ANTILLEAN PIONEERS IN PANAMA: MIGRANT EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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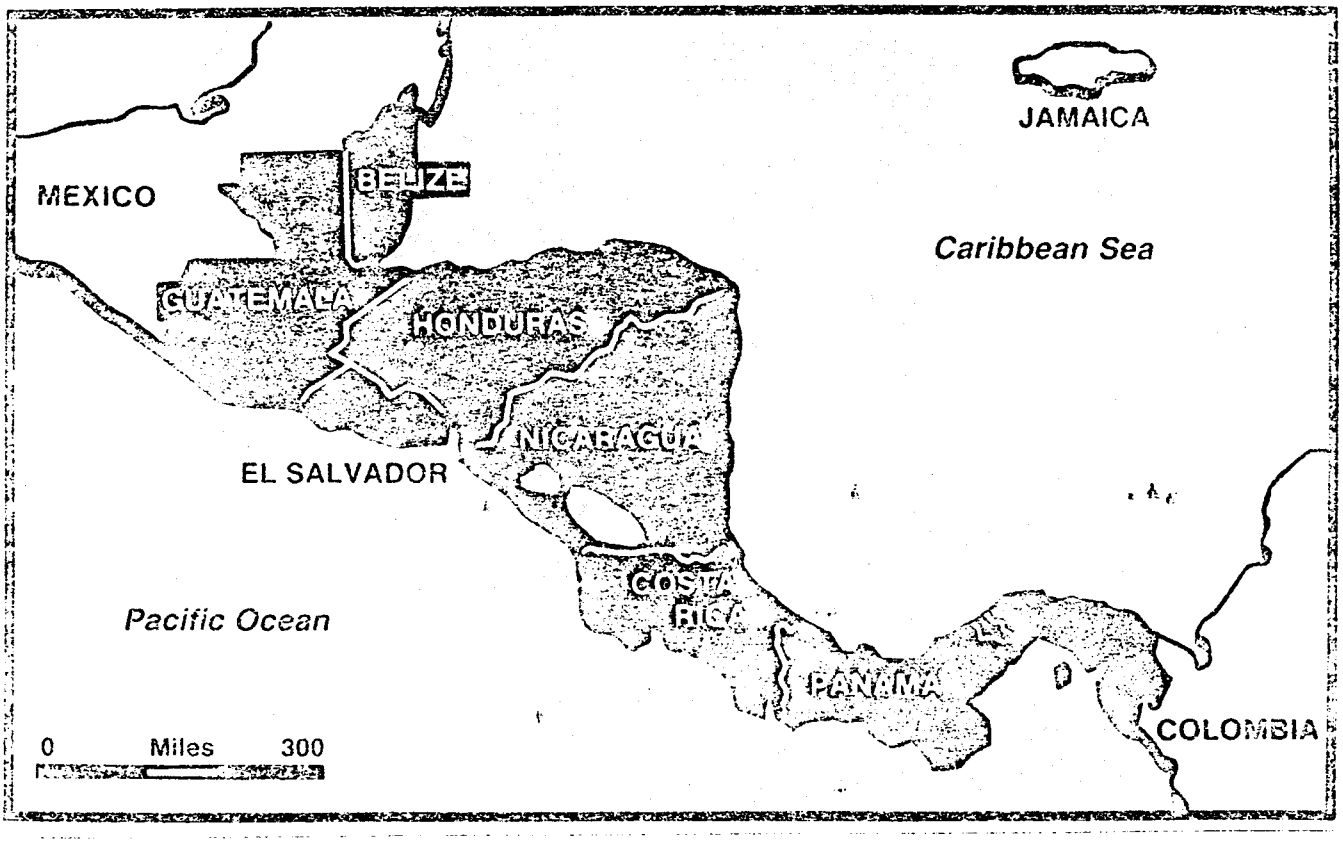
INTRODUCTION

Beginning in 1850 Antilleans began their migrations to Panama as laborers on the "pathway between the seas". The successful completions of the intercontinental railroad and the Panama Canal were acclaimed as engineering triumphs of international importance, introducing a new era of world trade. Belatedly it was recognized that these undertakings would have been impossible without the Antillean pioneers whose historical role had not only been underestimated but ignored.

This paper will examine: (1) the educational opportunities offered the children of Antillean workers in the Canal Zone; (2) the role of bilingual education in broadening their employment opportunities in the Republic of Panama; and (3) the role of education in changing the status of Antilleans in Panamanian society.


JAMAICA
MEXICO
BELIZE
Caribbean Sea
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
NICARAGUA
EL SALVADOR
COSTA RICA
Pacific Ocean
PANAMA
COLOMBIA
0 Miles 300

WORKERS UNDER CONTRACT BROUGHT TO THE ISTHMUS BY THE ISTHMUS CANAL COMMISSION .

COUNTRY	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	Total to 1914
Spain			1,174	5,293	1,831						8,298
Cuba**			500								500
Italy			909	1,032							1,941
Greece				1,101							1,101
France			19								19
Armenia			14								14
Total form Europe			2,616	7,426	1,831						11,873
Isla Fortuna			361								361
Barbados	404	3,019	6.510	3,242	2,592	3,605				528	19,900
Guadaloupe				2,039					14		2,053
Martinique		2,733	585	2,224							5,542
Jamaica		47									47
Trinidad			1,079				205		143		1,427
Curacao			23								23
St. Kitts			933						9		942
St. Lucia									55		55
St. Vincent									296		296
Granada									93		93
British Guiana									332		332
Total from the West Indies	404	5,799	9,491	7,505	2,592	3,605	205		942	582	31,071
Costa Rica		244									244
Colombia		1,077	461								1,493
Panama		334	10	13							357
Sin Clasificar			69								69
Total from this group		1,655	495	13							2,163
GRAND TOTAL	404	7,454	12,602	14,944	4,423	3,605	205		942	528	45,107

Adapted from the Canal Register, October 28. 1914 **Spanish Workers recruited in Cuba

If, as we in the Caribbean are fond of saying, "History is geography", the unique geographical position of Panama must be emphasized in any historical account. In this brief historical summary I am omitting the Amerindians, inferring that they had not previously perceived what Balboa, the world traveler, did as he gazed on the Great South Sea. Although the poet Keats mistook his protagonist, he did not underestimate the importance of the event:

> "Then I felt like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken;
> Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
> He stared at the Pacific --and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surmise --
> Silent, upon a peak in Darien." (1)

Spanish conquistadores inspired successive migrations, the profit motive remaining constant throughout Panama's history. Vasco Nunez de Balboa had guided the expedition of Martin Fernandez de Enciso from Santo Domingo (Hispaniola) safely to Darien, and taking advantage of a subsequent rebellion became leader of the colony. As such he learned from the Amerindians of the existence of the wealthy Inca Empire and the Great South Sea. Pizarro, the conqueror of Peru, was with Balboa when he claimed possession of Darien for Spain in February, 1513, and would later return to conquer Panama. Balboa was replaced and executed by the official governor, Pedrarias Davila, in 1514. In 1519 the city of Panama on the Pacific coast was founded,

Panama was a part of all of the significant events of Caribbean history: a major diocese of the Catholic Church, the site of Amerindian insurrections, and the Caribbean port for the next wave of migrants, Africans from the Guinea coast via Cuba and Santo Domingo. This in turn led to a more organized rebellion by the "cimarrones audaces", the audacious cimarrons.

Studies for a trans-isthmian canal were initiated by Royal decree in 1534, but estimates for construction exceeded the amounts possessed by the Crown of Spain. (2) In the struggle to control rebellions and pirates, the idea was abandoned.

Pirates pursuing the path of gold from Peru crossed and re-crossed the isthmus. Drake attacked in 1572 and 1578 and ultimately was killed in an attempt to conquer Panama from Puerto Rico. Pirates evolved into buccaneers, and Henry Morgan, sailing from Jamaica, succeeded where Drake had failed. In 1671 Morgan conquered Panama, destroyed the city, divided the loot among his sailors and returned to Jamaica.

International development, as opposed to destruction, began about 1695 when a Scottish merchant, the Marquis of Tweedsdale, received permission from the British Court to set up a trading company in Panama. Although these investments flourished in the colonies of New Caledonia, they also reflected the tensions developing between England and Scotland in Europe. After England and Scotland were reconciled, Spain re-established autonomous government in Panama, which had been an on-again off-again situation since the foundation of the Vice-royalty in Peru. Despite local control, Panama sank into economic decline beginning in 1750 as sea traffic around Cape Horn proved safer than land-sea travel from Portobelo.

Early Educational History

About the middle of the sixteenth century the Jesuits began their teaching efforts in Panama. Since their goal of teaching the catechism included the indigenous population as well as the children of colonists, the Jesuits set an early example of multicultural education, with a respect for local customs and indigenous tongues. It is difficult to ascertain whether this

open-door policy of education may have contributed to the concentration of power in the Jesuitical order. What is known is that the monarchs of France, Portugal and Spain so feared the influence of Jesuit teachings that the order was expelled from the colonies of the New World in 1767 by Royal Decree.

Panamanian society was developing along colonial lines: Spanish as masters, Creoles (people of European blood born in the colonies) as simple merchants receiving some political and social consideration; Amerindians, mere entities; and blacks as slaves. Parish priests replaced the Jesuits as teachers, tutoring in reading, writing and the scriptures. Women received no education beyond learning the catechism. Those who could afford it sent their children to Spain. Lima, Santa Fe and Quito. This group who studied abroad were to form the most powerful nucleus for the independence of Panama.

The "criollos" were the group which backed the Latin-American independence movement. As the Wars of Independence continued, it was geographically expedient that Chile on the Pacific send troops to Panama City. O'Higgins, the liberator of Chile, proposed to Bolivar, the liberator of Peru, that they cooperate in using the isthmus for trans-oceanic attacks. The Chilean squadrons of British Admiral Cochrane, led by Commander Illingworth, attacked Panama and by 1820 the forces of the Republic were in control of this strategic area.

The patterns which may be discerned in this brief historical summary are these:

(1) Panama's role in international commerce has been largely determined by its geographical position and has remained constant despite economic fluctuations, local rebellions, and the effects of political upheavals of European metropolitan powers on colonial development;

(2) Panama has attracted successive waves of immigration because of development resulting from this geographical position from Europe, the other Americas, and particularly from the easily acessible archipelago Caribbean;

(3) early attempts by the Jesuits to develop a multicultural educational system were discontinued when the order was suppressed in 1767.

Antillean Migrations

Antilleans were originally imported into Central America to work in the banana industry which was developing as sugar production in the West Indies decreased. In order to transport bananas quickly to the coastal areas for export, railroads were needed and Antillean labor was brought in to build them. Migrants from the Antilles began to arrive in appreciable numbers in Panama about 1850 seeking employment on the transcontinental railroad. The original estimate of two years for construction became in actuality five; the cost was eight million dollars, six times the original estimate.

According to Elmo Doig, a Panamanian writer, (3)

> "...capital seeking investment opportunities overseas found receptive and pliant collaborators in the nascent oligarchies of Central America...West Indians who came to Central America in search of jobs were forced to work for next to nothing. The trans-isthmus railroad in Panama, built sixty years before the Panama Canal, resulted from the California Gold Rush which demanded the speedy movement of people and supplies between the eastern United States and the Pacific Coast. Of 5000 West Indians who came to work on the railroad, 2000 remained after completion...Those who stayed in Panama found jobs made possible by the economic boom that came from the infusion of money generated by the railroad and the high staff maintained during its early years of operation. But dependence on the United States

> traffic ruined the economy when that traffic shifted to the new United States transcontinental railroad."

From the point of view of the foreign investor, the transcontinental railroad in Panama was a great success. In the first year it save eight thousand miles of travel from New York to San Francisco, showed a profit of seven million dollars and became the highest-priced stock listed on the New York Exchange. (4) A larger Antillean migration followed in 1880. When the French began construction of the sea-level canal they originally used Panamanians, but they also soon needed foreign workers. The 2000 imported workers in 1881 became 4000 in 1882. Between 1882 and 1888, 19,000 workers were contracted; in 1885 alone, nine thousand of the 12,875 workers contracted were from Jamaica. European workers numbered less than one thousand and there were 5550 black workers from the United States.(5)

Having acquired the French interests through the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, the United States began the construction of a canal with locks in 1904. Between this year and 1913, 31,071 Antillean workers were contracted, the majority between 1904 and 1909. Most came from Barbados, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Trinidad and St. Kitts. Between 1904 and 1908 labor contracts were arranged with 9,298 Spaniards, 500 Cubans, 1,941 Italians, 1,101 Greeks, 19 French and 14 Armenians. This made a total of 11,873 Europeans who along with the Antilleans spoke a language other than Spanish. (6)

These nineteenth and twentieth century migrations repeat the pattern of earlier centuries when Africans were brought to

all of the Spanish colonies of the New World, but in particular to Panama where the sparse indigenous population could not be converted into an efficient labor force. (7)

Westerman also points out (8) that by the twentieth century colonization, slavery and the plantation system had become the common experience of all archipelago Antilleans or "West Indians". The majority also had in common a British heritage. Westerman echoes Sir Philip Sherlock's pronouncement: (9)

> "...Antilleans speak English and their social and political institutions have been principally molded by British patterns".

From this we may infer that the Antillean laborer brought not only his physical strength but mental concepts which differed from those of the indigenous Hispano-American. According to Westerman, the historically recognized causes of migration, over-population and a precarious economic situation, cut across socio-economic levels. Peasants and laborers were not the only immigrants; many were of the middle and professional class, trained in and conscious of their traditions.

It should be noted, however,, that French-speakers from Martinique and Guadeloupe participated in the migration and few from the Danish West Indies Westerman reports that (10) the Danish Governor prohibited the use of St. Croix as a point of embarkation for workers recruited in surrounding islands.

A census taken in 1930 of blacks living in the Canal Zone shows that 39% had been born in the Antilles, 34.5% in Central or South America, 25.4% in the Canal Zone, and less that 1% in the United States or its territories or other countries. Three out of every five black workers had either been born in the

Antilles or had ancestors from there. In the same year 80.4% of the whites came from the United States, 6% from the Canal Zone, 5% from North or South America and 10.1% from other countries. So within the narrow confines of the Canal Zone different historical traditions as well as different ethnic groups were represented, the totality of which in turn differed culturally from the surrounding Republic of Panama.

Cultural Tradition and Social Change

Both the hispanic and anglo traditions had their own version of the caste system. The fact that one was based on "peninsulares", "criollos", "indios" categories and the other on language and color (English-speaking/non-English speakers; white/non-white) did not obscure the discriminatory function of both in regard to economic rewards. Doig notes that differences were exploited to maintain control of the migrants (11):

> "...Not only did the importation of West Indians assure a pool of excess labor to keep wages down, but it also meant a labor force that could be kept relatively isolated from the local population. The West Indian workers...understood the language spoken by the white over-seers from the United States...their (the Antillean) language and cultural differences made it hard to draw support from the local Spanish-speaking population. To further forestall labor cooperation, United Fruit employed some mestizos and Indians on a part-time basis on the plantations, and paid them less."

Labor conditions as described by Doig would not be duplicated on the building of the Canal. Within a circumscribed area an ethnic mix worked together despite cultural differences.

And it had soon become obvious that if the United States was going to succeed where France had failed in building a canal across Panama, a highly efficient collaboration between government and private industry was needed. New responses to old problems were to result in pioneering efforts which in many cases became accepted practice and internalized as tradition.

Since the administration of such a large, complex and distant undertaking was a new experience for the United States government, President Theodore Roosevelt was not impeded by precedent when he, in a sense, put government into partnership with private industry by appointing a three-man civilian commission to oversee the Canal Zone operation, the chairman of which would report directly to the Secretary of War (12)

The President visited Panama personally to inspect the engineering, labor force and labor facilities. In the agreement which he signed while there, the United States government assumed the responsibility for what went on in the Canal Zone. The intervening variable in the social process was the establishment of a highly efficient, complex operation in a geographical area where this was a novelty.

The social change taking place was not immediately apparent. "Gold" and "silver" were the terms used to describe the discriminatory practices continued by the Americans in the Canal Zone. West Indians and white North American stood in different lines for paychecks, in the post office and the commissary. There were black wards in the hospitals and black schools for black children. Black men who served on the zone police force drew half-pay and were not eligible for promotion beyond a certain rank.

The greatest contrast was in living conditions. The Isthmian Canal Commission argued that it was necessary to bring American women to Panama to establish a normal way of life. To

accomplish this, adequate and comfortable housing was a prerequisite. It also took steps to bring in large numbers of West Indian women without the same concern for their welfare. The laborers sent word back to the islands; relatives came to join the established laborers and so did other women seeking the steady work they could not obtain at home.

Women joined men in the deplorable sub-standard housing available to black workers. This point is little touched upon in official reports, the attitude being that it was not the concern of the Canal Commissioner to provide housing.

This was not simply racial injustice; it was also the law of supply and demand. As McCullough notes (13):

> "...It could be very naturally assumed that this was all the most blatant kind of racial injustice. And in a very large measure, of course it was; but not entirely. Simple problems of supply and demand also entered in, that is, experienced technicians (men to run and repair the machines), doctors, and competent clerical people were always in short supply and had to be kept satisfied if the canal was to be built; common unskilled laborers from the impoverished islands of the Caribbean were always available in abundance and expected no better than what they had known at home. And besides, there was the political factor: the labor force was not merely black, it was foreign; these were not United States citizens and in Washington therefore they represented no constituency."

From the point of view of comparative history, labor conditions in Panama 1905-1914 were as good (or as bad) as those in the mines of Kentucky or the mills of New England. Safety negotiations set down by the I.C.C. were in advance of American industry, commissaries were better than company stores, and working and living conditions were better than those of Egyptian fellahin who built Suez or the West Indians who had come during the French era.

Medical progress in Panama has become part of Caribbean history, as tropical diseases were controlled and then conquered. Hospital care was free for all employees, but those diseases which continued to claim the lives of West Indians, malaria and viral pneumonia, seem to have been due to the wretched housing. Theodore Roosevelt visited the hospitals in Panama and noted that nearly all of the patients were black. (14) As soon as he returned to Washington he noted this in an official report and requested improvements.

Working conditions were as perilous as the housing. During the period of construction, hundreds of Antilleans died in a violent manner due to premature or delayed explosions of dynamite, landslides, derailments, or falling rocks. (15)

According to Theophilous Armstrong of the Virgin Islands, (16) one had to lead a "charmed life" to survive the malaria and yellow fever which were rampant in Panama. Armstrong went to the Canal Zone as a young teenager and advanced in pay from fifteen cents an hour to sixty dollars a month, which was considered good pay at the time, more than the twenty-five dollars he might have earned at home. Panama also served as a training ground for work he would find in New York City after six years of working on the canal.

Development of Public Schools in the Canal Zone

The Antillean pioneer in Panama thus suffered from a succession of handicaps. He was an alien in a strange land, a land steeped in the hispanic caste system and all the color prejudice of the anglo heritage. Yet the children of Antillean laborers escaped from this prison through the medium of education.

The Isthmian Canal Commission established schools for the black West Indian children in 1904. In 1906 a Superintendent of schools was appointed to be in charge of the first public school

under the jurisdiction of the United States. By May of the same year 18 schools were operating with 601 students and 21 teachers. Five months later the system had grown to thirty schools, 1,237 students and thirty-four teachers, nineteen of whom were Antilleans, four North Americans and one Panamanian.

Schools were segregated and discriminatory educational practices reinforced the inequities of the social structure. Westerman (17) provides the following statistics:

Schools for "gold" employees			School for "silver" employees	
	teachers	students	teachers	students
1908	23	721	20	2,146
1909	32	640	21	2,421
1914	43	1,270	23	1,492

The situation did not much improve when Panama became an independent nation on February 23, 1904. As Faulkner Watts points out (18):

> "...'Independence' was a political term in reference to Latin America and did not affect social attitudes which were carried over from the Europeans...Access to certain jobs, to public office, to commerce and to higher education was limited to the elite. Recent studies have shown the effect on the psyche would produce self-deprecation on the one-hand and a suppressive mentality on the other. The caste system was a way of life in Panama, part of the hispanic tradition before the building of the canal was contemplated."

Watts made this statement in reference to Independence of of the Spanish colonies from Spain. Although "independence" was still a political concept at the time of the ratification of the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty by the Congress of the United States, the new nation of Panama did break with the past in authorizing the establishment of a public education system open to all regardless of race, social class, sex or religion.

Private schools had been functioning in both the Canal Zone and the Republic of Panama under church auspices. Westerman (19) notes that church schools were the first to be under the direction of Antilleans, usually missionaries from the West Indian islands. He recalls that many Antillean educators were invited to join the faculties of private educational institutions in Panama City and Colon. Hector Connor from Jamaica was the first to set up a model school; he later became President of the Municipal Council of Colon. John G.C. Phillips, also of Jamaica, was awarded the distinction of "hijo meritorio" for sixty years of outstanding teaching in Panama City.

Westerman exemplifies the transition of the Antillean from illiterate laborer to educated statesman. His father came from Barbados and his mother from St. Lucia in the year 1910; they met and married in the Canal Zone. George, the youngest of seven children born in Colon, went to the public schools run by the American government in the Canal Zone. And there was no public education beyond the sixth grade at that time. Because he was the only boy his family sacrificed to send him to one of the private schools run by an Antillean, Samuel Innis, in Panama City. Another one of his teachers was Preston Stout.

In addition to teaching, Stout and Innis had organized a labor movement in the Canal Zone. They were refused membership in the American Federation of Labor in 1920 because they were "colored" and subsequently deported to Cuba as "agitators". Elmo Doig has pointed out (20) that colonial blacks had long been active in organizations like trade unions which focused on

working conditions. This focus broadened as blacks linked employment with issues involving racial discrimination and West Indians began to identify themselves with national issues.

The fact that Westerman's teachers in his formative years were both Antilleans and labor leaders may have had more influence than it is possible to determine. He characterizes these years under their tutelage as "unfortunately, very few". He could not afford to go on to a higher level of education and sought work as a messenger in the transportation division of the Canal, considering himself to be more fortunate than his female classmates whose only expectation was domestic work.

Westerman progressed to office-boy and then to clerk-typist. He was taught typing by his brother-in-law and perfected this skill through practice. There was no opportunity to pass from the level of "silver" to "gold" worker in the regimented system of the Canal Zone where all the better jobs were reserved for white Americans.

But opportunity did exist in Panama City. Not because there was any less prejudice or any less of a caste system, but the office skills which Westerman had acquired in the efficient Canal operation were needed in Panama City. Also, his early schooling in English-speaking schools with a North American Curriculum and in the Spanish-speaking schools of the Republic of Panama under teachers who doubled as labor leaders gave him an eclectic approach to existing work.

Westerman found employment in the National Brewery and was soon promoted from office manager to production manager. His abilities were appreciated by the politically ambitious Ernesto de La Guardia, Jr., General Manager of the brewery, after Westerman organized his successful presidential campaign, de La Guardia became President of Panama in 1956 and appointed his Antillean campaign manager Panamanian Ambassador to the United Nations.

In this international body Westerman made use of his Antillean connections: (21)

> "...All Panamanians were in favor of changing the treaty. The 1903 treaty was unfair to Panama. We were unanimous in the decision that a radical change was needed but from 1946 we had no influence. But I got in touch with Alexander Farrelly from the Virgin Islands who was a legal adviser to the United Nations and Cyril King, a political aide to Senator Humphrey, (and later Governor of the Virgin Islands) and they were very, very helpful to me. We Antilleans began to bring about some changes in the relations between the United States and Panama - changes that led to the Carter-Torrijos Treaty". (22)

Westerman, for the most part self-educated, credits his extended reading for the background needed to deal with international affairs. He read everything he could -- books in English from the United States, books in Spanish from Colombia and Panama, and came up with what he felt was truly "Panama's point of view". Yet he also recognized:

> "...the government of any country has the responsibility to qualify people to acquire and maintain the knowledge of their historical background and their cultural mores... of any ethnic group...they must be educated so they can make their own choices... not have something imposed on them like the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty... nothing in the universities -- only studies in anthropology and sociology..."(23)

Westerman wished to make quite clear that at this point in history he endorses the statement made by Roy Bryce-La Porte, which he quoted:

> "...In its failure to address itself squarely on the cultural development of the West Indian minority in Panama the United States found it-

> self faced with a serious problem of cultural and racial adjustment during and after the construction of the Panama Canal. The offspring of the West Indians pose a rather delicate problem for the United States planners in regard to its new relationship with Panama. Consequently, it would behoove the United States to concern itself with problems of assimilation and integration." (24)

If the case history of George Westerman, the messenger boy who made the most of his opportunities to become Panama's Ambassador to the United Nations seems atypical, we might consider Anesta and Henry Samuel. This husband and wife team of educators, recognized in both Panama and the United States for their contributions, considered that their childhood in the Canal Zone followed the average pattern.

Anesta's parents were from Monsterrat, Henry's mother from Barbados and his father from Antigua. As children of "silver" workers, they went to the public schools of the Canal Zone until the eighth grade, then they "went to work".

This did not mean that education ended, however. According to Anesta:

> "...We had West Indian teachers in Red Tank (Canal Zone) who gave us private tutoring. My parents paid fifty cents a month, later one dollar. Our parents were a constant inspiration -- always reading and urging us to do better. We also went to Sunday school and clubs after school."(25)

Work opportunities for women in the Zone were limited to sewing and beauty culture. Anesta managed to go to New York for an advanced course in beauty culture and then returned to work in the Canal Zone. She married Henry who had a clerk

level job in the Zone. During the depression years of the 1950's they saw little future for themselves or their son in Panama. At the ages of thirty-five and thirty-two respectively, they decided to go to the United States to work and continue their education as adults.

They sold their home, their beauty-shop business and went to Brooklyn, where they attended Rhodes High School. Henry worked nights as a hospital orderly, earned his high school degree, and attended Brooklyn College until he received his Master's Degree in Education in 1970.

Anesta's higher education was interrupted by the birth of a second child sixteen years after her first. She solved this problem by becoming assistant Director of a day-care center while she finished evening high school and ultimately received her Master's Degree in Education in 1976.

Henry Samuel summed up his eleven years as Assistant Principal of the George W. Brower School, P.S. 289, as "nothing unique";

> "...There really wasn't much unrest at my school. we treated everyone as human beings in the social process. We tried for a good self-image and taught them to respect their teachers and that basically, they were responsibile for their own education. We had dialect problems and one experimental bilingual program. 26% of our students were on grade level and other sudents were in a "gates" program between grades 4 and 7 until they met the required grade level. After 1980-81 there was no social promotion." (26)

There is now a public high school in the Canal Zone and some students go from there to the University of Panama or the

Catholic University in Panama City. According to the Samuel's, the brain drain of the 1950's has been reversed and since the 1960's the economy of Panama has been booming due to the new banking laws. International firms must make a committment to hire locally.

It should be noted that the Samuel's have given much back to the Antillean community. Anesta was recently honored by the President of Panama for twenty-nine years of presiding over a scholarship fund for Panamanians who wish to pursue higher education in the United States. Approximately $100,000 a year is contributed to this fund, much of it from the Antillean community.

Secondary School Education in the Canal Zone- Ray Dixon

According to Ray Dixon, who worked as a Supervising Teacher in Business Education from 1946-51, he was hired in Washington, D.C. by a representative of the Canal Zone Department of Education because of a pressing need for senior high schools.

> "...The story I heard later was that Eleanor Roosevelt had visited the Canal Zone and was horrified to find that there were no senior high schools. In her view the Canal Zone was part of the United States and so were public high schools. (27)

The plan, when Dixon was hired, was to establish one high school at Silver City in Colon on the Caribbean end of the Canal and another at La Boca in Balboa, on the Pacific. The terms "Silver City" and "La Boca" refer to the sections where the Antillean communities had developed.

> "...We began with a staffing problem. There were no high school buildings and no high school level teachers. We met this problem using whatever buildings were available and hiring the Junior High School teachers to become Senior High School teachers. We relied on the experienced principals, working with the Canal Zone black assistant principals, to train the faculty. The planners informed us that they did not want to import black principals from the United States because they did not get along here as well as the whites." (28)

The white supervising teachers concentrated on teaching in the following areas: science, mathematics, English, social studies, business subjects and home economics.

> "...There was also the problem of what to call the schools. They weren't really vocational schools- they were more business-oriented, so we called them "occupational schools", because we were training for occupations: We had a metal and a wood shop, and automechanics. We also taught music -- we hired a Panamanian who had a Master's degree to teach that." (29)

Dixon pointed out that most of the students by this time were citizens of Panama. The migrants from the West Indies were originally under the protection of the British Embassy. After a while Britian, which had no commercial interest in the canal nor any role in precipitating the migration, refused to carry on this stewardship. The United States was disinclined to offer citizenship to West Indians living in Panamanian territory. So the Antillean residents became citizens of Panama.

According to Dr. A. Faulkner Watts (30), until quite

recently it was official dogma that Antillean blacks were "not assimilable", despite their citizenship status. The Africans who had entered the country as slaves had long been more or less fused into the culture; they were not assertive (if aware) of their African heritage; many had mixed with the Indians. But as late as 1950, immigration was denied to those Blacks who did not speak Spanish.

As far as the new occupational high school was concerned, students were required to study Spanish as a language as well as English. In general, all Supervising Teachers were required to teach one class as well as supervise less experienced teachers in their respective subject areas. Such teachers were either based in Boca or Silver City.

There were some exceptions to this rule. In subject areas where there was a small number of enrollments, such as business education and home economics, Supervising Teachers divided their time between the Atlantic and Pacific, commuting by means of the Transcontinental Railroad, three days at Boca on the Pacific and two days at Silver City on the Atlantic.

> "...We usually had about 150-200 students graduating from Senior High School, about 50% male/female. I found their intelligence to be equal to a similar class I had taught at home in upper New York State, except for cultural differences. They did not do as well on standardized tests." (31)

During his last two years in Panama, Dixon initiated a work-experience program in which the Supervising Teachers helped the students get employment and then supervised them on the job. Some worked in the Canal Zone, but many jobs were in Panama City. This meant that graduates had to be bilingual and Spanish shorthand was added to the curriculum at this time.

Teachers continually received on-the-job or in service training. They were paid for twelve months, taught for eleven. and took summer courses in the Canal Zone. These courses included education courses. Dixon himself taught English grammar and Educational Psychology. In this manner local Junior High School teachers qualified to teach at the Senior High School level.

Non-teachers who knew shorthand wanted to teach it, and Dixon gave them the pedagogical training necessary. He found the office experience of these neophyte teachers of great value when they taught business skills in the classroom.

> "...Local teachers were paid on the "silver scale", the rationale being that their needs were not as great as those sent down by Washington. These were paid on the same scale as Washington plus 25%." (32)

Housing had become a problem by the time Dixon arrived, even for the "gold" employees. Presumably construction had been halted during the period of World War II and it was some time before adequate family quarters were available. Dixon described their housing as "primitive". Nevertheless, he summed up his experience in Panama as "broadening".

> "...My wife and son and I went down immediately after the war on a ship of the Panama Steamship Line with other Canal Zone employees. It was still like a troop ship...But it is always a great professional experience to set up a new educational program, to be a pioneer. I selected and bought the texts, the furniture, the typewriters. I set it up...This was after seventeen years of teaching in a small town, the same area where I was born, brought up and went to school. During my orientation I learned a great deal about another culture, I visited Panamanian schools, met the Commissioner of Education of Panama. In Carthage, New York, I had never seen blacks, let alone worked with them... I was very happy that my son had the chance to grow up in this environment and learned to swim with all the other children there in that enormous pool in Balboa." (33)

It was because of their son that Dixon and his wife decided to leave Panama. One could not buy property in the Canal Zone, "put down roots". There were few inducements to mix socially with Panamanians, but Dixon transcended this barrier in his "work-experience" program. Both he and his wife enjoyed dancing and took advantage of every opportunity to go to dances outside the Canal Zone. He noted that there was a good deal of intermarriage between single principals and Panamanians.

> "...My Panama experience also helped in subsequent teaching when I went back to the United States,back to classroom teaching in Prince George's just outside of Washington. I found that the Canal Zone was more advanced. Prince George was just opening up. It was really primitive there compared to the adult night school we had in the Zone, which was open to all Panamanians. We had interviewed the applicants, of course, but they turned out to be very good students." (34)

Summary and conclusions:

The historical patterns associated with conquest and colonialization were changed during the United States occupation of the Canal Zone by: (1)free secondary education with an emphasis on occupational training; (2) an efficient training laboratory where practice could supplement theory (the Canal Zone operation), and (3) academic bilingual preparation which facilitated the transition from employment in the Canal Zone to higher level jobs in the Republic of Panama.

This paper hypothesizes that the openness of the multi-cultural approach and the lack of pseudospeciation gave Antilleans the opportunity to develop the capabilities which made assumption of leaderships roles in the Canal Zone and the Republic of Panama feasible. This in turn effected a breakdown in the traditional caste system and the beginnings of social assimilation in a multi-ethnic society.

As sociologists have documented, methods used to create social change can be used by opponents as well as proponents of given goals. According to my Antillean informants, who volunteered the information, any Panamanian who wanted more advanced education or professional training could get it "from the Russians". All expenses would be paid for those who wished to study medicine, engineering, or law in countries within the Russian sphere of influence.

I did not have the opportunity to verify this statement. However, a conference was scheduled by the Panamanian Chamber of Commerce for the week after I left Panama. Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller were to address the participants on the role private industry could play in providing higher education for the Panamanians. This event is highlighted by the recent classification of education as a putative "weapon of war". (35)

The basic tenets of the Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty were these:

The United States was empowered to construct a canal through a zone ten miles in width (in contrast to a zone of six miles in the Hay-Herran pact). Colon and Panama City were not to be a part of the zone, but the sanitation, sewerage, water supply and maintenance of public order in these terminal cities were placed under United States control. Further, four title islands in the Bay of Panama -- Perico, Naos, Culebra and Flamenco -- were granted to the United States and the United States had the right to expropriate any additional land or water areas "necessary and convenient" for the construction, operation, sanitation or defense of the canal. In return the United States guaranteed the independence of Panama.

The French canal company was granted the right to transfer its concessions and property (including the Panama Railroad) to the United States and the compensation to Panama was to be the same as offered earlier to Colombia -- $10,000,000 on exchange of ratifications and an annual annuity of $250,000 that would commence nine years later.

The most significant difference, however, between this and the earlier treaty was contained in Article III, which specified that Panama granted to the United States within the Canal Zone "all the rights, power and authority ... which the United States would possess and exercise by the Republic of Panama of any such sovereighn rights, power or authority." Though not the sovereign within the canal zone, the United States was to be able to act like the sovereign.

And instead of a one-hundred-year lease of the zone that would be indefinitely renewable, as in the Hay-Herran pact, the zone was to be held by the United States "in perpetuity." (36)

1. John Keats, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer. It was Balboa, not Cortez, who discovered the Pacific.)

2. Juan B. Sosa and Enrique J. Arce, Compendio de Historia de Panama, Panama, Editorial Universitaria, Edicion Facsimil de la de 1911, p. 83.

3. Elmo Doig, "The Black Presence in Central America: Background Information (Part II)", Interracial Books for Children Bulletin, 13: 2 & 3, p. 27

4. David McCullough, The Path between the Seas, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1977, p. 4.

5. Revista Loteria, No. 318-319, Octubre:1982, pp. 37-39.

6. Revista Loteria, p. 39.

7. George W. Westerman, Los Inmigrantes Antillanos en Panama, Copyright, Panama, 1980, p. 18.

8. Westerman, p.17.

9. Philip Sherlock, West Indies, New York, Walker and Company, 1966, p. 7.

10. Westerman, p.23.

11. Doig, p.27

12. McCullough, p. 492.

13. McCullough, p. 578

14. McCullough, p. 502

15. Westerman, p. 35.

16. Virgin Islands Daily News, August 30, 1978.

17. Westerman, p. 17.

18. A. Eaulkner Watts, "The Black Presence in Central America: Background Information (Part I)", Interracial Books for Children Bulletin, 13:2 & 3, p. 27.

19. Interview with George Westerman, Panama City, Panama, December 29, 1982.

20. Doig, p. 38.

21. Interview with G. Westerman.

22. Interview with G. Westerman.

23. Interview with G. Westerman.

24. Interview with G. Westerman.

25. Interview with Anesta Samuel, Panama City, Panama, December 30, 1982.

26. Interview with Henry Samuel, Panama City, Panama, December 30, 1982.

27. Interview with Ray Dixon, Frederiksted, St. Croix, February 13, 1983.

28. Interview with R. Dixon.

29. Interview with R. Dixon.

30. Watts, p. 26.

31. Interview with R. Dixon.

32. Interview with R. Dixon

33. Interview with R. Dixon.

34. Interview with R. Dixon.

35. National Commission on Excellence in Education, as reported in the New York Times, April 27, 1983, p. 1.

36. McCullough, p. 393

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