

# 1 The Estate

**A**T THE CENTER of the Village was the Estate. It was a vast estate, gigantic even in perimeter and it was owned and controlled by one man, whom the masses of the people just called “the owner.” Most of the residents of the Village and the surrounding areas worked on the Estate. They had no other means of sustenance. Their bread, butter, and livelihood came from the property. On this Estate, there was no security, unions, compensation for injuries, insurance, or pensions. The people received a daily wage and received a paycheck every fortnight.

They were also compelled to purchase goods from the owner’s store. Sometimes when the paycheck came or arrived, the people ended their bi-monthly physical tasks with little or no cash, because the goods taken were always on credit. The goods were also more expensive on the owner’s plantation than in a regular store. It was exploitation and oppression at the same time. The people wanted a better life, but this was their life. It was not an economic life worth living, but they accepted it.

In the Village, 90% of the population did not have an alternative because the Estate employed them, and they also lived on the land belonging to the owner. It was a form of feudalism. If they arrived late for work, or if they did not complete the daily task as expected, their daily wages were docked. The workers’ perspectives were in accord with rules, norms, and standards of international good conduct. They aspired and struggled for equality, principles,

and moral phenomena. On the other hand, they had to deal and be content with an owner who did not believe in standards, principles, and morality.

Added to these forms of oppression was sexual exploitation, which was prevalent. It became the norm for the overseers, watchmen, or any others with authority to have sexual intercourse with any female because refusal meant severe repercussions for the female worker. Here is how it worked: the overseers measured the daily task with a measuring rod of approximately 10 feet in length. A worker received 10 by 12 rods in a rectangle style for the daily task. Workers' paychecks were deducted if the tasks were not satisfactory to the overseers or the watchman.

It is reported in the oral history of the Village that if an overseer demanded sexual intercourse with any female, and she refused even with a satisfactory explanation, he increased the measuring rod counts from 10 to as much as 20 by 22 or more. Consequently, she would be given the worst tasks, like the rocky or swampy parts or the parts with the hardest bushes to clear. Therefore, women on the Estate gave in to sexual exploitation without hesitation, even though they were never happy with the situation. These conditions of increasing the daily tasks also happened in other areas of the Estate, like where the nutmegs, cocoa, bananas, or other products were grown and harvested. It was a fantastic idea to become an overseer, and there was no intellectual or academic qualification for the job.

The primary qualification for the overseer position was to be a strongman with a very hostile and aggressive behavioral attitude. He had to be cruel, brutish, unfriendly, selfish, and nasty. The owner prevented him from being friendly and kind to the folks in the community. He was the only man who worked on the plantation with great authority. He was more authoritarian and tyrannical with workers than any other man on the Estate. The watchman also had power and was the only one who carried a gun, a 303 rifle. He was also required and expected to be brutish, barbaric, and hostile, but the overseer was indeed more powerful.

However, because of the environment, aura, and mood in the

Village, both the watchman and the overseers had to be somewhat friendly, considering the complaisance of the masses and the Village's atmosphere, which was initiated, formulated, and instituted by the founders of the territory who the youths also called the ancestors. They designed, established, and started a village with such a friendly atmosphere that negative behaviors could not survive and thrive. Negative attitudes and behaviors were always ephemeral, short-lived, and temporary. It was a village of sensibility for all who discovered the neighborhood and experienced its aura and ambiance. According to the Village's oral history, the fore-parents of the masses wanted love, togetherness, peace, and happiness for all who encountered and lived in the Village. With these goals and objectives, they devised and built an amiable, friendly, and sympathetic community. It was a sociable and auspicious society, without any whit of selfishness from the people in the Village, and that was their environment.

Therefore, because the overseers and the watchman were operating in such an environment and surroundings, they were compelled to have some modicum of compassion and friendliness to operate inside this sui generis village. They could not operate in a milieu and neighborhood that were in opposition to the people's desire, aspiration, belief, and direction, even though hostility and unfriendliness were expected by the owner because the owner dictated what their jobs entailed and the behaviors they had to impersonate: cruelty, savagery, and viciousness. Their behaviors had to change because of the people's politeness and their humanistic characteristics. The humane power of the people was more potent than barbarity and inhumanity, the Elders declared. The populace claimed their worldview needed to reflect solidarity, goodwill, collectivism, generosity, and harmony with human life and mother earth. The masses made it clear that whenever they experienced adversity, hostility, and habitual oppression, these phenomena added something to their knowledge, wisdom, and judgment for maturity.

The work on the Estate was back-breaking, tedious, complicated, and challenging. It was no simple task. The day started at

7:30 a.m. and ended at 4:30 or even 5:30 p.m.; it was constant work. Yet, the public had no choice but to work on the plantation, which was a monopoly. When a monopoly operates in an area, it controls whatever it wants; unfortunately, this was the negative side of the Village. The condition on the Estate created a situation the people did not bargain for during their working tenure for the owner. It was a state that the people were never happy in, but it was the rule, and the workers accepted the condition.

However, they were never happy with the situation and their status on the plantation. The masses understood they were in a quandary, even though they complied and accepted their situation, but acceptance was not agreement; it was just acceptance. Workers not only came from the Village to work on the Estate, but some came from far away in the surrounding areas and other villages. The working population came from as far as five to eight miles away to work on the land that occupied the northern part of the Estate, which was just a branch of the entire demesne. The eastern, southern, and western branches existed as far as 10 to 20 miles beyond the Village, which was still owned and operated by the same owner.

From all indications, the plantation originated from slavery, but the record was sketchy because records concerning ownership of land in the Caribbean were almost nonexistent at that time. In addition, the people were neither scholarly nor writing folks. Furthermore, there were no economic and historical records available. The history was oral, and oral history can be lost, altered, or omitted over time. It was challenging to research the history of any plantation without documents, records, or any written account of events.

The Estate was central and the sole entity to all employment and all other economic activities for the working class in the entire village. It was also the place where inequality, corruption, wrongdoing, injustice, nepotism, and exploitation were inherent in the structure and nature of the organized land and the bureaucracy. The masses were aware of their physical environment and understood that this environment was part of the Village's core structure and design. A minuscule but affluent group separated from the working

class was called Victorian conservatives by the masses. They owned and controlled a vast portion of the land. Apart from the Victorian conservatives, approximately 8 to 10 independent workers in the community inherited/purchased or rented small plots of about 1 to 5 acres adjacent to the Village. These lands and the large Estate were the two entities that drove the physical environment and made up the Village's economic structure. However, without the people, the physical structure had no monetary value and could not exist. It flourished but would have inevitably collapsed.

For it was the people the owner of the Estate depended upon, and they were the driving force behind what happened on the Estate, the Village, or the surroundings. The entire area's economic backbone depended upon the public, who worked and spent their time and money on goods and services. The Estate's owner did not care about how the masses suffered and were being exploited; he continued to exploit and oppress while accumulating enormous wealth from their suffering and exploitation. The accumulation of wealth was his central concern, unlike the people, who never understood his attitude, mentality, and erratic behavior, and he never understood the people's perspective and demeanor.

The owner and the masses of the people were like two parallel lines that never met and would never meet. They thought differently, acted differently, and had disparate goals and intentions. The owner hated the people, but the people never hated him; they just never understood their relationship and level of exploitation. It was the magnitude of the exploitation that made the people question the owner's motive and objectives. The proletariat, as they were sometimes called, worked for starvation wages on the Estate and survived only because they had the Commons.

The Commons were where everyone who worked on the plantation, and even those who retired or never worked on the Estate, had a parcel of land or what was often called a "garden." The owner charged rent for these gardens, even though the people worked on the Estate and served assiduously. In the Commons, the people grew vegetables, fruit, and ground crops. They grew items

like peas, corn, yams, potatoes, plums, cassava, taro, dasheen, pumpkins, and other items. It was verboten and impermissible to grow commercial products like bananas, cocoa, nutmeg, coffee, and other spices like cinnamon. These products were prosecutable and treated as contraband.

The Elders recalled episodes during slavery when slaves were forbidden to be butchers, and acts were passed that forbade slaves to sell sugar, cotton, cocoa, coffee, and even ginger. They reminisced on what they knew and heard, and some wailed and sobbed softly and noiselessly. They were crestfallen and saddened about the history of their fore-parents but were ecstatic and delighted or maybe contented about the Commons. Had it not been for these edibles from the Commons, the people would not have survived because their earnings were inadequate. Their meager – or as the youths called it, paltry – earnings were substandard for any working-class group in any geographical area.

They harvested, planted, and reaped these items as their primary source of survival. The puny wages were ridiculous and insufficient for any standard of living and survival. It was the Commons that augmented their wages. From the Commons, the people reaped their peas from which multiple dishes were made like pea soup, rice and peas, stew peas, peas as a side dish. From the garden, other items like pumpkin, corn, and cassava followed the same procedures, as the same things could be done with those vegetables. They collected or purchased coconut from the few vendors who sold the merchandise and made coconut oil for family consumption. The product was sold at 5 cents per item, and in extreme circumstances when merchants have an abundance, citizens received two for the same price, but even 5 cents were a hefty price for a coconut. Therefore, even though the wages were insufficient, the Commons were important and served not only as substitutes but as the main source of sustenance for the people. It was the Commons that gave sustenance to the survival of the people in the Village, not their wages.

The owner's only objective and allegiances were for the accumulation of capital and not for the people's welfare. He lived apart from

the people. He never cherished them, helped them, or cared about their welfare, because to him, they were dangerous and disliked; perhaps not as dangerous as slaves who joined rebellions during slavery, but close. He never even knew their names; as for their work, he paid them \$1.20 to \$1.40 a day for 8 to 10 hours a day. There was no relationship between the owner and the people. Some hated him, for he made them cry wrathfully, understanding that they could not do better, and some cried unconsciously, as they were not aware that their cries were related to their socio-economic conditions because of their disconsolate state of mind. There were reported instances when children observed and watched their parents cry as the parents complained about their socio-economic condition and the abuses on the Estate.

They lived a life not knowing they were crying inside, but deep inside, they sobbed, wept, and wailed. Some cried out so loud that one could identify their tears even though sometimes the tears did not flow down their cheeks. They were considered poor workers and peons. Even though no one called them peons, they were peons just as in the Southern United States, where peonage became rampant; it was a sad truth, but it was the reality in the physical environment of the region. The Elders comforted the masses by explaining that even though they were physically mistreated and handicapped, they should always be kind to one another and be extroverts rather than introverts, and history would show their greatness and not individual selfishness, self-centeredness, and egoistic mentality. The Elders asserted that history always judged the deeds of mankind. When this happened and history is evaluated, examined, and judged, it is permanent, and the record cannot be adjusted, modified, or redressed. With history, no matter how much one's perception differed from the general rule, essence, theory, or doctrine, if history judged it to be wrong, it was wrong and could not be rectified. Thus, those on the right side would receive their merit by historical records and documents.

In the 1970s, prices of products from the Estate increased fivefold, and the great owner became richer from the sale of those

agricultural products. But he became more oppressive and careless of workers. It was like an inverse in mathematics; the richer he became, the less he cared. He did not care whether they lived or died, whether they ate, starved, or became homeless. Even though no one was homeless because this phenomenon did not exist in the Village, if it had happened, it would have become a social phenomenon, a social disease, and a disaster in such a small population.

The owner worshipped and adored the almighty dollar and his wealth. His soul was enmeshed with the products from the plantation. He saw and believed in one thing: how much value was produced daily and the quantity of profit from his enterprise. The people cultivated, harvested, and carried the produce to the great house. At this house, referred to as a “*bookan*”, the daily produce was measured, and if it fell short of the expected standard measurement, the overseer or the watchman reduced the workers’ daily wages according to their calculation without consultation or a conference with the employee or peasant, as the youths defined the employees on the Estate.

The workers went to the “*bookan*” in fear, except for the individuals with surpluses, but surpluses were not always easy to find. It was difficult enough reaching the daily measurement; imagine trying to achieve surpluses. The fear started as they approached the big house. Furthermore, if the overseer or the watchman had a vindictive personal issue with a worker, the overseer simply calculated that the daily measurement was not met and reduced the individual’s daily wage without an explanation to that individual or any other workers.

This was the state of the Estate. The employees had no voice or rights. They could not ask for a hearing or some form of grievance if any member felt unjustly treated or discriminated against. The workers were simply at the mercy of the owner, the overseer, and the watchman. These three had absolute and infinite power over the laborers on the plantation. What existed on the Estate were unwritten policies, which seemed to state that the workers owe to the bosses’ absolute obedience without protest and dissatisfaction. The bosses



owe the workers nothing, including an explanation for grievance or a simple explanation to a question.

The youths who attended secondary schools and studied the three major political revolutions in the eighteenth century, which were the American, French, and Haitian, insinuated that the French declared in their declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens that there were certain inflexible and unmodifiable rights of man, which were liberty, property, security, and the resistance of oppression. The youths expounded that man has a natural and unalienable right to resist oppression that is perpetrated on him. Thus, they asserted the people should resist their oppressors.

The Estate was a place of hard, back-breaking work, where bosses had unquestioned power, and workers were subjected to brutal treatment. The workers could not protest unequal treatment against themselves; otherwise, they were fired. As the plantation was the sole agent of employment, workers did not risk emotional and physical torture. It also followed that if a worker lost his/her means of survival, that worker also lost his/her Common, or rented garden because the gardens were the owner's property.

Most workers automatically paid union dues, but the union never represented the workers, for there was never a dispute that union representatives ever went to the Estate to resolve, solve, or negotiate, or even met with workers at a union office to comprehend their pains and suffering. The representatives of the union and the owner worked in lock-step with one another. Therefore, the people were exploited and oppressed from both sides. The bargaining power, leeway, or protections for workers was constantly declining, and freedom and advantages for workers never existed on the Estate. Workers were dissatisfied, exasperated, and embittered with the owner of the property.

The owner occasionally visited the Estate, and if he encountered workers, he never spoke to them or had a discussion with any worker. To him, the workers were just laborers whose only benefit was their labor. They were suited for nothing but back-breaking labor. A discussion with workers or a good hello was not something he was

prepared to participate in with workers because he had a monopoly in the area, and laborers were forced to work on the Estate, as there were no other means of employment in the geographic location.

This separation of class and hierarchy was evident when the owner entered the Estate. His form of dress alone allowed even a stranger or anyone else visiting even for a few minutes to realize that he was superior to the workers. He distinguished himself so that the obvious was noticeable. The workers postulated that their experiences with the owner were ungratefulness, perpetual depression, discouragement, and jadedness. They were sick and tired of his behavior and attitude toward all workers.

This is one main characteristic of capitalism – that workers should only labor because owners and others gave orders and collected the fruits of the labor. The workers received no benefits from their labor but wages. And the meager wages were always insufficient for the workers' survival. There were seldom times that the workers received an increase in their wages, and the increase ranged from 10 to 30 cents depending on gender, favoritism, and nepotism. Males always received higher wages than females, and some females received a higher increase than others. This was most likely favoritism, which the owner alone could determine or explain. What was obvious in the history of the Estate was that employees should remain oppressed and thus in perpetual opposition against their oppressor.

For most, it was a system of oppression, where workers had no rights even with their own physical bodies. The owner alone determined who worked, got fired, got pay cuts, or even received half-day work. There were some occasions when the overseer or the watchman determined which worker should receive half a day's wages even though the individual worked from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00, 3:00, or 4:00 p.m. The worker received half a day's wage, and this decision by the watchman was final without explanation to the worker or a hearing with the employee or union representatives. The masses of the people declared in their oral history that before the 1960s, the peasants worked with massantoes (torches) until 9:00

to 10:00 p.m., especially during the cocoa harvesting season, for 6 pence daily. The Elders lamented that this treatment was a combination of exploitation, brutality, cruelty, injustice, persecution, and tyranny.

It was understood by all that workers' rights never existed, and they never had rights under any circumstances. Collective bargaining laws did not exist, and grievances were absent from the Estate. It was a private plantation even though statutory laws governed every institution that operated. Private ownership overshadowed laws and regulations wherever they existed; therefore, it was the owner who completely governed the plantation. He ruled as he wished and was in total control of every aspect of the Estate's activities. His decisions were sometimes based on moods, feelings, and one-sided reports from the overseer or the watchman. Sometimes it was the watchman or overseer's vindictiveness that caused workers a cut in wages.

The Estate was not an oligarchy, governed by family members. Instead, it was run like a monopoly with all powers vested in a single personality with no board of directors. As already indicated, workers had no job and financial security, no insurance benefits like medical, retirement plans, workers' compensations or disability insurance, unemployment wages, and assistance for single mothers with dependent children. The workers never discussed such topics, and these issues remained passive and dormant for the "*proletariat*," as some classified themselves; part of the reason for this was ignorance mixed with job insecurity. For if such issues were discussed, employees could have easily lost their jobs.

Wherever a monopoly exists, workers' rights do not exist or are diminished tremendously. This was the universal concept that governed the Estate, located in the center of the Village. The Estate was estimated to be approximately 200 acres of land. On the land, every fruit, vegetable, ground provisions, and commercial product grew, including nutmegs, mace from the nutmegs, cocoa, and bananas. The bananas were produced for an English-based company that had a monopoly in the entire Caribbean to buy bananas. It

usually took two days (Mondays and Tuesdays) for processing from the field to the trucks that arrived to carry the bananas, which eventually were taken to the city or the main port to be collected by the company's cargo vessels. On the Great Estate, it took a barrage of workers carrying bananas on their heads in the rain, sunshine, heavy winds, stormy conditions, swamps, and temperatures above 90 degrees. The weather conditions were never to be considered. The only criterion was that the bananas were produced and carried to the pick-up truck's location.

This process of getting the bananas from the field, which were from a valley, plain, hill, rocky, and even areas that slide into valleys where rivers ran deep, took tremendous concentration carrying the bananas because if one slipped, he or she most times did not recover easily. Some workers fell and were permanently injured; some were hospitalized and were fired after the fall and were not compensated for their injuries. With permanent injuries and without workers' compensation, insurance, medical, or even some social-service assistance, a permanent injury was the end of a laborer's working life.

This did not happen only within the banana industry but also within the other areas of the commercialized produce, such as cocoa, nutmeg, or other provisions. There was a favorite proverb on the Estate: "Fall, be perpermanently injured, be killed, but whatever happens, hold on to the bananas, the basket of cocoa or nutmeg." If the cocoa, nutmeg, or bananas fell, that individual was reprimanded, fired, and sometimes never returned. The workers suffered from pain and sorrow under those deplorable conditions. At the same time, they were helpless because they did not have the power and the strength to retaliate against their oppressor. The employees received no restitution, remuneration, or indemnification for fatal or non-fatal accidents that happened on assignments on the Estate.

This was the situation in the Village, as the Estate was the only means of employment in the entire hamlet, as some youths called the Village. This hamlet and its surroundings, which stretched for some miles, had a population estimated to be approximately four

thousand or more. Some small-scale farmers were in the area, but they were individuals with 1 - 5 acres of land who could not afford to hire anyone, for all the small farmers were men, and if married, their wives depended on them for sustenance and survival. The bottom line was that the only means of employment in the Village was from the great landowner. He controlled every means of production and the survival of the people. The people were also subservient to him. He was the king and determined the salary of the workers, who were working from 8:00 a.m. to sometimes 4:00 p.m., depending on the urgency of the commercialized produce to be harvested from the field. This was during the period of the 1960s to 1980s. The owner was the boss and answered to no one.

There was no governmental interference on the Estate, and the people had no one to appeal to except the great landowner. He had the authority to punish anyone without an explanation. For example, he had the authority and power to work anyone long past his or her assigned time without extra compensation. The great landlord extended a regular day to 5:00 or even 6:00 p.m. without compensation or explanation. The power on the Estate resided in the hands of one individual. The secret on the Estate was that no one, old or young, even knew how the owner became so popular and powerful and influential. In addition to this Estate, he controlled almost a full quarter of the surrounding area. The youths referred to him as a tycoon because apart from his possession of the land, he also owned and controlled valuable, profitable, and worthy buildings and businesses in the primary, secondary, and tertiary cities.

The landlord did not live on or close to the Estate. He lived in an area on a small hill surrounded by equipment used to process commercialized products. His palace of residency was located on a hill known as Brunkshire Hill. Below was the main road used by private and commercialized vehicles, as well as pedestrians on their way to visit relatives or going shopping, and students hurrying back and forth from schools. Close to the main road flowed a river. The river was not small or large, except for when a powerful rainstorm flooded it; then it overflowed its banks into the main road. However,

the river had never climbed Brunkshire Hill to reach the great landlord's palace.

On three sides of his palace were hills that elevated vertically to his place of residence. The other side of the palace was a private road built by the landlord which had a snakelike appearance, and it ran across from the main road up to the palace. None of the workers had even visited or been to the palace. To the workers, it was a mysterious place, as secretive as could ever be. The employees speculated, imagined, and framed sophisticated pictures of the palace, but no worker even walked the private road, for that road was out-of-bounds for the people who produced the wealth for the the day-to-day running of the palace. The palace was approximately 10 miles from the large Estate where the masses worked and lived in poverty.

The great owner was blind to the level of starvation and poverty on the Estate. The people saw the palace every second Friday of each month. On that Friday evening, starting at approximately 3:00 p.m., the workers dressed casually, after work, and walked miles to be paid. On a regular pay date, no one made \$50.00 or above, except maybe the watchmen and the overseers. After walking ten miles, the poor workers usually received \$20.00 to \$30.00 every two weeks, and some workers received as little as \$12.00 fortnightly. Workers were paid by the day, not by the hour. The daily pay was typical \$1.20, and the salary never increased beyond \$2.40 daily. Workers had to stand in lines in the rain or sun and wait for their names to be called to receive the meager salary. The owner's policy, action, and economic strangulation strengthened the people's hatred, displeasure, and fury toward him and his administrations because the workers knew they lived and worked in poverty.

As already indicated, another cunning idea of the owner was selling food to the workers. Usually, the workers purchased the foodstuffs on credit, and the prices were deducted from their salaries before employees receiving their wages. These matters became more complicated in the Village and on the great Estate with the landlord. He organized the store, and he embedded the masses deeper into

poverty. The workers purchased on credit from the store during hard times. They frequently credited goods (flour, sugar, salt fish, salt meat, rice) and other groceries needed for their existence.

The store was located where the workers received their wages, just below Brunkshire Hill, where the owner lived with his wife and children. Whatever the workers requested was given to them on credit. Once available, the store operated only on a pay date because it was an interim store with limited resources. Once groceries were purchased, that amount was deducted from the workers' next paycheck. The goods sold at the owner's experimental and provisional store were already sold at a high price compared to the traditional stores and supermarkets, and they must be paid for by the next paycheck regardless of what circumstances or difficulties workers faced. It operated something like American Express where the goods purchased must be paid for by the next fortnight (two weeks). The workers referred to it as the "*Estate credit express*." It was another form of exploiting the workers on the plantation. Most of the agricultural workers encountered financial crises throughout their lives but had no one to complain to and nowhere to run. They could not leave the Estate for foreign lands, for everyone had children, young and old, and could not make enough money to feed their families and save for trips to a foreign country.

In addition, they could not strike, complain, protest, or appeal to the government. The government was incapable of employing masses of people, and no governmental agency was set up to hear workers' complaints. Even government workers sometimes did not receive their salary on the scheduled pay date and were also oppressed and abused by their own government. The government was small, corrupt, made up primarily of family and friends who were employed or scheduled to be employed. Immoral activities had to be performed, especially by women who were compelled to comply with these immoral behaviors to receive employment in the country.

The employees on the Estate who lived in the Village faced all kinds of complications. They were handicapped not only by their

circumstances and historical conditions but by the environmental, political, social, and economic conditions that influenced their daily activities. As already mentioned, the government was incapable of helping, and the owner's henchmen confronted unions that tried to organize the masses of people with violence, threats, blackmail, intimidation, and commination. Anyone who dared join a union was immediately dismissed and could also lose their Commons and the plot on which the worker's house was located. The workers experienced hopelessness, a future that did not exist, and their dreams smashed.

Most employees' children could not break the cycle until early into the 1970s, when some parents made a drastic move through great sacrifice to start sending at least one member of the family, mostly the child with the most potential, to achieve a secondary education. Previously on the Estate, children went to primary school, usually grades one to seven. When a child was born on the Estate, before the 1970s, that child went to elementary school, which was the end of the child's formal education. When an adolescent or young adult left school, whether he/she graduated or not, he/she went to work on the Estate. The authority was happy, delighted, ecstatic, sometimes even jolly, and proud to see the rise in the working population.

After the 1970s, with all the cruelty and exploitation by the Estate bosses, the people decided that the youths could not continue that downward, descending trend, and so they concluded that their children must enter a path to education. It was one of the most progressive moves made during that era in the Village. The masses of the people declared that if they did not start during that period, the children would continue into the dark trend because it was customary to follow precedent, as a village mother claimed. She also declared that the people must exclude all previous habits and customs and take into consideration what is inwardly experienced for advancement, including the children's future.

Therefore, the people met in the Village, which was normal, and they decided that the children must be educated; otherwise, they would face exploitation, injustice, ill-treatment, and sexual



exploitation of the girls by the overseers and the watchman. It was a decisive and unanimous decision by the women and men in the Village. One woman said, "Gentleman and ladies, if we do not act now, the owner and authority of the Estate will destroy our youths; can we continue that trend, direction, and trajectory? If not, we must act, and act immediately. Otherwise, we will be destroyed, eradicated, and abrogated because our future is in the youths of tomorrow. Let us move forward!" And the people said, "Bravo, we will move!"

After this meeting, the young children began finishing elementary school, and then most or all went to high school. Before that period, a primary school education was the end of all schooling for the youths of the Village, for not one of the people's children ever entered a university or received a university education. After the masses decided on that glorious and heroic day, it became special and prestigious for the children to attend secondary school. It was the first group of peoples' children who attended high school. The people came out in great numbers on the first day of class when the first batch of children stepped out from the Village into high schools.

The masses cheered, laughed, cried, and hugged each other. It was a milestone; it was a day of remembrance. One Elder claimed that "just like D-Day, on June 6, 1944, in which the allied forces invaded Northern France by means of landing in Normandy which stands for a special day, and what FDR called December 7, 1941, it is a day that will live in infamy in the Village." It was a day of celebration and remembrance for the Village, and it continues to be remembered in the Village history. One of the most militant Elders, Mr. Oscar, claimed, "Let us remember this day in the Village as a day of remembrance." Villagers were proud of their children and themselves for their contributions, and they expressed these feelings by the superb showing in the Village. The children were happy that they were not going to follow precedent or the footsteps of their parents.

During that epoch, all secondary schools on the island were controlled by some of the dominant churches. They were mainly Presbyterian, Anglican, Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, and

Holiness. Only one secondary school was run and controlled by the government during that era. The history of those islands, colonized by the British, can attest to the church's dominance in education. It started with the period of servitude of African people when the planters sent their children and other descendants to England for their edification and scholarship. Therefore, the building of educational facilities was ignored by governments, those in the leisure class, and philanthropists. As a result, the church filled the educational void because they built, ran, and controlled institutions of education in the colonies. Thus, when the people's children went out to be educated, they all went to institutes dominated by religious denominations. Hence, the people were elated and ecstatic that while their children received an education, they also acquired religious teaching and indoctrination.

One of the mothers, Cynthia, said to her son in public, "I do not want you to follow my line of work, so you are going to high school. If you fail, and you *cannot* fail, but if you fail, then the whole present family failed, and you shame your founding fathers, and your forefathers and foremothers, and you failed your younger brothers and sisters and the children to be born in this family for years to come. Therefore, the past, present, and future depend on you and your success." She was right because any success in education, whether past, present, or future generations, became a success for all members.

Everyone in the Village was proud of the achievement, including the watchman who cried, and all in the population were ecstatic and thrilled. Before this brave move by the people, if lucky, a child received an education up to 7th grade; thereafter, he or she worked on the Estate, became unemployed, or became an apprentice, which meant he or she learned a trade (mason, carpenter, tailor, seamstress, etc.). Besides working on the land, young women were expected to take care of their homes, boyfriends/husbands, and minors. In return, their partners were expected to financially support them and to sexually satisfy their needs. Women's self-esteem depended not

on their accomplishments or skills but on their mates' achievements or success in life.

Living on the Estate was a nightmare for the populace because they encountered obstacles, crises, and adversities unimaginable and inconceivable in this contemporary world. Regardless of the atrocities, barbarities, wickedness, fiendishness, and outrageous behaviors encountered on the Estate, the people lived lives of peace and happiness inside this small Village because they were a people who believed in oneness and togetherness in everything they did. It was somewhat of a unique society because somehow, they understood that no one existed without others. The community they had and constructed was more valuable than all the owner's wealth and all the wealth and money in the universe.

This interconnectedness was crucial for the survival of the people and the Village. Everyone understood this simple fact. For they knew that if they understood this and nothing else, they understood everything, and if they understood everything and did not understand this simple fact, they understood nothing. They lived lives of simplicity and integrity that remained deep in their consciousness and values. One form of consciousness in the Village was unity. They knew that everyone depended upon everyone for the continued survival of the Village and the people.

The people always claimed that when their founding fathers arrived in the Village, they worked and studied how to make peace to have happiness. They wondered, inquired, and explored how they could stay in a village where they could live a peaceful life. Historically, no one thought of the political and economic conditions in the state or the Village; all they wanted and thought about was peace and happiness. They thought of how they could work with one another and how they could be in a state of togetherness. They called it the Village, and in that village, the aim was to be happy, love, cherish, and care for one another because they had believed in a great society for all the people.

They never thought of individualism, selfishness, and greed. It was the Village and its populace that were the hub, the cynosure, and

the gist, but regardless of the ambiance, the Village had to survive so the people could work together because it was an amazing, glorious, magnificent, splendid, and lovely place to live and work. Happiness, the Elders asserted, depends on multiple factors, but basal and essential to all are self-love, compassion, empathy, and kindness. From those principal factors evolve almost all human ethics, values, and ideals. Thus, it is cardinal to treat others well, and it is reasonable to trust they do the same.

The Elders reinforced that inequality is not a virtue but a vice, and it is essential for the populace of the Village to eradicate vices because they weaken the masses from unity and strength. Those principles were emphasized and prioritized regularly in the consciousness of the masses. As a result, their socio-economic conditions boosted resiliency and persistency, and not the opposite because they were able to work cooperatively through complex problems in harmony and with solidarity for unanimity. It was a place for them without interference from city and state politicians. They believed in themselves and in one another, so they wanted to be in a place of safety and a place of love and happiness. They cared for one another and all the children. They lived for one another and created a social democracy they called the Village.