 1976- )
	Democratic Labor Party	3(1961-1976)
Belize	Peoples United Party	3(1961-1983)
	United Democratic Party	1(1983- )
Grenada	Grenada United Labor Party	6(1951-57; 1961-62; 1967-79)
	Grenada National Party	2(1957-61; 1962-67)
Jamaica	Peoples National Party	4(1955-58; 1959-62 (Federation); 1972-80)
	Jamaica Labor Party	6 (1944-55; 1958-59; 1962-72; 1980- )
St. Lucia	St. Lucia Labor Party	5(1951-64; 1979- )
	United Labor Party	3(1964-1979)
Trinidad	Peoples National Party	3(1964-1979)

Source: Compiled by the author.

in the United States of America, than say BITU support for the JLP in Jamiaca. In Puerto Rico the main political parties tend to be located at the ideological center, rather than on the right or left wing. However there are sharp divisions over the question of statehood or independence for that country.

In Guadeloupe, a department of France, the pertinent political issues are autonomy for the country or further assimilation by France. In fact the French Communist Party (Parti Communiste Francais (PCF) has changed its name to Guadeloupe Communist Party (PCG) while at the same time adopting a slogan of autonomy for the island.

Likewise the Guadeloupean workers movement has been attempting to develop itself on a national basis gradually breaking loose from its links with French trade union and political forces. However due to its status as a French department Guadeloupe sends deputies and senators to the National Assembly in Paris, in addition to electing members to a local General Council. While the trade unions have been active in improving working conditions, their political role is of more recent vintage. But they are now at the forefront of the movement for self-determination and independence in Gaudaloupe.

It is also difficult to compare the role of the trade unions in Surinam with that in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The nearest comparison would be with Guyana where, as in Surinam there is sharp polarization of the society along racial lines, leading to a weak party system. In Guyana this has

led to the development of a militarized leftist-socialist regime, whereas in Surinam a dispute between the armed forces and the governing coalition resulted in a military takeover in 1980. This dispute arose out of a call by the military for a greater role in the development process, and an attempt by the NCO's to form a labor union. After looking at the link between the trade unions and the political parties in the three countries mentioned above, there is an indication of trade union involvement in the politics of these countries, but the nature and role of the trade union movement in the Commonwealth Caribbean differs markedly from that in other countries in this study. This could have some effect on the trends in industrial conflict which will be examined below. Table 6:2 shows the mean number of industrial disputes over the period 1960 to 1979 for the countries in this study.

There are two outstanding features which we can determine from this Table. First the small number of industrial disputes indicates either that there is a remarkable level of industrial peace in these countries, or that the economies are relatively small and at a low level of industrialization. Secondly, there is a large increase in the number of disputes during the period 1970-1979 as compared to the 1960-69 period.

During the decade of the 1970's there was economic contraction for the non-oil producing nations of the Caribbean Basin and this includes all the countries in this study except Trinidad. The result was high oil prices, balance of payments difficulties, slow or declining economic growth and high levels

Table 6:2

Mean Number of Industrial Disputes 1960-1979

<u>Country</u>	<u>Mean Number of Disputes</u>		
	1960-69	1970-79	1960-79
Antigua	5.6	3.2	4.4
Barbados	5.6	9.8	7.7
Belize	2.9	n.a.	n.a.
Grenada	6.3	n.a.	n.a.
Guadeloupe	4.7	17.1	10.9
Guyana	99.5	202.0	150.8
Jamaica	66.2	112.1	87.2
Puerto Rico	52.8	64.5	58.7
St. Lucia	1.5	5.6	3.6
Surinam	6.1	17.6	11.9
Trinidad	26.0	48.6	37.3

Source: Compiled from ILO International Yearbooks of Labor Statistics, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland, 1960-1980.



of unemployment. These events confronted the foreign-trade-dependent Caribbean economies with the vivid realization of the consequences of small size and economic dependence.

In addition to the economic contraction of the decade, there was also the impact of ideologies on the political economies of some countries in the region. As the colonial territories in the Caribbean Basin achieved independence, many European trade ties were replaced by a trade structure linked to the export of primary goods to the United States of America. In return the United States increased its trade in consumer goods, foreign capital investment, and also provided foreign aid. The United States saw this trade and aid dependence as supportive of a foreign policy inspired by fears of communist expansion in the region, although these fears have been overly exaggerated.

There was concern at the "left" turn taken by the PNP government in Jamaica in 1974 with the publication of its "Thirteen Principles of Democratic Socialism." The Prime Minister emerged as a leading spokesman for the Third World, and in UN debates calling for a New International Economic Order (NIEO). Jamaica's foreign policy led to closer ties with Cuba, and there was open support for liberation movements particularly the MPLA in Angola, which was also supported by the Cuban government. Here was a small country closely linked to the United States through trade, capital investment, and a market for its principal export commodity, charting

a foreign policy which was sure to antagonize the United States.

It was not long before the wrath of the "great eagle" to the north was brought to bear on the Manley regime. First there was a denial of a request for a \$2.5 million food grant by USAID, then a collapse in Jamaica's credit rating by the American Export-Import Bank, and adverse US press reports led to a drastic fall in the number of US tourists visiting the island. As discussed earlier, the bauxite companies began to transfer production from their plants in Jamaica to subsidiaries in other countries.

In comparison there was similar socialist rhetoric coming from the regime in Georgetown and close association with Cuba in the form of support for certain aspects of its foreign policy, and technical assistance. However it is interesting to note the difference in US policy towards Guyana, in comparison to its policy towards a similar situation in Jamaica. In the face of the oil crisis, mismanagement in the nationalized industries, inflationary rises in import prices leading to a serious balance of payments problem, the Guyana government turned to the IMF for assistance. With the clear indications that the economic crisis would only deteriorate, assistance was received from the IMF as well as the World Bank with little opposition from the US.

This was surprising considering that Guyana was declared a "Cooperative Socialist Republic" in 1970, and then proceeded to nationalize leading sectors of the economy including bauxite

and sugar. The US response to the socialist rhetoric of the Georgetown regime has to be viewed in the light of the fact that the Burnham government was installed via US-CIA connivance just prior to independence in 1966. Burnham was seen as the lesser of two evils, i.e. compared to the extreme left wing marxism of Dr. Cheddi Jagan. This brings us to the second point i.e. opposition to the regime in Guyana comes from the extreme left, therefore the alternative is even less satisfactory to those in Washington. In Jamaica, on the other hand, opposition comes from the conservative right, whose policies are more acceptable to Washington. Thus the US was prepared to let the Guyanese know that "Uncle Sam" still carries a "big stick" while in the case of Jamaica it was necessary to do some prodding with the stick.

Grenada was the third country in the Commonwealth Caribbean to feel the wrath of Washington. On March 13, 1979 the New Jewel Movement overthrew the government of Eric Gairy's Grenada United Labor Party (GULP), and formed the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG). The PRG immediately ran afoul of Washington due to its anti-imperialist rhetoric, and a close Cuban-Eastern European alliance as the basis for its foreign policy. There was also Cuban technical, military and economic aid, the most visible sign of the latter being the construction of a modern airport facility. According to President Reagan in a speech to the National Association of Manufacturers in March, 1983, "Grenada is building now, or is having built for it, a naval base, a superior air base,

storage bases and facilities for the storage of ammunition, barracks, and training grounds for the military."

Grenada was seen as a surrogate of Cuba, and a Cuban presence in any Caribbean country is considered to be contrary to US interests, requiring an automatic US response in order to maintain its security concerns. This response of course mirrors the pattern of Caribbean dependence on its great neighbor to the north, and the US has been quite willing to intervene in Caribbean states either overtly as in the Dominican Republic in 1965, or by covert means. Examples of the latter are destabilization of the Jagan regime in Guyana between 1962 and 1964, and more recently the Manley regime in Jamaica from 1972 to 1980.

In the case of Grenada outright military invasion occurred under the pretext of rescuing a group of American medical students living on the island, after an internal power struggle among the leadership of the PRG. A coup which resulted in the death of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, was the US justification for its invasion in order to guarantee the safety of US citizens, but also ensuring that any vestiges of the PRG were crushed in the process. However, with the death of Bishop, the revolution was mortally wounded, and the US invasion was tantamount to stomping on a corpse.

These three examples are by no means an exhaustive list of Caribbean Basin countries which have felt the heavy hand of US economic and military hegemony in the area. The economic effect can be seen in Table 6:3 below which shows US direct

Table 6:3

Net Book Value of US Direct Investment  
in Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad  
at Year-end 1968-1976. (US \$ millions)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Barbados</u>	<u>Guyana</u>	<u>Trinidad</u>	<u>Jamaica</u>
1968	6	40	215	295
1969	6	40	185	392
1970	9	40	198	507
1971	12	35	262	618
1972	18	36	280	624
1973	20	n.a.	433	618
1974	20	20	549	609
1975	19	22	656	654
1976	20	21	713	577

Source: Ransford W. Palmer, Caribbean Dependence on The United States Economy, New York, 1979, p. 14.

investment in four countries in the region and the response to the changing ideological climate in Guyana and Jamaica. It will be recalled that in 1970 Guyana was proclaimed a Cooperative Socialist Republic, while in Jamaica the socialist Manley government came to power.

As the table indicates there was a decline of US investment in both Jamaica and Guyana, this was in addition to the outflow to the US of profits and debt charges on previous investments, which resulted in an overall high income outflow. One way to deal with this problem is by borrowing, or to reduce government spending, but in a "socialist" economy the latter is easier said than done. Borrowing of course leads to increases in inflation and the public debt, and this is exactly what happened in Jamaica and Guyana. One of the results was high unemployment leading to social and industrial unrest. Much of the unrest which escalated into deadly violence was politically motivated. Looking back at Table 6:2 there is a clear indication of the escalation in industrial unrest during the period of declining economies.

As these trends in industrial conflict are examined, let us look at a comparison of five year averages on size, duration and frequency of strikes in a country representing each of the former colonial groupings included in the study. These are Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Puerto Rico, and Surinam representing the English, French, Spanish, and Dutch colonies respectively. These five year averages were calculated using the geometric mean since this results in decreasing the effects

of extreme peaks in strike activity. The resulting data are shown in Tables 6:4 to 6:6 showing size, duration and frequency respectively. Size of strikes is measured as  $SIZE = \text{STRIKERS}/\text{STRIKE}$  (in Hundreds), strike duration is calculated as  $DURATION = \text{MANDAYS LOST}/\text{STRIKERS}$  (in days), and strike frequency is measured as  $\text{STRIKE FREQUENCY} = \text{STRIKES}/1000 \text{ WORKERS}$ .

Table 6:4  
Size of Strikes, Five Year Average (in hundreds)  
1960-1979

<u>Period</u>	<u>Jamaica</u>	<u>Guadaloupe</u>	<u>Puerto Rico</u>	<u>Surinam</u>
1960-64	211.08	374.98	185.10	111.74
1965-69	341.00	219.13	181.34	189.40
1970-74	269.45	221.17	216.03	149.30
1975-79	79.40	57.33	268.39	157.28

Source: Calculated from ILO International Yearbooks of Labor Statistics, 1960-1979.

From the data presented in these tables there is a clear indication of uneven fluctuations in size, duration, and frequency of industrial conflict in the respective countries. In Jamaica the size of strikes, i.e. the number of strikers per strike peaked in the 1965-69 period, while in Guadaloupe the peak occurred in the previous five year period, 1960-64.

Table 6:5

Duration of Strikes, Five Year Average (in days)  
1960-1979

<u>Period</u>	<u>Jamaica</u>	<u>Guadeloupe</u>	<u>Puerto Rico</u>	<u>Surinam</u>
1960-64	8.42	2.70	9.16	4.37
1965-69	8.46	4.18	8.39	5.18
1970-74	11.87	7.73	10.84	5.78
1975-79	7.55	7.59	26.54	4.18

Source: Calculated from ILO International Yearbooks of Labor Statistics, 1960-1979.

Table 6:6

Strike Frequency (Strikes per 1000 Workers)  
1960-1979

<u>Period</u>	<u>Jamaica</u>	<u>Guadeloupe</u>	<u>Puerto Rico</u>	<u>Surinam</u>
1960-64	10.5	1.7	7.9	3.9
1965-69	8.8	12.6	6.0	5.0
1970-74	11.8	2.4	13.6	21.1
1975-79	19.5	29.1	4.5	11.6

Source: Calculated from ILO International Yearbooks of Labor Statistics, 1960-1979.



The data for Puerto Rico indicate a gradual increase in size with the largest participation per strike occurring in the 1975-79 period. In Surinam the peak is during the 1965-69 period, but there is a gradual increase following the granting of independence in 1975.

The trend which has developed is one which indicates a more uniform pattern for the size of the average strike over the period 1960-1979. As we look at strike size and duration it is interesting to note that Guadeloupe which had the highest number of strikers per strike (size) 374.98 in the 1960-64 period also had the shortest average duration per strike during the same period. Short strike duration may be indicative of an absence of worker solidarity, and sufficient resources to maintain a longer strike. A short strike may also be intended as a show of strength or be called by the union leadership for political purposes in order to show leadership control of the rank and file.

In many instances short strikes are indicative of the employer being unable to sustain a longer strike, and in developing countries where agricultural products must be harvested and processed, this is usually the case. Bananas, sugar cane and rice are crops which cannot be left standing in the field indefinitely, due to a strike, thus employers will make every effort to settle a strike as quickly as possible.

It is also important to point out that many Caribbean economies are mono-crop economies, and it is not long before governments become involved in mediating strikes with the

potential for adversely affecting the economy. Of course this works both ways in view of the fact that many of these unions are closely affiliated to political parties, and a strike may be called by a union whose party is out of power with the clear intention of embarrassing the government.

Average strike frequency, measured by number of strikes per 1000 workers shows some consistency over the period of the study. In comparison to the other three countries in Table 6:6 Jamaica has a relatively high level of strike frequency in the immediate pre-independence period. While the PNP led the country to the threshold of independence, it was the JLP which was elected to carry the country over the threshold, and into the future as independent Jamaica.

However, this was the period when the economic boom, based on the bauxite industry was slowing down, while the emigration outlet to Britain was being restricted through more stringent entry requirements for former colonial subjects entering Britain. The unrest of the 70's has already been discussed, and the increase in strike frequency is undoubtedly linked to the unsettled political conditions, and the decline in economic activity throughout that period in Jamaica.

Guadaloupe, a French Department shows a strong increase in strike frequency during the 1975-79 period. At this time the island began to experience a surge of nationalist sentiment demanding independence from France. These demands appeared to come from a vocal minority, since it is recognized that to sever ties with France would lead to a change in the

social and economic benefits currently enjoyed in their status as French citizens. However demands for autonomy have been increasing, and as far back as 1967 the French authorities violently crushed riots by anti-colonial militants.

### Procedure and Analysis

This section will provide information on the research design and methodology utilized in analyzing the data. The statistical methodology around which the data are analyzed is centered on the general linear model, in the context of which other techniques are also available. These are Ordinary Least Squares (OLS), Generalized Least Squares (GLS), and Maximum Likelihood Estimators (MLE), employed in probit analysis.

The linear regression model is based on the assumption that the dependent variable is a linear function of one or more independent variables, plus an error introduced to account for all other factors.

$$y_i = B_1 x_{i1} + \dots + B_k x_{ik} + u_i$$

According to the above regression equation,  $y_i$  is the "dependent variable"  $x_{i1} \dots x_{ik}$  are the "independent" or "explanatory" variables, and  $u_i$  is the "disturbance" or "error term." The purpose of regression analysis is to provide estimates of the unknown parameters  $B_1 \dots B_k$  which indicate how a change in one of the independent variables affects the values taken by the dependent variable. The

important aspect of the above application is that the dependent variable is a quantitative measure of some condition or behavior. In instances where the dependent variable is qualitative or categorical then it may be more useful to use Logit or Probit analysis.

The usual method of estimation for the regression model is ordinary least squares and that estimation technique will now be outlined. First of all it is assumed that the model is correctly specified i.e. that the endogenous variable can be computed as a linear function of a group of exogenous variables, plus an error term. The second assumption is that the expected value of the disturbance term is zero, and that the disturbance terms have a constant variance and are not correlated with one another. The fourth assumption is that the observations of the independent variable are fixed in repeated samples. The fifth and final assumption is that the number of observations is greater than the number of exogenous variables, and that there are no exact linear relationships between the exogenous variables.

The OLS technique is one of the preferred estimators among social scientists due to its important theoretical characteristics. Principal among these is that the least squares estimator can be shown to have maximum variance among all estimators that are linear functions of the observed  $y$ 's and  $x$ 's, and that are unbiased. These unbiased estimators with minimum variance are said to be the "best" or most efficient, estimators. The least square estimator is thus the

Best Linear Unbiased Estimator or (BLUE). Other desirable properties are that computational costs are relatively inexpensive, and the program packages are readily available. Because the technique is popular among social scientists, the results of using this type of analysis are more easily understood by a larger number of individuals.

The data sources employed in this study have already been discussed, as well as the purpose for selecting the countries to be included in the analysis. The historical and political background to strikes in these countries has also been reviewed. With this in mind it is necessary at this point to recognize the difficulty of attempting to explain the fluctuations in strike activity in a political context using conventional social science analysis, when the historical information points to links between economic, and political power as well as race differentiation in the context of colonial societies.

Snyder has argued that where:

. . . union membership is large and relatively stable, the political position of labor firmly established and collective bargaining well institutionalized, it is likely that the aggregate strike activity will respond to the variables emphasized in conventional economic analysis of strike fluctuations.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand in a non-institutionalized context the conditions which lead to a strike may not be purely economic, including the objectives of the strike. The ends may be political i.e. in seeking to influence government policy or

in the long run to acquire political power. But it is felt that labor's capacity to reach those goals is to a large extent based upon the level of organizational mobilization, and the latter also determines the extent to which strikes are possible.

However, organizational mobilization or unionization is affected by economic forces, and those forces may well be the same forces which affect strikes, although membership is clearly determined prior to a strike. On the other hand new workers may join the union as a result of recognition strikes, or because a successful strike indicates the value of a strong union organization. This is an important factor in considering strike activity in Caribbean Basin countries, since many strikes involve workers who are not yet members of the union, i.e. dues paying members.

In this study strike frequency is labeled NODISP (number of disputes). While there are numerous variations in the scope and intensity of various strikes, the number of disputes is the most sensitive indicator for purposes of aggregate time-series analysis. NODISP is the aggregate number of strikes for each country over the period 1960 to 1979 in the Yearbook of Labor Statistics as reported by the ILO.

WOKINV - Workers Involved in Labor Disputes is the aggregate number of workers involved in labor disputes in the countries included in the study. It is realized that this variable is strongly influenced by the occurrence of disputes involving large numbers of workers.

WORDL - Working Days Lost. This variable represents the aggregate number of working days lost due to strikes on an annual basis, and over the period 1960-1979 for the countries included in the study.

TUMSP - Trade Union Membership. Organization into trade unions is not necessarily a pre-condition for strikes but a strong union organization is useful in the event that a strike has to be called.

GNP - Gross National Product is used as an indicator of the general state of the economy, using data from the World Bank tables. The usefulness and drawbacks of this variable has already been discussed.

LITER - Literacy rate is used as a measure of social mobilization as suggested by Deutsch.<sup>5</sup> The data are not available on an annual basis for the countries in the study, consequently most of these data are estimates obtained by interpolation. Literacy rate is not a variable which is expected to change dramatically from year to year, therefore the interpolated data are deemed to be satisfactory for the purposes of this research.

The first hypothesis suggests that the number of disputes (strikes) should be positively associated with trade union membership, economic development and social modernization. Mobilization for collective action requires unity of purpose, and the desire on the part of individuals to act collectively. This type of activity arises out of the presence of a formal

organization rather than developing from a spontaneous outburst of dissatisfaction with the employment relationship.

One difficulty in specifying unionization arises from the fact that correlations between strike frequency and union membership could result from a third factor, viz., the size of the labor force. It is possible to control for this by deflating union membership by labor force size. Unfortunately labor force data are not available for all the countries over the period covered by the study. Snyder in deflating union membership by labor force size found that it had the effect of "artificially attenuating the negative relationship between unemployment and strike frequency."<sup>6</sup> However, as the interest here is in the absolute numbers of strikes, the raw membership data will be used, rather than restrain it by adjusting for the ever increasing size of the labor force.

Table 6:7 reports the estimates of the model  $NODISP = a + b_1TUMSP + b_2GNP + b_3LITER + e$ . where NODISP is the total number of disputes (strikes) over the period 1960-1979; TUMSP is trade union membership for the period 1960-1979; GNP is gross national product 1960-1979 and LITER is the percentage of the population that is literate 1960-1979; for all the countries in the table (N = 11). Because there were various periods with missing data for Grenada, no estimates are given for that country. The equation was obtained using OLS and the results are summarized in Table 6:7, which shows the regression coefficients with the standard errors in



Table 6:7

Regression of Number of Disputes on Trade Union Membership,  
Gross National Product and Literacy Rate, 1960-1979

<u>Country</u>	<u>Constant</u>	<u>Trade Union Membership (TUMSP)</u>	<u>Gross National Product (GNP)</u>	<u>Literacy Rate (LITER)</u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>
Antigua	97.868 (34.735)	.015 (.094)	-0.097 (.282)	-21.752 (7.723)	.486	.357
Barbados	-8.415 (46.118)	.761 (.860)	-.850 (.645)	1.461 (10.049)	.202	.053
Belize	-2.439 (60.288)	.798 (.741)	-.823 (1.072)	-.143 (13.470)	.133	-.155
Grenada	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Guadaloupe	-23.740 (58.327)	1.517 (1.605)	.910 (1.431)	1.431 (13.210)	.563	.345
Guyana	12.268 (35.717)	.770 (.312)	.866 (.379)	-4.623 (8.135)	.795	.757
Jamaica	14.583 (6.926)	-.472 (.450)	.882 (.215)	-2.379 (1.571)	.715	.658
Puerto Rico	-50.924 (32.650)	.161 (1.019)	-.498 (.261)	12.785 (9.465)	.216	.069
St. Lucia	-54.720 (73.326)	-.302 (.725)	0.723 (.637)	12.739 (16.418)	.368	.210
Surinam	6.497 (25.530)	-1.520 (.768)	1.997 (.602)	-.261 (5.088)	.517	.396
Trinidad	50.702 (35.020)	-4.575 (3.269)	1.386 (.965)	-1.055 (.904)	.152	.016

parentheses. Also shown are the R-squares ( $R^2$ ) and the adjusted R-squares ( $\bar{R}^2$ ).

The estimates in the table indicate that there are only two countries with a strong association between the explanatory variables and the dependent variable. Guyana and Jamaica exhibit an  $\bar{R}^2 = .8$  and  $.7$  respectively which is a better estimate of the models goodness of fit than the unadjusted  $R^2$ . However if we take into account  $R^2$  then Antigua ( $R^2 = .5$ ), Guadeloupe ( $R^2 = .6$ ), and Surinam ( $R^2 = .5$ ) all exhibit a reasonable goodness of fit. All the other countries i.e. Barbados, Belize, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia and Trinidad have  $R^2 = .4$ .

Upon further examination of the estimates for Guyana and Jamaica, in the case of the former, LITER has a negative effect on the dependent variable, while in the case of Jamaica both TUMSP and LITER have negative effects on the dependent variable. The influence of GNP on the level of strike activity in both countries is also positive, which could mean that where there is an economic surplus or an expansion in the economy, workers' militancy will increase in an effort to gain a larger share of the economic pie. In the case of Jamaica and Guyana the findings are in the hypothesized direction. But this is not an indication that in the region as a whole a higher level of unionization will result in an increase in the number of industrial disputes. It is important to note that two of the countries with the highest level of

unionization, and incidentally more politicized trade unions also exhibit the best fit in the regression equation.

The second hypothesis to be examined states that the number of industrial disputes will increase with higher levels of economic attainment. Gross National Product is used as a measure of economic attainment. It has been argued that mass political violence arises in some instances from the competition for scarce goods and services. We may assume that higher levels of economic development will result in a higher standard of living for the population as a whole. But this is not necessarily true, a country's increased economic wealth is not equally shared across the board by the general population. If the organized sector of the labor force is denied what they perceive as their fair share, this will most likely result in a demand for improvement in their economic package, and failure to realize this will lead to industrial conflict.

According to Deutsch, literacy rate is one of the key elements of social mobilization,<sup>7</sup> and a society with a high literacy rate is expected to be more socially mobilized than one which is illiterate. With higher levels of economic attainment and a socially mobilized labor force it is expected that there would be a strong demand on the part of the workers to achieve higher economic benefits, and improved conditions of employment. While Flanagan and Fogelman found that the relationship of political violence and GNP was negative and linear, there is nothing to indicate a similar relationship

between industrial strife and GNP. The 'withering away theory' of industrial strife has been discredited, and indeed in the United States during the 1970s, the number of strikes was higher than in any other ten year period since the end of the WWII.<sup>8</sup>

Table 6:8 reports the estimates of the model  $NODISP = a + b_1GNP + b_2LITER + e$  and the variables have been previously described, the number of countries remain the same as in Table 6:7 and ( $N = 11$ ). Due to various periods with missing data, no estimates are given for Grenada in this table. The equations were estimated using OLS, and the results are summarized in Table 6:8 which shows the regression coefficients with the standard errors in parentheses. Also shown are the R-squares ( $R^2$ ) and the adjusted R-squares ( $\bar{R}^2$ ). Of the countries shown in the table only two, Guyana and Jamaica have an adjusted  $R^2$  which is above, .5; Guyana  $\bar{R}^2 = .7$  and Jamaica  $\bar{R}^2 = .7$ .

In the case of Antigua both explanatory variables have a marginal negative effect on the dependent variable. Belize, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia and Surinam indicate marginal positive effect of both explanatory variables on the dependent variable, but the association is weak as indicated by the low  $\bar{R}^2$  values. However, the strong  $\bar{R}^2$  values for Guyana and Jamaica are in the hypothesized direction and show the influence of GNP on the strike rate. The data from Guyana and Jamaica support the argument that countries with a labor force high in literacy will have higher levels of strike proneness than countries

Table 6:8

Regression of Number of Disputes on Gross National Product  
and Literacy Rate, 1960-1979

<u>Country</u>	<u>Constant</u>	<u>Gross National Product (GNP)</u>	<u>Literacy Rate (LITER)</u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>
Antigua	95.453 (30.052)	-0.107 (0.264)	-21.228 (6.717)	0.484	0.405
Barbados	-12.823 (45.553)	-0.417 (0.417)	3.626 (9.684)	0.163	0.065
Belize	-16.306 (59.358)	0.215 (0.472)	3.656 (13.102)	0.022	-0.174
Grenada	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Guadaloupe	-40.841 (55.020)	1.883 (0.986)	7.297 (11.570)	0.498	0.355
Guyana	-51.115 (28.279)	1.603 (0.266)	10.493 (6.100)	0.717	0.684
Jamaica	13.045 (6.788)	0.726 (0.155)	-3.090 (1.422)	0.695	0.656
Puerto Rico	-53.583 (27.189)	-0.499 (0.253)	13.846 (6.494)	0.214	0.121
St. Lucia	-68.522 (63.301)	0.492 (0.301)	15.495 (14.539)	0.358	0.260
Surinam	-19.850 (24.093)	1.107 (0.442)	3.605 (5.197)	0.360	0.261
Trinidad	2.382 (6.011)	0.565 (0.788)	-0.494 (0.834)	0.042	-0.077

not as socially modernized. For example Guyana has a higher literacy rate than Jamaica and in Table 6:8 LITER has a stronger influence on the dependent variable in the estimates for Guyana than it does in the estimates for Jamaica.

The economy as indicated by GNP also strongly influences the capacity to strike, the ability to organize, and the employers' strategy at the time of a labor dispute. The propensity to strike will therefore be highest when the availability of labor is low and employers are prosperous. But in order to support strike activity the level of union membership must grow and prosper. Some of the basic requirements for increased union membership are feelings of solidarity among workers, and a sense of group or coalition behavior. If the movement is to grow it is necessary to have continuity of leadership, as this has an important bearing on the creation and maintenance of union politics. Third world trade unionists have suffered heavily from the loss of strong leaders, as trained and experienced union officers left the movement for better opportunities, in many instances in the political field.

The main pre-requisites are an industrial relations system which has legitimized union development, the growth of industrialization, and the ability of the unions to gain recognition. In many instances it is the latter which serves as the principal building block for trade union growth. The union which calls a successful strike and negotiates a good contract, deals with grievances promptly, and effectively will be able to increase its membership. The third hypothesis

examines this argument by stating that the level of union membership should be positively correlated with strike proneness.

Workers will join unions if they expect that the benefits derived from membership - increased wages, handling of grievances, improved conditions of employment etc. will exceed the anticipated costs. These costs include not only membership dues in the union, but also potential employer hostility and possible victimization for joining the union.

The OLS estimates of the model  $TUMSP = a + b_1NODISP + b_2GNP + b_3LITER + e$  are reported in Table 6:9. All the symbols used in this equation have been described before and the data are for the period 1960-1979 for the countries listed in the table ( $N = 11$ ). The results of the estimates reported in Table 6:9 show the regression coefficients with the standard error in parentheses, as well as the R-squares ( $R^2$ ) and the adjusted R-squares ( $\bar{R}^2$ ). Of the eleven countries for which the estimates were run, three, Antigua, Jamaica and Trinidad show  $R^2 < .5$ .

However the explanatory variable NODISP has an insignificant effect on the dependent variable for all of the countries, which indicates that trade union membership does not show a strong increase if there is an increase in strike rates. In fact GNP (economic growth) and literacy rate reflected a stronger effect on the dependent variable. But as we look at all three explanatory variables, their combined effect on the dependent variable supports the hypothesis. While

Table 6:9

Regression of Trade Union Membership on Number of Disputes,  
GNP and Literacy Rate 1960-1979

<u>Country</u>	<u>Constant</u>	<u>Number of Disputes</u> (NODISP)	<u>GNP</u>	<u>Literacy Rate</u> (LITER)	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>
Antigua		-0.141 (-0.159)	0.678 (0.799)	-38.106 (-1.336)	.357	.197
Barbados	-5.008 (-0.384)	0.061 (0.884)	0.595 (4.859)	2.623 (0.945)	.684	.625
Belize	-15.047 (-0.602)	0.143 (1.076)	1.270 (1.076)	4.239 (0.768)	.837	.782
Grenada	-8.411 (72.230)	-0.003 (-0.673)	0.340 (8.894)	-- --	.948	.931
Guadaloupe	-7.789 (-0.570)	0.085 (0.945)	0.481 (1.653)	3.244 (1.141)	.648	.472
Guyana	-63.999 (-3.467)	0.358 (2.467)	0.384 (1.362)	15.869 (4.016)	.745	.697
Jamaica	5.143 (1.238)	-0.144 (-1.047)	0.436 (3.309)	1.060 (1.188)	.525	.430
Puerto Rico	-15.957 (-2.097)	0.010 (0.158)	-0.001 (-0.014)	6.439 (3.488)	.775	.733
St. Lucia	42.475 (1.573)	-0.047 (-0.417)	0.791 (5.861)	-8.397 (-1.355)	.779	.724
Surinam	14.131 (1.938)	0.162 (-1.977)	0.765 (4.822)	-1.961 (-1.256)	.817	.772
Trinidad	-11.511 (-0.540)	-0.021 (-0.418)	0.082 (0.835)	4.905 (1.020)	.325	.190



there is support for the hypothesis from the data analysis, it is important to note that mobilization for strike activity or union membership does not develop instantaneously. Organization is necessary for strike action, and the latter functions as a catalyst for the former.

The fourth hypothesis to be examined suggests that industrial conflict will increase with higher levels of decolonization. In order to more thoroughly estimate the model it would have been preferable to have data for both the pre-independence and post-independence periods for the countries in the study. The data for the colonial period are not readily available, therefore it was necessary to use a dummy variable in order to estimate the model.

As independence represents the highest level of political change in the countries in this study it was anticipated that this would result in a higher level of labor militancy. The basis for this line of reasoning is that in most Caribbean countries there is a high level of foreign ownership of the means of production. Once the political institutions came under local control, the nationalist fervor may extend to economic institutions, and this happened in the case of Guyana, as pointed out earlier in this study.

Table 6:10 reports the results of the OLS estimates of the model  $NODISP = a + b_1WOKINV + b_2DINDEP + b_3GNP + e$ , where WOKINV is the number of workers involved in labor disputes for each country over the period 1960-1979; DINDEP is a dummy variable representing the political status of a country

Table 6:10

Regression of Number of Disputes on Workers Involved  
in Labor Disputes, Political Status and Gross National Product  
1960-1979

<u>Country</u>	<u>Workers Involved (WOKINV)</u>	<u>Independent/ Dependent State (DINDEP)</u>	<u>Gross National Product (GNP)</u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>
Barbados	0.6190 (3.1726)	-0.0192 (-0.0346)	-0.3230 (-0.7063)	.5	.4
Guyana	0.1764 (1.4797)	0.6626 (3.1032)	0.4430 (1.4770)	.8	.8
Jamaica	0.0068 (0.0360)	0.3558 (-1.2260)	0.9411 (5.0210)	.6	.6
Surinam	0.6481 (3.9372)	-0.2222 (-0.3939)	0.3377 (0.6714)	.8	.7
Trinidad	0.4703 (3.3824)	-0.1010 (-0.1627)	0.2382 (0.9114)	.5	.4

(1 = Independent, 2 = Dependent), the other symbols used have already been explained, N = 11 for the number of countries in the study. The equation was not estimated for Guadeloupe or Puerto Rico since these countries are not independent, and there would be no comparison period i.e. pre/post independence. Antigua, Belize and St. Lucia were also omitted since during the period covered by the study they were in colonial status.

The countries which were estimated did not have a balanced period of independent/non-independent status, but it was the best that could be done with the data available. Jamaica and Trinidad gained independence in 1962, Barbados in 1963 and Guyana in 1964. These are relatively short periods to measure the effects of the variables in the model as specified. The results in Table 6:10 are therefore not totally unexpected. Despite  $R^2 > .5$  for three countries Guyana, Jamaica, and Surinam, the effect of DINDEP on the dependent variable for those countries was marginally negative, except in the case of Guyana.

The results for Guyana were expected. It has previously been indicated that Guyana is a country plagued by industrial strife, which has strong racial overtones. In addition since independence, the government has nationalized the greater part of the country's industrial sector. There has also been a high level of industrial unrest arising from the one party rule of a militarized leftist-socialist government.

Due to the structure of the Guyanese economy, despite PNC attempts to control the trade union movement, agricultural workers and their unions are under the control of the PPP, the opposition party. This gave the PPP the incentive to pressure the PNC government to institute democratic reforms, and after independence this became more intense as a liberal democratic regime became extremely oppressive.

From the estimates reported in Table 6:10 there is little justification to suggest that with independence, these states have exhibited higher levels of strike proneness. In order to refine the results it would be necessary to develop a larger data set, including data from both the colonial and independent periods. But it is necessary to look at both sides of the coin, while the effects of independence may be strong enough to influence working class behavior, it is also after independence that regimes become more restrictive. This is especially true in their attitude towards trade unions. In Trinidad the restrictions came in the form of the Industrial Stabilization Act, while in Guyana there was blatant use of the military and the police to control the activities of the trade unions.

## CHAPTER 6 - FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See George Beckford, Persistent Poverty, Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup>See The Jamaica Gleaner of August 30, 1981 reporting a poll by Carl Stone; and The Star of June 9, 1982 reporting a follow-up poll also by Carl Stone.

<sup>3</sup>Carl Stone, "A Political Profile of the Caribbean" in Sydney Mintz and Sally Price (eds.) Caribbean Contours, Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>David Snyder, "Institutional Setting and Industrial Conflicts: Comparative Analysis of France, Italy, and the United States," American Sociological Review 40 (3), p. 265.

<sup>5</sup>See Karl W. Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," American Political Science Review, 55 (September 1961), pp. 493-514.

<sup>6</sup>See David Snyder, "Early North American Strikes: A Reinterpretation," Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. 30 (3), 1977, pp. 325-341.

<sup>7</sup>See Deutsch "Social Mobilization and Political Development," *Ibid.*, pp. 493-514.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

While economists have written extensively on the problem of mini-states in a world economic system, little has been written about the role of trade unions in the political economy of Caribbean states. This study is intended to fill in this gap in the literature. However as with the charting of any new pathway, many obstacles were encountered that require further research.

Trade union activity means different things to different people. While economists may be more interested in its effect on wages, the sociologists will be concerned with its influence on working class consciousness, and the historian sets out to chronicle specific events through time. This study by a political scientist with a strong industrial relations background attempts to analyze the political rationale for working class activity carried out by the trade unions, not only for worker benefit, but also to enhance political change to the advantage of the working class.

The trade unions have been involved in a game of strategy, with a goal which was not only to achieve material benefits, although this was desirable, but also to attain

influence in the political arena which would enable them to seek a change in the rules of the game to the workers advantage. In fact they were desirous of a change in the general mode of social, political and economic determination. As we look at the interaction between the trade union movement and politics it is interesting to note that in the former British territories (with the exception of Trinidad) the political movements which developed were generally closely linked to the trade unions.

The background to this role for the trade unions is discussed in Chapter 3. The emergence of a colonial labor policy in the British Caribbean is traced to the riots of 1935-38 and the recommendations of the Moyne Commission. Following the riots Britain recognized that it had to exert control over the explosive power of the masses. Major Orde-Browne who had visited the Caribbean prior to the Moyne Commission recommended that the territories needed "responsible" trade unions. He found that a people fighting for the franchise, as well as a higher standard of living, should have their energy channeled into a direction which would not challenge the sovereign rights of the colonial power.

Britain decided to support the establishment of a strong trade union movement prior to granting the franchise to the citizens of these countries. Without the right to vote the trade unions became the rallying point through which demands were voiced. It was the only organization open to these disenfranchised people through which they could exert some

pressure for change on the colonial establishment. These demands arising out of the inequities of class conflict and social stratification by skin color, would eventually lead to a wave of nationalism throughout the Caribbean. This would culminate in independence for these territories, and the break-up of a state apparatus designed to maintain the control of a European plantocracy over the descendants of a black slave society.

State intervention by Britain's Colonial Office in the establishment of an industrial relations system extended the bipartite relationship (labor/management) to a tripartite one. That action invited a reaction by the workers' movement, although at that point in the history of these countries the movement was rather rudimentary. Management also reacted to such a move and a similar phenomenon was observed in the United States during the New Deal era and following the passage of the National Labor Relations Act. Similar activity occurred in Trinidad following the passage of the Industrial Stabilization Act which revolutionized the industrial relations system in that country. The outcome of this state intervention was a new interdependence with the state. This tripartite relationship has been labeled as corporatism by some political scientists and sociologists.<sup>1</sup>

Crouch has argued that under corporatism unions do not negotiate purely bread and butter issues, but rather seek to represent an economic activity or social category vis-a-vis the state. By so doing they are indicating the desire to



become more active participants in the decision making process of the state, particularly as far as those decisions which affect the unions are concerned. This does not mean that trade unions have given up the struggle for improving economic issues, but they see a strong national economy as a prerequisite for improvement in both the economic and social conditions of the workers.<sup>2</sup>

These countries have emphasized the development of a vibrant national economy, if only from the point of view that the central government is in many instances the largest employer of labor. This is the context in which the political conceptions of trade union activity must be viewed, taking into consideration the nature of the political system and the stratification of power within that system.

On the other hand governments in developing countries, to a certain extent anticipate the "cooperation" of the trade unions in support of government policies based on development plans which generally seek the participation or support of foreign capital investment. Where this support of the trade unions has not been forthcoming there has been a progressive subordination of the trade unions to the government and extensive governmental regulation of labor-management relations. This is particularly evident in some Asian countries e.g. Singapore, South Korea and Malaysia. In the countries included in this study, there has been no overt attempt at control of the trade unions, except in the case of Guyana.

However, in many instances the trade unions have such close ties to the political parties that there is in effect strong political influence on many trade unions. Political parties are also mindful of the trade union's role in the protracted struggle leading up to independence. Organized labor and political leaders who come to power through the support of labor were always in the forefront of that struggle. But the potential for labor unrest is always seen as a threat to domestic order, especially if there is a large segment of the economy linked to foreign investment, which views labor unrest as a sign of weak government and a signal to start seeking a more cooperative locale.

As we examined the trade union movement in the Caribbean Basin countries, we found that their development was generally a reaction to colonial rule and the working and social conditions in the colonies. The problem facing the trade unions was threefold since the colonial power (the government) was in many instances the largest employer, and generally the next largest employers were the sugar companies which were closely associated with the ruling power. At the outset it was not the intention to allow the labor force to gain bargaining power, and trade unions met strong opposition from the ruling elite in the colonies.

Following the disturbances of 1937-38 the potential power of a militant trade union movement was recognized, and a policy of support for the movement under government tutelage was enacted. Departments of labor were established, staffed

by British civil servants and labor legislation was enacted after approval by the British Colonial Office. The rationale for this policy was that if there was to be labor protest it should be channeled towards economic objectives, and away from the political arena, since the latter could threaten the colonial status quo.

As we examined the legal framework affecting trade unions in the countries included in this study, it was necessary to concentrate on the former British colonies. Puerto Rico enacted its version of the U.S. National Labor Relations Act which granted trade unions in that island the same rights and privileges they enjoyed in the U.S. Trade unions in Guadeloupe as a department of France operated under the same conditions as trade unions in France. The same was true in Surinam as a part of the Tripartite Kingdom of the Netherlands, trade union legislation was similar to that in Holland, and workers were free to organize and be recognized by employers.

In the Commonwealth Caribbean trade union legislation is based on the British Trade Union Act of 1871. The legislation in the colonies provided for the establishment of trade unions and the right to strike. Although we may generally conceptualize trade unions as being organizations for workers, the legislation in the British colonies allowed for the establishment of trade unions of employers (masters) and many of these (generally known as employers organizations) are still in existence in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The right to exist as a trade union was important, but even more paramount

was recognition by the employer. Unfortunately the legislation did not provide for compulsory recognition of trade unions by employers.

In effect there are three approaches to the problem of union recognition: (a) the voluntary system, (b) compulsory recognition, and (c) certification. Under the voluntary system administrative rules allow the Ministry of Labor to conduct a poll (with the consent of the parties) to determine which union represents the majority of workers. But the parties are not legally bound to accept the results of the poll, and if this occurs the only way to resolve the issue is through a strike.

Compulsory recognition of the union by the employer was established in Trinidad based on the Industrial Stabilization Act of 1965. Similar legislation was enacted in Dominica in 1967, whereby the union must show that it represents 51 percent or more of the workers in the enterprise in dispute.

Under the certification system a board is appointed with the authority to grant certification to a union as the exclusive representative in a particular bargaining unit. The board has to determine inter alia that the union represents more than 50 percent of the workers, and that the latter are in good standing.

Now that these countries are all independent there is another aspect to the issue of freedom to join trade unions. This arises from two International Labor Organization Conventions, the first Convention 87 Freedom of Association and

the Right to Organize, and the second Convention 98, Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining. These two conventions provide that workers and employers shall have the right to establish and join organizations of their own choosing without previous authorization. They also state that workers shall enjoy protection against acts of anti-union discrimination in respect of this employment. Further that workers shall not be subject to conditions of employment which prevents union membership, or calls for relinquishing such membership on being employed. These Conventions have been ratified by the independent Commonwealth Caribbean countries, but their effect as a guarantee of freedom of association is still questionable. This is because the convention does not have the force of law until it has been incorporated into the local legislation.

After the union has been recognized and an agreement negotiated, the student of Caribbean trade unionism will find that except in the case of Trinidad, that agreement is not legally binding. This of course is a holdover from the British system of voluntaryism. Voices have been heard seeking to have the system of industrial relations regulated by statute, but changes evolve slowly in these countries. The degree of regulation varies and it is doubtful whether the American legalistic system could be adopted, despite the presence of many U.S. corporations whose management would surely be pleased with such a development.

Once the collective agreement is signed terms and conditions of employment are agreed upon in that document. The agreement usually provides for benefits above the level of that in industrial relations legislation. Since this study deals with trade unions, a detailed discussion of industrial relations legislation was not carried out. However the discussion in Chapter 3 focussed on the role of legislation in enhancing the development of trade unions. Legislation established the framework in which collective bargaining is carried out by the trade unions. The latter, through the collective agreement establish their own system of rights and protection for the workers.

There is however one piece of legislation which needs to be discussed and that is the Essential Services Law. This law seeks to reconcile the workers' right to organize and take economic action to achieve adequate wages and conditions of service, and society's right to continuous service from indispensable enterprises. In the context of the Caribbean these laws are comparable to the Taft Hartley legislation in this country which provides for a board of inquiry and an 80-day injunction against a strike or lockout in the case of national emergency disputes. Essential Services legislation exists in most Caribbean countries and require for notification to the Minister of Labor of a dispute between workers and employers in any industry declared to be "essential."

Within twenty-one days of such notification the Minister of Labor must appoint a tribunal to hear the case. The

parties are required to attend the hearings and to present their case to the tribunal. There can be no strike or lockout if the Minister of Labor appoints the tribunal within twenty-one days of being notified that a dispute exists, and the award of the tribunal is final and binding. Despite the legal prohibition of strikes in enterprises covered by the Essential Services law, strikes do occur, but government generally seeks to obtain a settlement through the arbitration process rather than prosecuting the strikers.

Although government could technically declare almost any enterprise to be "essential" the law is generally accepted by those employers to whom it applies. One reason is that in many instances it is the government which is the employer. Essential services are usually in the public sector e.g. telecommunications, public transportation, ports and harbors, electricity and gas, etc. In most developing countries these services are provided by the government or through public corporations which are government controlled.

The unions on the other hand have resented the restrictions of the Essential Services law and have indicated this in no uncertain terms. But unions representing workers in enterprises protected by the law make every effort to work within the constraints of the law. This brings into question the issue of why is the law still on the books if the unions prefer a less binding type of legislation?

Earlier in this study it was stated that many trade union leaders after building strong support in the union

movement, used that support to further their ambitions in the political arena. Indeed some were guilty of "double-dipping" i.e. while they were legislators they also held trade union office. This would lead us to believe that the trade unions, especially those allied with the party in power would have strong support for their legislative agenda.

The irony is that, especially in the post independence period, that has not been the case. During the colonial administration the common enemy was the colonial government and its policies. Union rivalries were more easily set aside in order to form a coalition against the expatriate government. With independence, such rivalries became more intense. Infighting has hurt the union's ability to develop and support a political agenda. The politicians are aware of this and take the position that the trade unions can "look after" their members without being pampered by the government.

Trade union militancy has increased and although strong ties remain with the political parties, labor is now developing into a more autonomous group, emphasizing economics rather than politics. While this trend has been occurring gradually, it is the fragmentation of the labor movement that has rendered it almost impotent to take on the government as it did in the protests of 1937-38.

By being unable to press for legislative reforms, the government is able to concentrate on issues closely linked to economic development which are more highly visible e.g. roads, housing, hospitals and health care. Governments also



recognize that in the development oriented post-independence period, the employers and the owners of capital have become more powerful than the trade unions. The former trade union leaders, now politicians are aware that those who control capital can disrupt the economy more effectively than strikes among bickering trade unions. The case of Jamaica in the latter half of the 1970s previously discussed is a good example of the impact such a group may have on the country as a whole.

While much of the economic downturn in Jamaica in the 1970s was precipitated by the oil crisis in late 1973, the political climate and uncertainty in the economy led foreign investment to decline and resulted in the flight of capital from the island. The change in the political climate was the result of the political orientation of the Manley government, which was committed to democratic socialism. The latter involved public ownership of utilities and worker participation in industry.

On the basis of the research in this study there is support for the view that increasing trade union militancy has led to higher strike levels. As we saw in Chapter 6, strike frequency (strikes per 1000 workers) in Jamaica increased from 10.5 in 1960-1964 to 19.5 in 1975-1979. In Guadeloupe over the same period strike frequency increased from 1.7 to 29.1 and in Surinam the increase was from 3.9 to 11.6. As the economies of these countries expanded, so did trade union representation, and labor relations became more conflict prone.

Since collective agreements were not legally binding documents (except in Puerto Rico) there was hardly any penalty for calling a strike during the life of the agreement. Unions therefore did not see the strike as an instrument to be used at impasse during negotiations. Instead the strike was seen as a means of sending a message to management indicating the union's strength and to "test the water" to see how management would respond.

The result was generally an indication by management that there would be good faith bargaining over issues in dispute or those likely to result in dispute. This position however only served to reinforce a certain level of militancy among trade union leaders and particularly those at the shop floor level. In fact many strikes are called by the workers, their elected delegates or shop stewards rather than by union officials. This is due to the structure of the union, the "blanket" type discussed earlier. There are few officials to cover the territory. As a result officials are rarely in place when it becomes necessary to call a strike. The role of the official is in many instances to sanction an unofficial strike.

Although strike frequency has increased especially in the 1975-79 period the duration of strikes has also decreased as indicated in Table 6:5. There are two reasons for this, first workers generally do not receive strike benefits, and secondly once a strike is called there is usually quick movement back to the bargaining table in an effort to settle the

dispute. It should also be noted that while the immediate post-war trade unions had their largest membership among agricultural workers this began to change in the mid-1960's and 1970's. With the establishment of subsidiaries of multinational corporations, both private and public sector enterprises expanded. Along with this expansion was a growth in membership of clerical, technical and administrative workers.

Among the latter group of workers, there tends to be a higher level of job security and it is this group which exhibits a greater tendency towards strike proneness. In fact in the late 1970's the lowest strike levels were among agricultural workers. One of the major problems which restricts official union control of the membership is the structure of the unions. Known as "blanket" unions, trade unions in the Caribbean are not generally organized according to industry, but embrace all workers. This results in a small cadre of union officials attempting to cover a large number of enterprises, resulting in informal leaders at the workplace exerting enormous influence over the workers.

In the early stages of the trade union movement work stoppages were called because of wage demands, while the movement as a whole supported broad social and political issues. By the 1970s most of the larger colonial territories had achieved independence and the democratic socialist ideology was spreading throughout the Caribbean region. This led to different demands by those unions which were affiliated to political parties advocating the new ideology. In Jamaica

the workers under the umbrella of the Manley government which was a strong supporter of democratic socialism began to seek greater power at the workplace and even to challenge management's authority.

While these new demands were interesting from an ideological point of view, they did little to unify the labor movement. In the late 1970's when Jamaica was having its worst economic crisis, the unions were unable to rally their members to deal with broader political and policy issues. Stratification on a party basis crippled the movement's ability to act at a time of economic crisis for its members. At the other end of the Caribbean Basin in Guyana, the crisis was a reverse of that in Jamaica. The unions were faced with a leftist-socialist regime identified with the black population attempting to govern and control the union movement in a community that is strongly divided along racial lines. The anomaly in Guyana is that both major parties are leftist and socialist in ideology, but the ruling party has declared its leader President-for-life and has used the military to bolster its support and as strike breakers during industrial conflicts. Despite higher levels of state intervention in the economies of most Caribbean Basin countries in the decade of the 1970s, there was limited state influence on the trade union movement, considering the links between labor and the political parties.

Turning to the changes in the shape of strikes the general tendency has been for strikes to become smaller in

size with little fluctuation in duration but some increase in frequency. There have been changes in the shapes of strikes (this is evident from Figures 4:4 and 4:7) just by increasing the number of establishments participating in strikes will result in an increase in the size of strikes being examined. This is what has happened in many instances; with expanding economies and blanket unions, the number of plants involved in strikes will increase. However we cannot be certain (since the data are not available) that any aspect of these changes were brought about due to political motives.

However the shape of strikes in Puerto Rico does not follow the pattern of the other Caribbean countries. While the size of strikes has remained relatively stable during the '60s and '70s in the period 1975-1979 the duration of strikes has increased one hundred percent. Puerto Rican trade union structure is linked to that in the mainland USA and the labor legislation and industrial relations systems are similar. Data for the U.S. including Puerto Rico show that in the late 1970s the average strike lasted longer than before. The mean duration increased from 23 days to 32 days during the periods 1946-1975 and 1976-1980 respectively. The economic conditions in the late 1970s made unions reluctant to strike, but when they did strike, it was often a case of survival of the union, thus resulting in a longer than normal strike.

While most of the countries included in this study are still largely dependent on agricultural exports, for example sugar or rice, two countries, Puerto Rico and Trinidad, are

not sugar economies. In Puerto Rico the employment in agriculture declined 69.4 percent between 1960 and 1979, while employment in manufacturing increased by 79 percent during the same period. Despite the decline in one sector of the economy, as industrialization increased industrial conflict has kept pace with economic growth. It may also be suggested that any decline in strikes in the agricultural sector may reflect a maturation process in the industrial relations system of that industry. As unions have developed over decades of negotiating agreements with the oldest industry in the region, patterns have been established which leave only the wage bargaining as the possible area for disagreement and conflict.

We also need to look at changes that occur outside the industrial sector especially any change in the level of politicization of the labor movement. With independence the need for political mobilization of the labor movement against a common enemy (the colonial power) largely disappeared and the trade unions were expected to concentrate on other domestic issues affecting individual organizations.

One important aspect of trade union development which has not been dealt with in this study is role of charismatic leadership in the trade unions. In order to deal with this issue it would have been necessary to carry out a survey in the various countries, which the writer was unable to do. However it is important to note that most of the able and charismatic leaders who started in the trade union movement and later became politicians leading their countries out of

colonialism, are now deceased. Bustamante in Jamaica, Grantley Adams in Barbados, Eric Williams in Trinidad. Forbes Burnham in Guyana, and Munoz Marin in Puerto Rico. Except for the latter these were the leaders who fought colonialism starting in the trade union movement (except Eric Williams) and eventually signing the independence documents at Westminster in London. A leader like Bustamante could incite a mob to violence in a split second, while just as quickly he could call them off and send them back to work. These leaders were able to generate absolute confidence from their constituents.

In considering the rise from trade union leader to charismatic politician, the question can be asked whether or not these labor leaders were not merely using the unions as a stepping stone to advance their own political ambitions. The answer is yes and no. There may have been some trade union officials who were ambitious enough to seek political power on the backs of the union movement.

However, it is clear from a review of the historical achievements of most of these former union leaders, that they were first strongly nationalist and had as their primary goal the political and economic development of their country. Many of these persons were educated in Europe and were able to articulate the issues using popular European ideological rhetoric. They were demanding European type parliamentary democratic institutions having been socialized into liberal political thought and values during the course of their education.

There is no abundant evidence to suggest that the union movement was used by its leaders to propel them into political office. They clearly had the support of labor at the polls, but these were the leaders who had fought with labor during the strikes and lockouts. It was only to be expected that once they sought the political kingdom, they would be rewarded with support by the labor movement.

Many of the current leaders of the trade union movement did not "pay their dues" in the struggle for independence, and therefore see their role as leading the unions to seek more conventional trade union goals. Trade union leaders are becoming more responsive to their membership, than to a political leader. The tendency is to move away from domination by the political party to maintaining close ties to the rank and file with the expectation that whenever it suits labor the support of the party will be available.

At the outset of this study it was indicated that this dissertation would be a preliminary study of the politics of industrial conflict in Caribbean Basin countries. Societies are shaped by geography, history and economics. It was one aspect of the geography of these lands (a fertile soil for growing sugar cane) that resulted in the development of a sugar economy demanding cheap labor (slaves - free labor) which caused the historical linkage with the European metropolitan powers. It was the economics of production which led to the demise of the original culture and the importation of alien cultures to this part of the world. The end result



was that the succeeding societal and cultural forms which developed were based on racially determined social status with whites at the top and stratification below based on the lighter shades of black.

Although there is no doubt that the old rigid stratification based on color is being dismantled, sociocultural revolutions tend to be evolutionary and unlike military revolutions do not change the status-quo overnight. The Caribbean Basin remains a patchwork of political and constitutional anomalies. There are the independent countries, French overseas departments, U.S. territories (Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands), Dutch colonies (Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao), British colonies (Bermuda, and the British Virgin Islands), and the curious division of the tiny island of St. Maarten into French and Dutch sections. Ideologies are also abundant, Communism and socialism in French Guadeloupe and Martinique, Democratic-socialism in Jamaica, Christian socialism expounded by the regional Caribbean Council of Churches, Conservative-Authoritarianism (Haiti), Leftist-socialism (Guyana and Surinam), Liberal-Democracies (Belize, Barbados, Trinidad, St. Lucia) and Communism in Cuba.

Yet despite this conglomeration of social stratification and political ideologies, the region is remarkably stable if we discount the 1979 coup d'etat against the Gairy regime in Grenada, and the subsequent assassination of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop also in Grenada in 1983. In examining the trade union movement in the countries this study has included

cultural, social, economic and political variables in its endeavor to trace the foundation upon which the movement was established. The analysis continued with a discussion of the impact of those variables on the movement in its present state. Studies of this nature are useful not only from a scholarly point of view but also for policy makers and potential entrepreneurs who intend to operate in the region.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See P. Schmitter, "Corporatism and Policy Making in Contemporary Western Europe," in Comparative Political Studies, April 1977, pp. 7-38; and H. Wilensky, The New Corporatism, Centralization and the Welfare State, London: Sage, 1976.

<sup>2</sup>See Colin Crouch, Class Conflict and the Industrial Relations Crisis. London: Heineman, 1977.

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