THE 1918 RIOTS
“THEM PLANTERS GOT WELL SHOOK UP”

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When Great Britain declared war on Germany in August 1914, there was a great deal of anxiety in Antigua about the effects the war would have on the island. A number of measures were immediately taken to calm the population. The Colonial Bank was allowed to refuse or delay any large demands for cash, both to stop a panic and to conserve money to pay the laborers. The government held “conversations” with those merchants it felt might take advantage of the situation by raising prices.[1] It also, on request, assured the Colonial Office of the loyalty of all its subjects—specifically meaning the Lebanese, who as citizens of the Ottoman Empire might have been classed as loyal to the enemy; the only exception was a German commercial traveler who was made a prisoner of war and shipped off to Trinidad.[2]

Britain depended upon its colonies to help out in the war effort, and Antiguans rich and poor, in the city and in the countryside, threw themselves vigorously behind the war effort. Across the island, people responded to calls for aid with a variety of fund-raising efforts. The schools held dances, bridge tournaments, and bicycle races. There were Red Cross committees in many villages, and the women made bandages and knitted scarves and hats.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS DETERIORATE

Although many young men joined up, the island's economy at first seemed little affected. But as the war progressed, people began to experience increasing hardship. Ships carrying badly needed goods were blown up, diverted, or delayed, and the by-now-established reliance on outside foodstuffs began to take a toll. Imported items became more expensive and such basics as flour, matches, kerosene, and cornmeal became increasingly scarce.

No doubt everyone suffered, but some suffered far less than others. Rising sugar prices, a guaranteed market, and several years of good production had brought prosperity to both the planters and the government. Import merchants also suffered less: while there were fewer buyers, prices were higher. The small shopkeepers felt the pinch a bit more, in part because they had to face customers from the laboring classes. In June 1917, for instance, when several small shopkeepers were tried for overpricing, they pled (backed by the newspapers) that they were being put in an impossible situation, squeezed between the wholesaler, who was raising his prices, and the consumer, who was protesting if the shopkeepers raised prices to cover their costs.[3]

Reports of scarcities and rising prices began to appear in the papers early in the war, but the government did not begin to get seriously worried until 1917. In February the newspapers reported that there might be actual starvation if something was not done.[4] At one point in early 1918 there was no rice, sugar, bread, cornmeal,

or kerosene; bakers and other shops were forced to close; the street lights were out. T.H. Best, who was Colonial Secretary and also acting governor throughout most of this period,[5] reported to the Colonial Office that he could see a "physical deterioration" among the laboring population due to poverty and malnutrition.[6] Sammy Smith, a plantation worker at the time, described the situation considerably more graphically: "During and after the war people nearly eat one another. There seem to be no end to hunger and starvation."[7]

THE PLANTERS BLAME THE LABORERS

The planters' response to the situation was to blame the laborers: there was not enough food because they refused to plant food crops. Best tended to agree, and restated a complaint that was a favorite of many Antiguan governors, that this was because of the government's previous and on-going failure to the make the former slaves become self-supporting. At the same time, the planters were frustrated at not being able to attract sufficient field labor, which they also attributed to the laborers' unwillingness to work. Best, as well as one newspaper columnist, felt that this was more the result of out-migration than resistance, but the planters were convinced. This led to a concerted campaign to make "vagrants" work, accompanied by threats of increasingly harsh punishment for acts—such as praedial larceny, or stealing food crops—that the planters (and in this case the government concurred) saw as lawless. In June 1917, for instance, when there were reports that praedial larceny was on the increase, the planters lost no time in suggesting that flogging be instituted as punishment;[8] by February 1918 a law to this effect had been passed.

While some of the shortages were unavoidable, the food crisis was not, and everyone agreed that the obvious solution was to grow more food crops. There was no agreement, however, about who should do so. No cane farmer, large or small, was willing to give up sugar land in order to plant provisions, but the large planters were far better able to resist government pressure, and it was the peasants who became the focus of the effort. Here too compulsion was discussed, but not instituted.[9] Instead, there were repeated appeals in the newspapers to "patriotic" small cultivators to plant provisions.[10] The planters were not subject to this kind of pressure, however, and only "Stroller," the *Sun* columnist who considered that his role was to represent the "common man," pointed out that the planters were inexcusably being let off the hook. (Sammy Smith remembers that some planters gave land they did not need to those who wanted to work it, but that they insisted on keeping two-thirds for themselves.[11])

The situation continued to deteriorate and the laboring population began to grow restive. Not only were the planters clearly making large profits, but they were increasingly attempting to control the labor force by prosecuting their workers under the terms of the Masters' and Servants' Act. This act, also known as the Contract Act, had been passed immediately after emancipation in order to keep the former slaves

tied to the estates. It allowed a family to continue occupying a house on an estate, rent free, as long as its members worked there. They could not even look for work on another estate when their own had no work for them. And since housing off the estates was scarce, workers were effectively tied to a particular plantation; even after villages began to be established, a majority of workers still lived on the plantations.

Complaints about the act grew, and in 1914 a commission was established to inquire into its workings. Not surprisingly, it found that while the planters brought complaints against the laborers in great numbers—about four hundred a year in the three years preceding the inquiry—the laborers had brought very few—an average of five. There was widespread agreement that at least parts of the act were unfair: one article in the *Sun* noted that the seventy-nine-year-old act was so obviously outdated that "any right-thinking person, planter or otherwise," should agree that it needed amending; another called for an end to this "miserable system of helotry."[12] Yet despite this, the planters were adamant that the act remain in effect, and no changes were made as a result of the commission's inquiry.

LABOR UNREST

In February 1917 a series of night-time cane fires upset the planters and led to a spate of alarmed articles in the *Sun.* Workers on other islands were beginning to call for higher wages to offset the higher prices caused by the war, and there were strikes in nearby St. Croix. The term "union" was suddenly in the air. In Antigua, the *Sun* reflected general planter sentiment when it warned that the island would find itself on the "eve of conflict" if something was not done to improve the condition of the masses. People in Antigua were well aware that in neighboring St. Kitts, the St. Kitts Universal Benefit Association had tried to reorganize itself as a trade union but had been forestalled by Best, who believed he had quieted what he felt was a "highly excitable situation" by negotiating a wage increase and at the same time forbidding trade union activity because of wartime conditions.[13] But the St. Kitts association continued to attract members—by August 1917 it had 1,500 (out of a nonwhite population of 26,000)—although its activities reverted to those traditionally associated with a friendly society, a situation the governor considered "excellent."[14]

Nevertheless, despite this display of verbal confidence, Best was aware that, along with the collective demand for wage increases, a new and extremely disturbing factor had been introduced into the islands, and this was that the demands were increasingly being phrased in racial terms, as black against white. The movement in St. Kitts had been encouraged by a man named Arlington Newton, a Barbadian who had lived in the United States. He was described in one dispatch to the Colonial Office as "a man of doubtful antecedents, who has lived much in the United States and, according to his own account, in Egypt."[15] He was viewed as such a threat that he was forbidden entry into the Leewards, but he continued to send letters and messages of advice and encouragement.

THE ROLE OF THE LODGES

At about this time in Antigua, James A.N. Brown and his brother, both of whom had also lived in the United States and had probably been strongly influenced by Marcus Garvey, formed a chapter of the Ulotrichian Universal Lodge. They were from the start determined that the Lodge would act not only as a friendly society but as a political organizing force as well.[16] The Inspector of Police, in a letter devoted to the pernicious effects of the Lodge, wrote that one of its major aims was to "manufacture a feeling of race hatred," and concluded that its leaders were therefore pro-German and, as a result, seditious.[17]

In February 1917 there was an acrimonious split in the Lodge, and fifteen branches—all in the countryside—withdrew to form the Antigua Progressive Union Friendly Society.[18] Whether this was the result of a difference in politics or a matter of personalities—not only were the Ulotrichians under the patronage of the Dean and the Progressive Union of the Bishop, with considerable animosity between them,[19] but the founders of the APU were more rural: one was C.O. Sheppard, a clerk at the Antigua Sugar Factory, while another was a pipefitter there, and both were also small own-account cultivators,[20] while the Browns and their supporters were urban shopkeepers and small businessmen. In addition, the Browns took over virtually all the top posts in the Lodge, leaving little room for non-family members.

Whatever the case, the APU seems to have won the support of the newspapers in a way the Ulotrichians did not—perhaps it lacked the stridency and racial overtones of the urban lodge members, but it also emphasized traditional friendly society activities, such as helping the sick, alleviating poverty, and providing decent burials, and it received help from the churches and the planters.[21] Nevertheless, from the beginning labor problems were discussed at APU meetings, and both a political and a racial consciousness developed. Copies of Garvey's *Negro World* circulated.[22]

Then, at a series of public meetings in late 1917, the APU began to call for the abolition of the Contract Act and higher wages for cane cutting. The meetings grew larger and larger, and on October 28, 1917, at a meeting chaired by the Bishop, a resolution was passed calling for a revised wage scale that would be in effect across the island, and changes in the Contract Act. The resolution was greeted with considerable sympathy, even by the non-laboring population, and a number of articles in the *Sun* agreed that wages had to be adjusted if conflict was to be avoided.

THE "PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE"

Immediately thereafter, a group of nine men formed what they called—inaccurately, as we shall see—a "Committee Representing the Labourers," with the self-proclaimed mandate of coming up with an agreement for the 1918 crop that would forestall a confrontation. The committee included the Bishop and one other clergyman; C.O. Sheppard, president of the APU; the Rev. Dr. George Andrew

McGuire, also a leader of the APU; A.E. Hill, a teacher; A.H. Nurse, editor of the *Sun*; R.S.D. Goodwin and Sydney Smith, two leading planters; and—last but certainly not least—L.I. Henzell, manager of the factory and therefore the representative of its British owner, Henckell DuBuisson. Clearly this “People's Committee,” as it was called in the newspapers, not only did not represent the people but was stacked with members of the plantocracy and the middle class. Given the temper of the time, this was a recipe for disaster.

The committee wasted no time in showing its colors. First, it quickly decided to put the matter of the Contract Act on hold—the plantocracy had unanimously decided that the act was not to be tampered with, and the committee wanted to avoid a confrontation on that score.[23] The committee instead decided to concentrate on the issue of wages.

As people waited for the committee's proposals, the atmosphere on the island grew increasingly restless, and there was a rash of cane fires in December and in January 1918. Finally, the committee presented its proposal: there should be a uniform per ton rate across the island—10d for plant cane and 1s for ratoon cane.

While this proposal went part way toward meeting the canecutters' demands, it also adopted the ton, rather than the line, as the standard of measurement on all estates. This was already the case on the Henckell-DuBuisson estates but not on most others, and the proposal that it be adopted by all was taken by the cutters as an attempt to offset the wage increase and to increase planter control. The cutters hated the ton standard because the cane was weighed at the factory by a factory employee (or, if it was weighed in the field, by the overseer), and they frequently felt cheated. In the bitter arguments that invariably ensued, the planters always had the upper hand. In addition, the 1918 crop was expected to be very light, due to drought, and the laborers knew that if they were paid by the ton they would earn even less than usual—while the planters would still be assured their high profits. (It took much more work to cut a ton of cane in a bad year than in a good year.) “No payment by the ton” quickly became the rallying cry across the countryside.[24]

The People's Committee proposal was next submitted to the Planters' Association, a group that had been hastily constituted only shortly before. This was a brazen attempt to create what looked like a “negotiation” between the self-selected People's Committee, which, as we have seen, did not in any way represent the people, and a group representing the planters. How little “negotiation” was likely can be seen from the fact that Henzell, the most powerful planter on the People's Committee (and on the island) was also the honorary secretary of the Planters' Association.

Not surprisingly, then, the committee's proposal was immediately accepted by the Planters' Association, with three key changes: a sliding scale was instituted, so that the more cane cut, the less pay (apparently an attempt to limit the amount cut in any one day and thus make the laborers work a full week—the planters were constantly frustrated because the laborers preferred to work hard for two or three

days a week and then “retire” for the rest of the week to do their own business); the price differential between ratoon and plant cane was removed; and the general rate was increased slightly. The first two modifications were clearly in the planters' favor, and the third an attempt the make the bitter pill easier to swallow. But most important, the ton was to be the standard.

Such an agreement was bound to create a furor, and the planters were well aware that there was widespread sentiment in favor of cutting by the line—it was repeatedly endorsed in the *Sun*, for instance.[25] But they were determined to get their way, and now attempted to institute the agreement unilaterally. This high-handed action set in motion the chain of events that culminated in the “riot” of March 9.

The laboring population blamed the Progressive Union, and particularly its leadership, for the failure of the People's Committee to win them a favorable agreement. This led to a vigorous attempt by Sheppard to set the record straight, in letters published in the *Sun,*[26] in which he argued that the APU could not be blamed for the failure of the committee, since it was entirely separate from the APU, and since the two APU members served as individuals, not as representatives of the organization. Further, he argued that the People's Committee had not *intended* to represent the workers. This defense cannot have done much to mollify his constituents, who knew that he and his fellow APU members had neither resigned from the committee nor filed any protest about the agreement that was reached; and who could be forgiven for believing that the APU members on the committee—who were, after all, its president and secretary—would represent them. Indeed, this was hardly a spirited defense of the workers, and Sheppard's intent seems primarily to have been to defend his name. This was apparently not atypical of the APU's leadership: when the Rev. Dr. McGuire was appointed to a post in St. Kitts and met vociferous opposition for having been one of the “causes” of the riots, he defended himself by denying vehemently that he was either a “social [or] a labour firebrand.”[27]

THE PEOPLE GET VEX

The day after the planters announced the new terms—their terms—the cutters on some estates refused to cut any cane under the new rules, while others refused to work the customary number of hours in a workday. Some planters immediately invoked the Contract Act, hoping to punish the laborers until they fell into line, while the Antigua Sugar Factory attempted to force the small farmers to come to terms by refusing to accept their cane.

The situation quickly became hostile: as Sammy Smith put it, the people were getting vex.

Then, on February 26, a hearing for the first of the Contract Act cases was held in Parham magistrate's court, and the magistrate ruled that payment by the ton was the fair method. A huge crowd had gathered, and an unpopular planter and his son were stoned (but not injured) as they left the court.

The next day, what Colonel Bell, the Inspector of Police, described as “bands of young men” stopped people from cutting cane on at least four estates (Morris Looby, Donovans, Millars, and Cassada Garden). The police issued summonses against a number of “offenders.” The situation can hardly have been helped by an intemperate letter in the *Sun* proposing that, under martial law, the laborers should be made to serve King and country by being *forced* to work.[28]

The planters were becoming increasingly alarmed, and on February 27 they sent a delegation to Best, to protest the situation and to ask him to enforce the Contract Act. Best decided instead to create an “impartial” commission to look into the situation. He appointed the Chief Justice, F.M. Maxwell; the Dean; and Thomas Fisher, the governor of the prison. In the context of the times, this was a fairly liberal threesome—the Dean, it will be remembered, was the mentor of the Ulotrichians, Maxwell was a distinguished nonwhite jurist originally from British Honduras, and Fisher, while a jailer, was active in civic affairs and never considered by the plantocracy to be quite of their class. None was a planter. The commission's composition and mandate were not announced, however, until March 4.

On March 1, a Friday, the attorney for the Maginley estates was stoned while on the way to town, as was the overseer of another estate. Both fired their revolvers even though neither was hurt: in fact, the first was so unaccustomed to guns that he nearly shot himself, which perhaps gives some indication of the planters' state of mind. A police car was sent to patrol the main road to the estates, and more people were arrested.

On the following Tuesday—it was now March 5—the cases against those who “intimidated” the canecutters were to be heard, again in Parham. A crowd of more than four hundred people gathered, carrying an assortment of homemade weapons and making a noisy commotion. Colonel Bell, according to his own account, attempted to convince them that they should disperse and await the results of the government commission, but some in the crowd had copies of a leaflet that they believed outlined the true agreement. They were convinced that the planters had abrogated this agreement and substituted one of their own, and they were outraged. The leaflet specified higher rates, uniform across the island; stated that the cane was to be cut by the line, or, if by the ton, was to be weighed on the estate on which it was cut (never at the factory); specified different rates for plant and ratoon cane; and outlined a sliding scale that *increased* for cane cut above the minimum on dense fields. It also included a provision for equal pay for women. Although its source is not specified in the official reports, the proposal embodied everything (and more) that the estate laborers wanted. Furthermore, it was extremely detailed, and appears to have been a carefully worked out agreement, or draft of an agreement.

To Bell, however, it was a forgery, and he and the magistrate attempted to convince the crowd that it was a false document, a propaganda piece manufactured by troublemakers (although who they were and what their purpose might be was not specified). The crowd was not satisfied. At this point a planter—in fact, the same

unpopular planter who had been stoned the previous Friday—emerged from the courthouse, and the crowd again began to throw stones at him. This was enough for Bell, who felt that the situation was fast getting out of hand. He quickly called for a detachment of the Defense Force that was stationed in St. John's, and when it arrived (it came by car, while the police were mounted on horses) it escorted the planter home; two armed police constables were left to guard his house. This particular planter's presence was in fact a direct provocation: even Bell felt that his presence was extremely unwise, since he had no business in the court and had come only to show that he was not afraid.

There were fires that night at Ottos estate, and in the early morning hours at Gambles. The next morning, when the canecutters at Ottos refused to cut the damaged canes, the owner sent in cutters from another of his estates, under police protection. According to Bell, an attempt was made to “interfere” with these cutters, and still more summonses were issued. Nevertheless, the situation was calm enough for Bell to write a long report (which Best forwarded on to the Colonial Office) that concluded with his firm belief that order had been restored.[29]

By the next day, however, it was clear that this evaluation was premature. There was another cane fire that evening, and it burned perilously close to Government House. Bell clearly feared that an insurrection was in the offing, and called out the entire Defense Force. Two more fires then sprang up on the same estate. When the manager and some of the laborers tried to put them out, a “disorderly mob” tried to stop them. The manager immediately identified four men as leaders of the crowd—how he knew them is not clear—and Bell was determined to act forcefully by arresting and jailing them.

THE RIOT

It is important to note that the stage on which all this activity was taking place now moved from the countryside to the town because it indicates the extent to which frustration with the economic situation was not confined to the rural estate workers but was widespread. And with this move came a new set of actors. The crowds were now young and urban. In fact, the four men Bell was determined to arrest—Joseph Collins, George Weston, John Furlonge, and “Sonny” Price—not only lived in the city, but lived in the Point, the center of the urban proletariat and an area long considered a law unto itself.

March 9 was a Saturday, and market day. St. John's was crowded and noisy. Bell and the magistrate went to the Point to arrest the four men.

The Point had always been an area that looked after its own, and the people were determined not to let the men be arrested. Bell realized that feelings were running high and retreated. He ordered all the rum shops closed, an action bound to provoke a hostile reaction on market day. He then went up to Government House to attend an extraordinary meeting of the Executive Council. There he argued that the

arrests had to be carried out. The Council agreed that he should take whatever action necessary.

The planters fled town for their estates, while Bell returned to the Point. He arrested Weston, Price, and Collins; Furlonge escaped, only to be killed—coincidentally or not—later in the afternoon.

By this point a huge crowd had gathered, filling St. John's Street from well down in the Point up to Popeshead Street, along Popeshead and across Newgate Street to the Police Station. Although there is no indication that the crowd was armed with more than stones picked up from the road, Bell considered that a riot was in progress and ordered the magistrate to read the Riot Act. He then ordered the militia, which had approached Popeshead Street, to make one bayonet charge, and then another, in an attempt to disperse the crowd. When this failed, he ordered the mounted infantry to fire. They got off eighteen rounds, and the crowd finally scattered; many of those hit were reportedly shot in the back. Fifteen people were injured, and two subsequently died.[30] At least 38 people were arrested; almost half were women, who were also prominent among the stone throwers—close to three tons of stones were collected in the clean-up the next day. Few of the rioters were canecutters, which again points to the extent to which this had become an urban action.

A curfew remained in effect for about a week, and liquor sales were prohibited.[31] Throughout that evening and the next day—Sunday—there were incidents of vandalism and threats to burn down the town; one shop was looted. Best had called for reinforcements, and a Canadian artillery officer and twenty-six men arrived from St. Lucia to relieve the Defense Force, along with a British patrol boat (with an Admiral aboard), two French men of war, two mosquito fleet boats, and the subinspector of police and five of his men from Montserrat. By the time this huge force arrived, however, the town was quiet.

On Monday, March 11, Weston and Collins were tried at court martial; Weston was given seven years hard labor, but reportedly escaped.[32] An inquest was held into the deaths, and it agreed that the government had acted correctly. This was hardly surprising, particularly since the jurors came from among the families at the heart of the nonwhite middle class: Roland Henry, Richard Colbourne, Joseph Armstrong, William Hart, and Hugh Kelsick. On April 4, the twenty-three men and women charged with rioting were tried, and all but seven found guilty; sentences ranged from two to three years hard labor—punishment so harsh that one Colonial Office official was moved to write that the “whole thing savours of vindictiveness”; another, however, felt that if the sentences were harsh, then they must have been deserved.[33] (Twelve more remained to be tried, but the result is not included in the correspondence.)

The three-man commission of Maxwell, Fisher, and the Dean had reported on March 9, the day of the riot, but its findings were not made public until Monday. Although the commission agreed with the planters that payment by the ton was

preferable, “in the circumstances” it recommended payment by the line. The rates it proposed were almost exactly those in the Parham leaflet (which were, not surprisingly, far higher than those offered by the Planters' Association),[34] and reinstated the differential between plant and ratoon cane. It did not, however, recommend a sliding scale.

The factory reopened on March 12. There was one last-ditch effort by an estate manager to get his laborers to accept a lower rate, but the magistrate ruled against him, thus effectively codifying the agreement.[35] Henzell, however, continued to bombard both his company and the Colonial Office with intemperate letters about the new rates. He felt that he was the only clear-sighted planter on the island, and argued that the government's weak and foolish capitulation would cause nothing but trouble. The laborers were going to earn “entirely out of proportion to the amount of work done” and, as he put it, “All the licks we got with stones has gone for nothing.” He was particularly upset that the final agreement, as published in the *Gazette,* included the phrase “if the laborer is willing,” which he believed effectively took away all authority from the planter.[36]

THE PLANTERS' VIEW OF THE RIOT

As a whole, however, the planters were very proud of how they had stood up to what they believed had been an enormous threat to their way of life. They heaped praise on the Inspector of Police, Bell, on the magistrate, and the defense and police forces, both in their dispatches to the Colonial Office and in public ceremonies in Antigua. Bell was awarded a piece of silver plate—paid for by subscription—for his services and good judgment.[37]

The planter/government line on the entire affair was quickly established: the riot, it was decided, had in fact had very little to do with labor conditions but had been instigated by “lawless and idle persons” in the city—the main evidence being that those who were arrested were city people.[38] This was clearly a planter attempt to deny the harsh conditions faced by the laboring population. In addition, the planters argued that the “riot” would not have happened had there not been “outside agitators” motivated by racial animosities. In other words, they refused to believe, at least publicly, that “their” labor force would rise up against them on its own. It is difficult to determine, given the sources, the extent to which racialism actually played a role, but there seems to have been a fairly general consensus that by the end the situation had acquired a decided racial aspect. As Sir Frederick Maxwell put it, “What began as a labour question developed into a race question”; and Sammy Smith reported that what had been a dispute between Point people and the police became, once the militia was called out, a battle between “nega and white.”[39] The one voice of reason was that of Sir Frederick Maxwell, who had been charged with investigating the riots and who wrote a very thorough and sympathetic report that concluded, among other things, that the real agitator did not come from among the laborers but

was the person who suggested that the *planters* get together.[40]

Over the next few months, the planters gradually convinced themselves that perhaps they had given in too easily and began another assault on the "idleness" of the working masses. There were renewed calls for enforced work—"Every eater should be a worker," the *Sun* editorialized on April 27. The newspaper also reported favorably—and more than once—on a Trinidad law that in effect allowed "habitual idlers" to be jailed,[41] and frequent editorials bemoaned the fact that some people would rather beg and steal than work. The economy was not improving and the fault was the laborers: they had to be "taught habits of thrift and industry"; they were "suicidal" in their inability to use opportunities to earn more; each of them had to be "taught to feel his responsibility as a man."[42] This hysteria continued for several years, and culminated in an amendment to the Vagrancy Act to allow the imprisonment of habitual idlers, with the persons so charged having the responsibility of proving they had a trade or calling.[43] The governor told the Legislative Council that idlers "should be made to work and so contribute their share to the upkeep of the state."[44]

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RIOTS IN THE LONG TERM

Although it might appear from this that the laboring population achieved little as a result of the tumultuous events of 1918, and although this belief is apparently part of the popular conception of the riots—Sammy Smith reports that for the next few years things were very quiet, the planters feeling assured that the laborers had learned their lesson (he also believes that they failed to win any wage increase)—this was in fact far from the case. For despite the fact that some things did not change—the Contract Act remained in effect until 1937, for instance—the key point is that the balance of power between labor and management imperceptibly shifted toward labor. It was for good reason that "them planters got real shook up," as Sammy Smith put it. And the more astute planters recognized this: it is part of the reason that Henzell, more of a businessman than most of the other planters, protested the agreement so vehemently. He knew that it was a major victory for the laborers, not only because they would earn more but, even more important, because for the first time since emancipation organized collective action had achieved better wages and conditions than had been possible in the traditional method of negotiating agreements between workers and management on an estate-by-estate basis, where management always had the upper hand. The road to trade unionism had been embarked upon.

The events of these years also taught the laboring population another lesson, although one that they would have to learn again and again, and this was that their middle class leaders were willing to settle for less in order to avoid confrontation. In the future, leaders would have to come from among their own ranks: leaders from other classes could not be counted on.

NOTES

1. CO 152/342/Conf., 14 August 1914. The Colonial Office series CO 152/... is held at the Public Record Office at Kew Gardens in England, and contains all the material sent directly to and from the Leeward Islands, including dispatches, enclosures, and minutes. These are the dispatches that are cited in what follows.
2. CO 152/345, Secret, 27 January 1915 and ibid.
3. *Sun*, 25 June 1917, 26 June 1917. A fairly large but incomplete collection of newspapers, including the *Sun*, which had been placed in a considerable state of disarray in the courthouse on High Street in St. John's after the earthquake in 1974, was salvaged and sorted by myself and several students in 1980. It should by now have become available for general use in the archive.
4. For example, *Sun*, 21 February 1917.
5. The governor, Sir Edward Merewether, had been governor of Sierra Leone and was appointed governor of the Leeward Islands in 1916. However, he was captured by the Germans en route to Antigua and did not arrive until 1919.
6. CO 152/358/10, 9 January 1918.
7. Keithlyn B. Smith and Fernando C. Smith, *To Shoot Hard Labour: The Life and Times of Samuel Smith, an Antiguan Workingman, 1877-1982* (Scarborough, Ontario: Edan's Publishers, 1986), p. 124.
8. *Sun*, 14 June 1917
9. For example, *Sun,* 26 May 1917,
10. For example, *Sun*, 15 June 1918.
11. Smith and Smith, *To Shoot Hard Labour,* p. 124.
12. *Sun*, 30 June 1914, 28 September 1917.
13. CO 152/354/Conf., 10 June 1917.
14. CO 152/356/Conf., 24 August 1917.
15. CO 152/359/Conf., 15 May 1918.
16. Paget Henry, *Peripheral Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Antigua* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1985), p. 82; CO 152/358/113, 28 March 1918.
17. CO 152/359/Conf., 15 May 1918.
18. CO 152/358/113, 28 March 1918; *Sun,* 28 February 1917.
19. CO 358/Tel., 12 March 1918.
20. Caroline Carmody, “First Among Equals: Antiguan Patterns of Local-Level Leadership,” Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1978, p. 161.
21. *Sun,* 13 June, 25 June 1917.
22. On all of this, see Carmody, “First Among Equals,” p. 161.
23. *Outlet,*, 13 March 1987, quoting a letter from George Moody-Stuart, who was in charge of the Henckell-DuBuisson estates, to the Colonial Office. George Moody-Stuart was the first of the family to come to Antigua. His son Alexander arrived in the mid-1920s and married L.I. Henzell's daughter Judith. Alexander and

Judith's son, also named George, continued the family's interests in Antigua into the 1950s.

24. CO 152/358/113, 28 March 1918.
25. *Sun,* 6 February, 8 February, 9 February, 16 February 1918.
26. *Sun*, 1 March, 7 March 1918.
27. *Sun,* 23 April 1918. This is the same Rev. George Andrew McGuire who became UNIA chaplain-general in 1920.
28. *Sun,* 27 February 1918.
29. CO 152/358/113, 28 March 1918; enc. of 7 March.
30. Best's report of March 12 gives the figure as three, but this seems to have been premature; see also *Sun,* 12 March 1918, and Bell's report, which states that there were 16 “casualties.”
31. *Sun*, 13 March 1918.
32. Smith and Smith, *To Shoot Hard Labour,* p. 133.
33. CO 152/359/Conf., 15 May 1918.
34. *Sun,* 13 March 1918,
35. CO 152/358/114, 28 March 1918.
36. CO 152/358/Tel., 12 March 1918, Enc.
37. *Sun*, 20 March 1918.
38. *Sun*, 10 April 1918
39. CO 152/360/295, 25 September 1918; Smith and Smith, *To Shoot Hard Labour,* p. 131. It seems quite possible that the Ulotrichians, and possibly unaffiliated people with Garveyite sympathies, played a major role in the dispute, but the material available allows no conclusions one way or the other. In any case, the Ulotrichians were certainly concerned about the status of black people as such, and were clearly affected by Garveyism, which was spreading rapidly throughout the Caribbean in these years (although there does not seem have been a UNIA branch in Antigua). For instance, in June 1917, well before the riots, the Ulotrichians sponsored a public lecture at the Methodist church on the life and work of that “great pioneer of the race,” Booker T. Washington. The speaker, according to the *Sun,* emphasized that “we are not to look for *greatness* in being *white,* nor to *live* to *wipe* the feet of the white man, nor to think there is any *disgrace* in *not being* white.” (*Sun,* 30 June 1917; it is not clear if the emphasis is the speaker's or the writer's.)
40. CO 152/360/295, 25 September 1918.
41. *Sun*, 10 May 1918,
42. *Sun*, 6 May, 7 September, 12 September, 14 August 1918.
43. *Sun*, 2 April 1922.
44. *Sun*, 1 April 1922.

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