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Jamaican Prime Minister Readies Country for Return to Stone Age

July 15 (IPS) — The citizens of Jamaica are being told openly that their future is one of slave-labor and fascist economic policies similar to those in Brazil.

Under the guise of the "spirit of social cooperation" and a sense of pride in what Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley calls "a National Adventure," Jamaicans are advised that local manual labor is the solution to Jamaica's development. Manley's policy statement appeared June 12 as the seventh article in a series called "The Politics of Change; A Jamaican Testament," published in the *Jamaican Weekly Gleaner*.

The article focuses on how the educational system of Jamaica must change to ensure that the young desire manual work instead of a "profession" or a "white-collar" job — thus providing the psychological basis for regressive labor-intensive work methods in farming and industry.

Manley states: "*Children love doing things. They love doing them with their hands as indeed do many adults during their leisure time. Obviously, the stigma that attaches to manual work is not instinctive but derives in the main from social forces. During childhood, then we have a golden opportunity to instill in people a sense of the naturalness of work... A way must be found to persuade children to choose new careers which are alien to the common experience. This last is more difficult than might appear on the surface because the traditional educational options leading to a traditional profession as the ultimate in opportunity are profoundly associated with status in the popular mind.... Anyone who has shared the experience of workers in Jamaican industry will notice that the instinctive response by workers to what they deem to be unreasonable pressure is to condemn the pressure as 'slave driving.' Naturally, therefore, the more unpleasant kinds of work reflect the same historically conditioned tendency to resist.*

"Obviously, a country cannot develop if there is a neurotic attitude towards work. Rapid development cannot be sustained by negative work attitudes."

Doing What Comes Naturally

In the Sixth Commonwealth Education Conference June 10, 1974 at the National Arena, Manley re-emphasized the building of this new fascist economic

order under the spirit of cooperation. The schools were directed to conduct "extensive involvement in manual work to make work seem natural."

In order to pay off their debt-services to the Rockefeller banks, Manley's "Jamaican Testament" prescribes no money for new technology. Manley warns that "The young country must be constantly on its guard against the uncritical importation of technology which may be relevant in a highly sophisticated metropolitan economy but may be counterproductive with regard to the stage of economic development in an emerging nation struggling with its peculiar social problems." Modern engineering techniques, Manley cautions: "may be disastrous in some young countries which may be wrestling simultaneously with unemployment and a balance of payments problem. Local manual labor may well be the best response to both problems."

The Press Pushes Slave Labor and Speed Up

To assure the Jamaican population that slave-labor rather than advanced machine-technology carries status for individuals as well as benefits for the nation, the *Weekly Gleaner* published an editorial June 14 lauding the workers who cut sugar cane by hand. The editorial states: "*Cane-cutting as a means of earning a livelihood has stepped up in social rating in Jamaica since the Clarendon Jaycees in 1971, organized a competition among this category of worker in their parish. That competition was intended to show that there is dignity as well as national utility in cane-cutting, thus helping to erase an impression in the minds of both cane-cutters and their communities that this is a degrading occupation.... Cane-cutting in the process [of the cane-cutting contests organized by the Sugar Industry Labor Welfare Board] has undergone a social metamorphosis by which it is now recognized as an industrial skill and one which moreover is making a valuable contribution to national survival in the context of the prevailing circumstances.*

"Something more has emerged, however, with the level of performance at New Yarmouth Estate just a fortnight ago, when the last contest was run off. This new factor is that the Jamaican cane-cutter, working at his best is extraordinarily proficient and can earn a good livelihood for himself and his family right here on the

island without need to emigrate to Florida or anywhere else, and, at the same time, reduce if not eliminate the need for mechanical cane-cutting.

"This year's champion pair of cane-cutters, Messrs. Charles Henry and Sebert McGlashan, between them cut 12 tons, 18 hundred-weight of canes in the four-hour period of the contest. Since the average working-day

during crop is nearly 10 hours, this means that both men can do approximately 30 tons in a working day. At the minimum rate of \$1.00 a ton now applying in the industry, both men can earn a \$30.00 a day together or \$15.00 each.... Allowing that ordinary working-days are different, the level of performance should not be less than 10 tons a day, or \$60.00 in a 6-day week."
