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# DUALISM DEBUNKED: MULTIPLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE ANGLO-CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

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## **Introduction**

There is a definite need to go beyond the political economy framework which emphasizes the dualistic nature of the agricultural sector viz., plantation and peasant. The agricultural sector constitutes cultivators with varying levels of: (i) commitment to agricultural production, (ii) access to resources and (iii) linkages between and among themselves by a host of social and economic relations. Furthermore, the interplay among them is not necessarily determined by any given period by conflictual relations between large (plantation?) and small (peasant) holdings, but is to be located in the nature of the intra-agricultural sectoral links and not least their connections with the non-agricultural sector. This latter phenomenon is virtually ignored in the literature. Yet one of the basic features of West Indian agricultural social structures is the fact that all strata engage in non-agricultural occupations. Additionally, the role of the State although acknowledged is barely contained and integrated into analyses

of the sector, in spite of its impact, not least in the definition of options available to members of various agricultural strata.

This essay is at once historical and conceptual. The issues raised are primarily designed to recast our thinking so that the coordinates of the farm/holding incorporate these interconnections among agricultural strata as well as the overall impact of relations forged in other arenas in which individual members of these strata participate. The exercise transcends simple academic enlightenment and poses meaning for the design and implementation of agricultural policy in the Region.

Our aim is to show that these larger boundaries exist and attempt to map their various interlinks. In specific relation to state policy, it is shown how both the outcome of agricultural policy and general policy during a particular historical period affects individuals and changes their agricultural options. The paper concludes that a complete

understanding of the influences on the farming household provides the real basis for efforts to transform and/or stabilize relations and forms that are considered desirable. Not least important to this end is the selection of the most suitable persons for the execution of such policy.

### **Select Review of the Contribution of Analysts**

The literature on the agricultural sector and its dynamic revolves around the distinct concepts of plantation and peasant constantly suggesting the phenomenon of dualism in the agricultural sector. Although these concepts are fundamentally incomparable (since the former represents a particular social stratum and the latter a form of agricultural enterprise) these categories are nonetheless constantly juxtaposed.(1)

Beckford (2) operating within the dependency school paradigm takes this dualistic framework further than others. He has contended that *"rural economy reflects a pattern synonymous with the wider economy"*. While the larger economy is composed of two principal sectors, the 'overseas' and the 'residential', in the 'rural sector' these conform to the 'plantation' and the 'peasant' sector, respectively. Going further he adds that the expansion necessitated by the 'overseas' feature of the plantation historically has had the effect of constricting the growth and expansion of the peasant sector. Underdevelopment of the agricultural sector is therefore defined by the disproportionate growth of the plantation over the peasant sector all of which is

accompanied by conflictual relations.

### **Assumptions of Agro-Policy/Role of Plantation Economy Thesis**

This interpretation of agrarian social relations underscores the work of a number of analysts. Thus we have on the one hand a plantation economy and on the other a peasant economy; the former attempting to limit the expansion of the other in its routine operation. And the end product of all this is the marginalization of the peasant economy.

The usefulness of the plantation/peasant paradigm is that it highlights the unequal distribution of resources in the agricultural sector. This view also draws attention to the apparent existence of two separate production systems, the more prosperous one concentrating on the export market, and the other for the domestic market.

However, if one of the objectives of the paradigm is the elucidation of power relations in the agrarian sector and how this affects production, it may legitimately be said to distort history. For as Hall and others have shown, even in the immediate post-emancipation period, a variety of incipient strata emerged. One clear result of this would have been the emergence of multi-dimensional economic and social relations making the relations between small holder/peasant and the plantation far more complex, thereby involving processes of cooperation, accommodation as well as conflict. (3) When and where and under what conditions these twin processes of conflict and accommodation have occurred

and with what consequences for: (i) the disposition of individual farmers towards the improvement or stagnation of agriculture; and (ii) the effect of the emergence, dissolution, and/or reconstitution of agricultural strata are still matters for much social historical enquiry. Secondly, the paradigm by placing (disproportionate) emphasis on the unequal relation of the plantation/peasant barely contains and integrates the role of the state as a key socio-economic and political force. Yet upon the decline of the planters as a political force, the state has been active in the creation of classes/strata and has hastened the decline of others and remoulded social relations, not least of which are relations involving the small holder and other social classes in the agrarian and non-agrarian sectors.

### **Characteristics of Agriculture that lend Themselves to the Sense of Dualism**

There is however a sense in which a statistical even historical (of a limited time period) examination of the agricultural social structure can (mis-) lead to the conclusion that indeed a dual structure exists. One may generalize by presenting a mix from the cases of Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia and Jamaica.(4) In the first place, there is a distinct disparity in land tenure, acreage, production, and applied technology, between small holdings and plantations.

### **Land Holdings Number and Acreage**

If one takes the case of Trinidad and Tobago

for instance, between 1963 and 1982 (although there were changes in the size of holdings and the acreage distributed), land holdings remained fundamentally skewed. For example in 1963, holdings over 100 acres which represented 503, were in 1982 down to 93. In terms of acreage in 1963, the average size of holdings over 100 acres was 500. In 1982 however, this doubled to 1096.4 suggesting that there were fewer owners, but greater acreage accruing to each one. On the one hand, holdings less than 5 hectares (1 ha. = 2.47 acres) constituted 47% of all agricultural holdings and occupied only 7% of total acreage. By 1983 however, their percentage share of all holdings had increased to 86% and their acreage share to 32 %. (5) There was a small increase in the average size from 2.2 acres in 1963 to 3.2 in 1982. At the same time, whereas 30% of small holders were tenants in 1963, by 1982 this number had increased to 38% suggesting that many 'new' small holders were not free holders thereby further exacerbating the divide between small and large holdings or peasant and plantations. The situation in Jamaica and St. Lucia is far more skewed. This has been ably demonstrated elsewhere. (6)

### **Crops Grown**

There is also the propensity to view large plantations as the purveyors of traditional export crop production, and small farmers/producers of food crops for domestic consumption. But this perspective has its historical conditionalities. During the immediate post-emancipation period, this distinction was far more sharply drawn. However, over time this tendency has become increas-

ingly blurred. For example, the traditional export crops became associated with small holder farming systems and while the division in crop production was more or less maintained, inter-cropping with greater involvement in the export market became the norm among small holders.

This is exemplified in the Jamaican case. Dichotomous crop production and overseas marketing destinations were well underway in the late 19th century. By 1890 ground provisions accounted for three-quarters of the total agricultural output of small holders, whose share of export crops was steadily expanding and spiralled with the introduction of banana production. Between 1890 and 1930 for example, production of ground provisions decreased from 74% to 69%, respectively. At the same time, export crop production of small holders increased from 23% in 1890 to 27% by 1930.

In later years, 1968/69 for example, 48,089 small holders with a total acreage of 229,000, were producing export crops on 92,251 acres (40%) of them.(7)

### **Technology**

Perhaps disparities between large and small agricultural holdings have been most apparent in the type and use of technology.

Equipment such as ploughs, tractors, irrigation pumps and the use of fertilisers, implementation of soil preparation techniques are found to be more prevalent on large holdings than on small holdings. Indeed, it has been found that the greater the participation of small holders in export production the

more likely the tendency to utilise modern equipment and techniques of production. (8) This phenomenon may be explained by the fact that more research and support is provided for export crops than for food crops. How these affect production remains unexplained in the general literature. But there is sometimes a tendency to judge efficiency in terms of the numbers of workers employed and to equate the intensity of land use among small holders as evidence of efficiency and superiority of their production systems.

The consensus among researchers and analysts on Caribbean agriculture is that small-holders farm more intensively than large farmers.

Yet these apparent structural differences obscure both the inter-connectedness between and among these strata and their relation to the non-agricultural sector. Thus under the weight of evidence of heterogeneity/differentiation within and among the sectors, the relational existence and substance of duality collapses.

### **Exploding the above Myth: The Fallacy of a Homogeneous Sector**

Perhaps unwittingly with the sense of dualism, is the implication that the 'two' sectors are monolithic and homogeneous and that their relations are circumscribed either by their somewhat autonomous existence on the one hand (implied in the treatment of the agricultural sector as constituting separate systems or modes of production) or linked in an intensely conflictual situation (as implied in the plantation economy thesis).

In reality, neither is the case.

Thus differentiating between the agrarian social strata and classes if you will and not least those that constitute the small holder sector becomes a vital exercise. Of equal importance is the need to highlight the interconnections within the agricultural sector and the rest of the economy.

In order to grasp these multidimensional relations we operate with three basic assumptions. The first is that the process of commercial production linked to global capital accumulation is the overarching exchange relation in the economy not least the agricultural sector. And that the prime concern of all rational individuals to improve the welfare of the household(s) to which they belong mediates this relationship.<sup>(9)</sup> The second related assumption is that varying degrees of occupational multiplicity (the ability of the individual to straddle various occupations for the maximization of income for personal and household use) exists at all levels. The third is that national policy originating in urban centers may at given historical periods have a determining effect (often times undesirable) upon the outcome of developments in the agricultural sector. For example, the availability of jobs in (relatively) high income sectors e.g. construction, bauxite, oil even government welfare projects as the special works programme Development and Environmental Works Division (DEWD) in Trinidad and Tobago <sup>(10)</sup> may have a negative impact upon agricultural production at the farm level.

Thus agrarian social strata need to be de-

fined in relation to these functional linkages.

### **Class Heterogeneity and External Relations**

Significant sections of all strata beginning from the medium size enterprises are engaged at different levels of intensity (necessity?) in the provisioning/selling of their labour power and in some cases in the purchasing of that of others. The latter reveals a strict wage relation exchange, or consists of either task or job-work or any form of paid labour.

Members of family farms who employ wage labour in one former another, may also earn salaries as civil servants, private sector employees or small business persons in the urban or non-urban arenas of the economy or even migrate as workers in other economies and return after several months or years. As not quite absentee owners, they work from time to time in a management/supervisory or sometimes all-round capacity on the farm.

Large planters operating on company or private estates may represent local or foreign capital functioning as business persons (in the traditional sense of the word) operating industries, commercial houses or involved in real estate operations.

Participation in the non-agrarian sector is therefore not simply the context of on-farm intra-strata relations but are constitutive of these very relations. Thus, at any given period in the cycle of household/farm devel-

opment, individual farmers or even entire farming communities may be far more responsive to these extra-relations than to the appeal of various farm/agricultural policy. As one analyst asserted:

*"Programmes which do not recognize that the small-farmer's needs, demands and likely responses are often heavily influenced by non-farm considerations are likely to encounter some difficulty."* (11)

It is therefore within this sector that the occupational multiplicity of the farming sector can be located.

### **Harnessing Income from Multiple Occupations**

Occupational multiplicity *per se* or the desire to supplement household incomes by seeking non-farm income elsewhere is neither unique to the Caribbean nor developing countries. For example in the United States where the practice is growing, one laudatory result has been the reduction of the disparity within the agricultural sector and also between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. (12)

Surveys done in Grenada in the late 1970's and also reviews of the phenomenon in developed and newly industrialized countries suggest that:

*"The value of farm output per acre, as well as total household income and per capita income, were all substantially higher for operators with off-farm jobs. Including income from jobs by others in the household, off-farm earnings accounted for about*

*half of household income for more than 50 per cent of the surveyed households."* (13)

Other findings suggest that off-farm work does not reduce the number of hours spent on the farm but actually results in an increase in the total number of work hours. And that:

*"... to the extent that there is a shift in resources from the farm to the non-farm sector, the farm-side reductions may be more likely to occur among the smaller farms. An expansion in the non-farm sector could thus result in consolidation and an increase in the average farm size of the remaining operators."* (14)

Hitz thus concludes that:

*"Off-farm work was not shown to lessen farming efficiency. Average yields on farms in the samples where the operators worked off-farm were higher than those where the operator worked only on his own farm. Operators with jobs seem able to substitute effectively household labour, hired labour, and capital for any reduction in their hours of work on-farm needed to work off-farm."* (15)

It would seem that in the specific case of the Anglophone Caribbean this relation, while perhaps beneficial to the particular household participants has not had positive effects upon the agricultural sector as a whole and perhaps even the farming households existing at the lower extremities of income and farming practices (small size plot, poor quality land, low education of farmer etc.).

The problem in the Region therefore seems to be (i) how to draw this external income into the agricultural sector and (ii) to decide the optimum farm size and the kind of assistance that would be needed to prevent either the parasitic drain of surpluses from the farm and/or the withdrawal even of family labour given the lure of external income.

Unquestionably, these 'extra' non-farm sources of income give rise to varying degrees of intensity and commitment to agricultural production. How, when and for how long clearly necessitates a broader picture of national policy via the state bureaucracy.

### **State Policy**

It has been stated from the outset that in the review of factors affecting agricultural production and the well being of agricultural communities it would be necessary to treat the State as a dynamic force that impacts in variable ways upon the agricultural sector. The explicit assumption here is that state policy is the principal screen through which the contradictions between groups/classes of various cultural or ideological persuasions and interests filter. State policy also reflects the contradictions of the global capital accumulation process e.g. the demand for certain goods and services on the world market and inter-state relations, for example.

In the specific case of the Anglophone Caribbean, the dismantling of the colonial system, and relatedly that of the plantation

system, has thrust greater responsibilities upon the State. The post-colonial history of the Caribbean reflects this growing centrality of state policy in the lives of individual citizens. For the moment however, a discussion of the theories of the State and its historical role lies outside the scope of this paper.<sup>(16)</sup> We need only portray its influence in the agricultural sector.

Paradoxically state policy, while forging a number of social structural changes e.g. from small holders to wage labour, *vice versa*, from wage labour to tenants etc. has in its relation to the agricultural sector operated as if the very agricultural forms were independent and fixed with limited socio-economic connections among themselves and none in relation to the non-agricultural sector.

Efforts to restructure economies, not least the productive development of agriculture, into viable and sustainable development projects have relied primarily on the strategies of land settlements, rehabilitation and modernisation schemes, and direct involvement of the State in production. Let us very briefly examine two principle forms viz., land settlements and modernization schemes. The principal ways in which state policy affected developments in the agricultural sector were (i) the formation, dissolution and reconstitution of classes/strata in the agricultural sector, and (ii) the promotion of specific cash crops and by virtue of this, the reduction of effort, land and resources towards food production.



### Land Settlements

The tendency to see land settlements as conservative and therefore part of incrementalist policy is only a part of the story. The other side is that land settlements served to foster and perpetuate the growth of new forms of labour supplies as in the creation of a dependent stratum of small holder. On the other hand a number of middle class small holders and others cemented their status whether in the agrarian sector or without by purchasing these lands.(17)

Throughout the Anglophone Caribbean, land settlement schemes have punctuated agricultural policy of the Region. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Crown Land Development Scheme established in 1967 still maintains its position as the most significant State agricultural scheme. (18)

In Jamaica for example, between 1929-71, the total number of properties acquired by the government was 269 representing a total acreage of 234,041. Of this the actual acreage allotted was 173,835 divided into 39,381 allotments. An average of 4.5 acres per household. (19)

Except for the inter-war period (1919-39), when government leased land from large property owners specifically for the purposes of supplementing war time food supplies, the actual orientation of production resembled the pattern which obtained nationally. This was particularly the case after the 1950's, where the increase in the production of food crops matched that of the traditional export crops.

Considered the hey day of land settlements, 1938-49 witnessed a proliferation of land allotments. Ostensibly, the major characteristics were as follows:

- (1) The average size of the allotment was not to exceed 5 acres in size (although many fell below this size);
- (2) Subletting and sub-division were prohibited;
- (3) Allotees were required to be *bona fide* farmers;
- (4) Transfers could be made only with the permission of the land commissioner and no title could be issued earlier than 5 years from the date of possession of land;
- (5) Allotees had to use approved agricultural practices, such as soil conservation measures and to have pasture land (1/5 of the plot size during the first year and 2/5 there after).

It was found that 71 % of all settlers supplemented their income by working on nearby properties. Furthermore, many cases were recorded of middle income non-agricultural persons investing in plots of land located on land settlements. More fundamentally however, land settlements contributed to the proliferation of a small holder stratum, who either used the plots as a basis for income, as supplement, or income, as main livelihood.

### **Modernization Schemes**

While land settlements provided the semblance of ownership, modernization schemes were the other arm of state policy which served to draw to small holders further and further into the ambit of export production imparting also at best measures of efficiency in land use. The principal beneficiaries to these schemes were the more secure small-holders.

These schemes operated under the assumption that the agricultural sector was dual and that the obstacles to agricultural development lay in the traditional and backward, so-called '*peasant*' sector. If land settlements recognized the integral relation of a dependent land owning stratum to export production, then modernization schemes were a concession to the various fractions of the small holding stratum. They were designed to coopt this stratum into export production and reinforcing the tradition of cash crops in preference for food production.

The Farm Development Scheme of Jamaica was one such programme. Its specific objectives were to assist individual farmers with grants, loans and free planting material to meet the cost of farm operations. Additionally, the scheme aimed to maintain and expand the production of export crops, to encourage food production, to effect adequate and proper land use, and to provide sufficient capital for farm financing in order to raise productivity and to improve farming techniques.

Such schemes were bureaucratically organized. At one level the government extension

services formulated the individual plans, supervised the actual work done on the farm, and the distribution of subsidies. At another level, the Parish Development Boards were delegated the responsibility for application approval. Finance was provided by the Agricultural Loan Societies Board and the People's Cooperative Banks. Loan eligibility depended upon clear freehold title to land. This was facilitated by the passage of the Facilities for Title Law (1955) which enabled small holders to secure title deeds to their properties.

The initial spatial objective of the scheme was to first establish solid cores of development before spreading to the rest of the island. As with previous agricultural projects, no distinction was made among participating farms. When considered eligible, farmers were granted subsidies. Assistance under the scheme was discontinued only after a '*sufficient level of development*' had been attained. However, in view of the financial expenditure, the principle of planning for the whole farm was scaled down. Instead, special assistance was given to farmers developing on their own, and later, assistance was awarded only for partial development and to farmers who had satisfied the criteria of the agricultural bureaucracy. Tasks accomplished under the scheme included land clearing, soil conservation, pasture improvement, the construction and/or repair of farm buildings, the provision of water supplies, the planting of permanent crops, food crops and the reafforestation of specific areas.

The other kind of programme involved conservation schemes like the Yallahs Valley

Land Authority (YVLA), and the Christiana Land Authority (CALA) both of which sought to institute modern methods of soil conservation and rehabilitation among participating farmers.

These schemes took the existing agrarian structure as a given and simply attempted to regularize tenure e.g. with the extension of freehold title in order to facilitate greater control and to modify agricultural practices.

For example, on the Yallahs scheme, smallholders constituted over 57% of all participating farming units although occupying only 10.5% of the total acreage. To the other extreme were large farms the average size of which was 317.9 acres but which occupied over 55% of the total acreage.

The YVLA was managed by a Board of Directors, who were granted extensive powers to regulate and control land use in the Valley. On the CALA, the same measure of regulation was seen.

For each farm to be developed a land capability map was prepared by the Authority, which formed the basis of a full and comprehensive plan embodying a farming programme for a number of years. Incentives in money, materials and fertilizers were given for establishment of pastures, for soil conservation measures for farm buildings, farm water supplies (tanks), afforestation and establishment of permanent crops. For soil conservation work, (contour trenches, stone walls, vegetative barriers etc.) the subsidy amounted to 75% of approved cost with a maximum of 10 pounds

per acre. For afforestation 5 pounds per acre plus free planting material were given as a subsidy.

Thus modernization schemes involved the reinforcement of export production and the improvement of techniques of production on different farms. They therefore secured greater control by the highly expanded state bureaucracy over the production and time of the small holders while upgrading skills and farm organization. The exclusion of large numbers of dependent smallholders suggest that the main beneficiaries were the better off smallholders.

#### **State Policy and the Dissolution and Reconstitution of Classes**

At the same time, one can envisage the impact of state policy designed for other sectors upon these same settlers. Bauxite development reorganized the very land settlements and settlers who were the recipients of these '*generous*' programmes. The organization of mining underscores the State's direct and indirect role (in consort with the companies) in the creation/consolidation and reorganization of the production patterns and lifestyle of sections of the smallholder stratum.

The provision which made land ownership mandatory before any mining operations could be undertaken led to the feverish purchasing of land by bauxite companies. There was, however, a pattern to these purchases which partly explains the pattern of losses of agricultural acreages which will be discussed later.

The larger bauxite companies, viz., Alcan and Reynolds which were the first to commence mining operations, acquired some 136,472 acres representing 5.7% of agricultural land primarily from large land owners most of whom were former pen keepers. The average size of these holdings was 291 acres, but many were well above this acreage. On the other hand, the smaller and later arrivant such as Kaiser also purchased land, but from smallholders the average size being 5 acres. Smallholders were also affected by the reacquisition of land settlement schemes by the government and their resale to the companies. Virtually all government land settlement schemes ostensibly released to settlers within the main bauxite parishes up to March 1953 were in one way or the other affected by bauxite land acquisitions.

For example, one such property, Toboloski situated in the parish of St. Ann, a leading bauxite mining site, had lost over 68% of settlement land out of a total of 1960 acres by 1959. In the parish of Manchester, another leading bauxite area, on the Chudleigh property approximately 57% of agricultural acreage formerly allotted to smallholders was lost to the bauxite companies.

These acquisitions were of particular importance to smallholder production. There were two main forms of compensation for smallholders. The first was cash and the second was relocation in their capacity as smallholders to other parts of the parish. In other cases, the companies would buy land for which no immediate prospect of raining was intended and then lease it out to tenants for specific types of farming. Or land for-

merly held by smallholders would be leased back to them. The terms of leases varied among the different companies.

An emphasis on short term crops curbed the mixed crop practices of the smallholder. However, no data exist which permit any serious assessment of this dilemma.

In terms of the tenancy arrangements of the bauxite companies, it is instructive to note that by 1962, 30% of all lands owned by the Alcan company was organized into these lease arrangements. The company supervised the land use and management, while the tenants were free to engage in whatever marketing arrangements they desired.

There are those who benefitted from these settlements as well as those who did not. Of the former, they did so by investing their money in house purchases, children's education, farm purchase and improvement, assisting members of families to migrate to England and elsewhere, and especially in the case of small farmers, saving in the local commercial bank. With the probable exception of those who bought and/or improved their farms, there seems to have been a significant number of former smallholders who were severely displaced by the companies' operations. One brief study makes mention of resettlement which entailed movement from one agricultural community to a non-agricultural one. The community of Schwallenburg was one example of such a movement to which farming persons were relocated.

The issue at this point is not simply to demonstrate the somewhat sacrificial quality of

the land actions between the bauxite companies and the smallholders, but to show that the constitutive ambience for this relation was the explicit liberality of state policy. This had the overall effect of reconstituting relations within and among smallholders and also reducing plantation acreages.

### **Altering the Economic Activity of Smallholders**

The specific industrialization policies (20) and the supra-favourable conditions under which bauxite companies operated have led a few analysts to conclude that these represent proof of the marginalization of the smallholder. Reading between the lines, it is presumed that what is meant is that, so long as smallholders were not given the opportunity to expand as smallholders the sum of their positions equals marginalization.

The concept of marginalization which connotes exclusion and isolation misses the point of class transformation and the role of the State. The evidence marshalled thus far suggests at best that smallholders had their roles transformed on the one hand, from farmers to proletarians or from specific type of farmer (producing mixed crops to pure-stands of cash crops). In so far as they became tenants of the companies they were engaged in new social relations of domination landlord/tenant. Far from being marginal therefore they acceded to new and old class relations, proletarian, semi-smallholder, combined with tenancy on bauxite properties. Unbearable conditions created as a result of these policies forced smallholders out of the agricultural sector, the district, and the country as well.

These developments suggest the critical role of the Jamaican state in effecting socio-economic transformation within the agricultural sector. More specifically, its critical influence in the creation and consolidation of a large dependent stratum of land-owning labour within a process of capital accumulation via export production with a significant degree of subsistence and food production.

This pattern of class formation, reconstitution and dissolution is repeated throughout the Anglophone Caribbean, the outcome of which is at once the appearance and the reality of the crisis in agriculture. The problems at once facing the symbolizing West Indian agriculture have been eloquently outlined elsewhere.<sup>(21)</sup> Their features may be summarized as follows:

1. burgeoning smallholder sector with contracting resources
2. declining agricultural acreage
3. decline of the middle stratum in agriculture
4. incremental increases in the size of holdings of smallholders but no significant increase in the acreage which they command.
5. except for Guyana the food import bill continues to be disproportionately higher than exports. That is to say the decline of the food deficiency ratio.

These developments in themselves suggest that a host of serious unintended consequences have accompanied agricultural policy. More fundamentally for our purposes, it suggests a high degree of fluidity in the character of agrarian social strata, of their relations among themselves as well as to the non-agricultural sector. Importantly, even when social phenomena appear stable and unchanging, much change may be occurring. The outcome of changes, say for example, the creation of a certain social stratum may at once reflect as well as determine the susceptibility of individuals, of various stratum to future social and economic changes not least within the context of programmes geared towards agricultural transformation.

This approach helps us to identify more clearly the needs of the farming households cum farming communities and provides a veritable guide in our selection of capable and committed persons for farming programmes.

### **Agricultural Transformation: Targeting the Farming Population**

Indeed, one of the surest ways to induce production and raise levels of productivity is the selection of the right farmer the democratic participation of the client population (22). Lewis (23) for example, argues that the success of agricultural schemes depends in part on the selection of the right person, and relatedly in the supply of the necessary inputs to the farm. But such a selection depends on knowledge of the social, economic and political coordinates of small-holder existence.

To be sure there have been few attempts in the past to identify the target group or individual farmer either as part of a recruitment exercise for land settlement, or to predetermine his/her eligibility for various kinds of agricultural support. For example, it has been argued that the Crown Lands Development Project in Trinidad and Tobago with its emphasis on small plots of land for food and vegetable production operated under the assumption that the farmer's economic links would extend beyond the allocation plot of land. One report's assessment of the situation was stated as follows: *"Thus society has determined that farm size by such as to employ one or two family members, and these less than full time. Though Trinidad authorities were prepared to go the other way and provide for full family employment, they were forced to retreat by the behaviour of project participants themselves as they respond to alternative opportunities in their economic environments which this particular project was powerless to defend itself against."*(24)

But the attempts to recruit the right people have not at the same time been accompanied by an information on the kinds of links which exist within and without the agricultural sector, such as we have noted both schematically and historically. This is manifest in the laxity with which services and inputs were provided. It is as if plots of land in themselves can perform magical deeds in the hands of the farmer. Furthermore, even partially the participation of the client has always been minimal.

A number of analysts focusing on state policy in the agricultural sector have high-

lighted the bureaucratic way in which policy gets formulated. The general consensus is that policy is invariably an elitist exercise in which the ideas and perspectives of its clients are taken for granted. For example, Stone (1977) in his study of tenant farming notes the superordinate role played by the Civil Service in the design and implementation of the projects with no inputs from the client group; the disorganized nature of the client group which prohibits collective/community action; the treatment of the project as an enclave, disconnected from other developments, interests or even communities and the narrowness of economic objectives. (25)

This integrated approach clarifies our perspective on what signifies the real objective of agricultural transformation and development. By integrating knowledge of the household and its linkages with that of the farm (it will be possible) to ascertain the capacity (and needs) of certain households to participate in agricultural programmes and also one would acquire more precise knowledge of just how to harmonize household community interests with agricultural policy and vice versa. In households which show a clear preference for their sources of extra income, agro-policy will have to be built around these even to protect these sources not to sever farmers from them in the hope, however desirable, of establishing independent farmers. The focus becomes less tunnelled, transcending the narrow (not underestimating its importance) concerns of the improvement and modernization of the agricultural plots.

## **Conclusion:**

### **Some Research Notes**

We have shown the importance of moving beyond current political economy with its emphasis on the dual agricultural economy composed of peasant and plantation. Instead we have argued that an analysis based on the relational aspects of the agrarian and non-agrarian linkages lead to a far more profound understanding of their constitution. We have also underscored the constitutive role of the State highlighting the need for strategies that can treat with these critical influences.

It would seem therefore that if our agenda does not simply end with the historical mapping of these changes but has as its ultimate objective the development of a holistic programme of agricultural transformation, the tracking of these changes is absolutely essential. This would involve careful and continuous monitoring of samples of households member(s) who are involved in the business of agricultural production. Of course our ability to predict and either adjust programmes or give relevant advice will depend upon the seriousness that is attached to improving the well being of the agricultural sector.

In the final analysis positive and substantial changes cannot take place in agriculture unless we press for the holistic approach. Obviously we need to have a clear philosophy of the desirable outcome. This would entail a joint long term project of research

and development with all agencies, governmental and non-governmental, as well as the representation from farming communities whose objectives include alleviating the production and productivity crisis, and ameliorating the conditions of men and women in agriculture. That is to say, many people working towards one goal. Given the inter-connections between agriculture and non-agriculture - that goal is fundamentally about consolidating the links between the two sectors through the supply of goods and services involving industry and commerce. Ultimately what is involved is the Sisyphean task of the liberation of the West Indian mind.

### Notes:

See footnote 17 in M. Crichlow (1988): **State Policy and the Formation of the Smallholder Stratum in Jamaica 1930-80**. Ph.D. SUNY Binghamton.

See G. Beckford (1975): **Caribbean Economy: Dependence and Backwardness**. Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research. See also by the same author "Peasant Movements and Agrarian Problems in the West Indies. Part II. Aspects of the Present Conflict between the Plantation and the Peasantry in the West Indies," **Caribbean Quarterly**, 18, No.1, March 1972,

See for example, D. Hall (1978): "The Flight from the Estates Reconsidered: The British West Indies

1938-42," **Journal of Caribbean History** 10 and 11, 16-24.

4. We are operating under the assumption that these three cases are similar so that the delineation of one characteristic of one can be taken for granted that similar conditions exist in the other two cases.
5. Much of this increase could be accounted for by the establishment of the Crown Lands Development Scheme established in 1967. This involved the cultivation of 12,000 acres of land shared by approximately 1,800 farm units of roughly 7 acres. In actual practice, this size varied. For example, the food and vegetable farms, at least 760 in number, were roughly 5 acres at an average.
6. See M. Crichlow (1988) and "False Assumptions ... False Practices - Some Notes on Agrarian Policy and State and Agricultural Development in St. Lucia," SUNY Binghamton, 1984.
7. See Crichlow (1988: Ch.4).
8. In Chapter 4 of Crichlow (1988), this point is discussed in greater detail.
9. Partiality towards commerce was explicit even during slavery among slaves by their practices of cultivation of food on provision grounds and participation in the Sunday



- market. Furthermore in the post-emancipation period, production for the household never precluded the sale of surpluses on the domestic market.
10. For more information on the erosion of agriculture in an oil economy see Pollard (1985). I argue elsewhere that though these 'external' influences were attractive enough, there were push factors emanating from poor infrastructure, and the general break down in governmental support which led to disenchantment among the client group.
  11. See E. Le Franc (1981): "Social Structure, Cultivation Practices and Food Availability," **The Interface between Food Availability, Food Conservation and Human Nutrition in the Caricom Region.** Proceedings of a Workshop in a UWI Postgraduate Training Programme in Food and Nutrition Studies held at The University of the West Indies, Faculty of Agriculture, St. Augustine, Trinidad, January 12-15.
  12. See Gregory Hitz (1988): "Part-time Farming in Grenada: Factors Affecting Off-farm Work by Small-farm Operators," Ph.D. Dissertation, Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland 1984. 19.
  13. See G. Hitz, p.74.
  14. Hitz, p. 138.
  15. Hitz, p. 137.
  16. See for example, H. Alavi, "The State Post-Colonial Societies," **New Left Review**, 74 July-August, 1972:59-81 among several others.
  17. In that sense land settlement stabilized a once potentially militant sector.
  18. See M. Crichlow (1989): "State and Agricultural Entrepreneurship in Trinidad and Tobago," Paper presented at the 14th Annual Conference of the Caribbean Studies Association, May, Barbados.
  19. See M. Crichlow (1988) especially Ch.4.
  20. For detailed information on the industrialization policy of this period, see O. Jefferson (1971): **The Post-War Economic Development of Jamaica.** Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research.
  21. See for example, C.Y. Thomas: "A Survey of Agriculture" and 1990 ECLAC Report.
  22. We take as given the provision of infrastructural, financial, marketing and other kinds that are perceived to be needed.
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23. See W. Lewis (1951): "Issues in Land Settlement Policy," **Caribbean Economic Review**, Vol.3, Nos.1 &2, pp.58-92.
24. See "Project Performance Audit Report - International Bank for Reconstruction and Development," IBRD (1977:46).
- 25 See Crichlow (1989:33).

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