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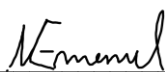
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ABSTRACT

This Caribbean Studies Research paper entitled ‘Education and the Children of the Afro St. Lucian Population 1838-1938’ provides a detailed account on the education of the children of the Afro St. Lucian population. In 1936 it was noted that “St. Lucia has been more completely neglected, both by the government and people of England, than any other colony; and its black population is therefore more degraded and ignorant.”¹ Also, of importance was the fact that out of a population of 14,000 inhabitants no more than one hundred children attended school in that year. The paper provides a chronological journey from 1838 to 193 and highlights the reluctance of, as well as the hindrances experienced by the island’s authorities to ‘formally educate’ the children of the Afro-St Lucian population. The competition and rivalry which existed between the Catholic and Protestant Churches as they fought over the rights to be the sole ‘educators’ of the children of the Afro- St. Lucian population. The many negative opinion by local authority as it pertained to the patois and the struggles and obstacles encountered by Church and State as they sought to eradicate the patois and establish the English language as the sole language spoken on the island of St. Lucia by the Afro-St. Lucian population.

Key words: Education, Afro St. Lucian, Patois, English Language, Mico School, Denominations, Delinquency.

¹ Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey. *The West Indies in 1837, Being the Journal of a Visit to Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica, St. Lucia, Barbados and Jamaica*. London: Hamilton, Adams and Co. 1838, 115.

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Thesis Statement

The education of the children of the Afro St. Lucian population, between 1838-1939 faced challenges and obstacles such as denominational rivalry and prejudices between Protestants and Catholic churches, the continued use of patois instead of the English Language, high level of truancy and delinquency.

Rationale

This study is significant and groundbreaking as it fills the gaps that exist in the historiography resulting from a dearth of research into the education of the children of the Afro St. Lucian population during the century after emancipation, 1838-1938. This study contributes significantly to the body of knowledge on the educational system not only as it pertains to St. Lucia but within the Caribbean, especially bilingual and multilingual territories. It also provides a chronological journey and insights into the many challenges and obstacles faced by the various governmental and denominational entities in establishing an educational programme taught using the English Language as the sole mode of instruction.

Parameters

The project covers 1838-1938 as these years highlight a pivotal period, one hundred years in St. Lucia's history as it pertains to the education of the children of the Afro St. Lucian population. In 1838, the first school was opened on the island by the Mico organization, this was followed by the establishment of schools by other religious denominations in an effort to introduce some formal educational programme. However, in 1938, one hundred later, there still existed major challenges,

paramount among these was the reluctance of these children to embrace the English Language as the main instrument of instruction.

Limitations

In producing this Caribbean Studies project, time and stipulated word limit were the most significant constraints the researcher experienced. A longer period and increased word limit would have facilitated a more in depth and comprehensive analysis of the topic. Additionally, a lack of key primary sources posed a challenge. Important primary and secondary sources found at St. Lucia's archives and libraries were either unavailable or incomplete as pages were missing, torn or illegible.

Objectives

This project examines an area and period of St. Lucia's history that is generally under-researched and seeks to contribute to the increasing body of historical research based on small islands like St. Lucia. It explores untapped information and provides an understanding on the segment of the island's population, children of the Afro St. Lucian population. It also provides insights into the struggles, hindrances and religious/ denominational prejudices experienced by various groups on the island as it pertained to the education of the children of the Afro St. Lucian population.

Methodology

Delving into the intricacies of the education of the children of the Afro St. Lucian population 1839-1938 involved a critical examination of the existing publications on St. Lucia's education history. To achieve these objectives, qualitative research was employed. Primary and secondary sources

were consulted in bringing this research to fruition. An examination of primary documentary evidence has been carried out at the St. Lucia National Archives Authority. Works housed at The Carnegie Library, Hunter Francois Library and Folk Research Centre in St. Lucia in addition to online sources, Alma Jordan Library, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad were also consulted. These sources largely included primary and secondary such as Annual Colonial Reports, Blue Books of Statistics, Ordinances, Newspapers, Colonial Records (C.O), Parliamentary Papers (P.P), as well as books, journals and articles.

Chapter Outline

Introduction

The introduction comprises the rationale, thesis statement, objectives, methodology, literature review and chapter outline of the study.

Chapter One: Planters' Resistance and the Establishment of an 'appropriate' Educational Programme.

This chapter provides an insight into planters' attitudes towards the education of the Afro St. Lucian prior to and in the immediate years after 1838. It also examines the recommendations put forward as it pertained to the type of educational programme that should be implemented.

Chapter Two: The Mico Schools and Denominational Prejudices

Chapter Two focuses on the establishment, operations and struggles experienced by the Mico schools on the island as they sought to educate the children of the Afro St. Lucian population. Emphasis will be placed on the denominational prejudices, animosity/hatred that existed primarily

between the Mico schools predominantly Protestant and the Catholic Schools during that period. An examination of the various attempts by the Catholic church to have total control over the educational system.

Chapter Three: Patois: Condemnation and Detestation

The chapter provides a background development of patois on the island, it also examines reasons for and extent of white colonial condemnation and detestation of the continuous use of patois.

Chapter Four: Elimination of Patois and Promotion of the English Language through Rewards and Incentives

Chapter Four describes the strategies and measures implemented by colonial authorities to deal with the education of the children of the Afro St. Lucian population specifically the advancing the use of the English language.

Chapter Five: Impediments to Education: Street Children and Wharf Rats

This chapter examines other impediments to education such as the activities of delinquents such as street children and “wharf rats” who were delinquent young boys who frequented the wharfs. It also looks at the measures taken by the authorities to deal with these issues.

Conclusion

The conclusion summarizes the key information discussed throughout the five chapters of the study.

Literature Review

To say that historiography on St. Lucia is limited is an understatement. In examining the historiography on St. Lucia, one is sure to encounter Henry Breen's *St. Lucia; Historical, Statistical and Descriptive*. This book, which was published in 1844, is the only social history of St. Lucia. The book provides some important insights into some aspects of the St. Lucian education system particularly in the post - emancipation period prior to 1844 however, it is limited in providing in-depth information. Additionally, the book covers the period only up to 1844. A *History of the Roman Catholic Church in St. Lucia* by Charles Gachet provides a chronological history of the Church on the island. It is limited in its description of the difficulties and obstacles encountered in educating these children. Information about the general history of St. Lucia can be found in Charles. Jesse's *Outlines of St. Lucia's History* which covers the island's history up to the mid-twentieth century. However, it only provides a chronological outline of historical events. A glimpse of St. Lucia's general history could also be gained from *Sugar, Slavery and Settlement; A Social History of Vieux-Fort, St Lucia From The Amerindians to the Present* by Jolien Harmsen. The book focuses specifically on a social history of the southern town of Vieux-Fort from the indigenous settlements to the banana era of the 1990s little information is presented on education. A more contemporary source entitled *A History of St. Lucía* by Jolien Harmsen, Guy Ellis and Robert Devaux is the closest attempt at a 'general' history of the island. However, this book is limited in its coverage of the education system particularly as relates to the education of the children of the Afro St. Lucian Population. The PhD thesis by Terencia Kenneyata Joseph entitled 'History of Indian Indentured Labour; the Saint Lucian experience, 1859 to 1903' located at the Alma Jordan Library, St. Augustine Campus provides information, in Chapter Three, on the educational system on the island however, this information deals specifically with the children of

the Indian indentured labourers and does not provide any significant information as it relates to the children of the Afro St. Lucian population.

CHAPTER ONE

Planters' Resistance and the Establishment of an 'appropriate' Educational Programme

Efforts to formerly educate the formerly enslaved began after the abolition of slavery and the termination of the apprenticeship period in 1838.² However, the island's planters originally did not want their former slaves to receive any form of education and therefore provided an array of reasons for their opposition to this endeavour. The planters believed that while education primarily performed the conservative function of helping to maintain the status quo, it also had a potentially destabilizing effect on the thinking of those who benefited from it.³ Education not only passed on the belief systems, values, and attitudinal disposition which supported the existing social order in that society, it also opened up new horizons and possibilities among its recipients, the formerly enslaved. During the period of enslavement, fear of revolt was a brooding omnipresence in the daily lives of the planter class.⁴ Many considered it dangerous to allow slaves to acquire knowledge which would lead to change more heavily under the existing condition of bondage.⁵

The plantocracy's opposition to such a move was founded on fear that once these individuals acquired literacy, especially in writing and reading the English Language, it would become difficult to maintain and sustain any degree of social, economic and political control over them.

² M. K. Bacchus, The Utilization, Misuse and Development of Human Resources in the Early West Indian Colonies, Waterloo on Wilfred Laurier, University Press, 1990, 21.

³ M.K. Bacchus, Education in Pre-Emancipation Period with special reference to the Colonies which later became British Guiana, 645.

⁴ Lewis. Gordon, Puerto Rico, Freedom and Power in the Caribbean, Merlin Press, 1963, 29.

⁵ M.K. Bacchus, 1990, 645.

Education would lead to greater opportunity for revolt against an establishment which had kept the enslaved population tied to the plantation with no access to upward mobility. The majority of planters never envisaged any society far less theirs where the enslaved population would be freed, men, women and children, now unrestricted to partake in activities outside that of the plantation. This view was summarized by Nicole Christopher who suggested that “the planters never doubted that the day any Negro slave would open his Bible and read the first verse of the Book of Genesis, the end of slavery would be in sight.”⁶ Therefore, the island’s planters vehemently objected to such a form of education which would develop among the enslaved Africans.

However, the main reason for planters concerns and hesitation was one centred on economics. Planters did not want children of the Afro St. Lucian population attending school for the simple reason that this would decrease significantly on the hours they worked in the grass gangs, which would negatively affect the economic prosperity of the plantation. If these children were to attend school, planters would not only lose their labour but would have to pay the cost of their schooling. Every effort was therefore made to inculcate ‘good work habits’ among these young, enslaved persons, it was thought that sending them to school would have the opposite effect.⁷

As Gordon noted, keeping slaves busy was one of the most reliable means of keeping them acquiescent. This was applied early in the life of a slave born child; schooling would have been a contradiction to the whole system.⁸ Coleridge during his six months visit to the West Indies, summed up the planters’ dilemma as it pertained to the proposed education of slaves in the

⁶ Nicole Christopher, The West Indies, their People and History –Hutchinson and Co. Ltd, 1965, 167.

⁷ M.K. Bacchus, 649.

⁸ Gordon S, 1963 op 10.

following statement, “If the planter attempts to educate the slave, they do little for their own safety, in persisting, they debar him from the privileges to which he would soon feel that he has acquired an equitable right. It will be impossible to march Negroes on the road to knowledge and compel them to stand at ease with the old entrenchment of ignorance.”⁹

However, though these negative views continued to be held by planters, many decided to keep their opinion somewhat quiet for the moment, this was primarily attributed to the explosive debate which was ongoing in England on the issue of slavery. This development coupled with a number of other factors, brought about a practical change in planters and legislators’ attitude; the British government was seen as moving inexorably towards the emancipation of slaves and the planters were powerless in preventing this development. St. Lucian planters therefore unable to delay the inevitable implemented with assistance from missionaries and the Catholic Church, a programme of activities centred on a two prong approach. One aimed on securing the moral education and spiritual salvation of the slaves and the other which taught them to accept unquestioningly their position in society where they were obliged to work diligently in whatever tasks they were assigned by their masters.¹⁰ Their religious education became the fundamental crux of all instructional programmes on the island; education was to be in the perceived spiritual interest of the slave and the economic interest of their masters. The material utilized usually contained scripturally based themes with strong moral exhortations which lead slaves to work hard and practice virtue.¹¹ The emancipation of slaves did not deter the planters nor the authorities from their original plans for

⁹ Coleridge, 1825, 321.

¹⁰ M.K. Bacchus, 655.

¹¹ Ibid, 655.

the former enslaved population that of continued servitude through the application of religious education.

Research showed that the first public school which opened on the island operated for only two years, its closure was attributed to a lack of funds. In 1836, two years prior to emancipation, there appeared to have been four schools in existence on the island with a total of less than one hundred children in attendance. It was not until 1838 that a serious attempt on the establishment of schools on a proper basis was attempted. During the immediate post emancipation years there continued to be much debate on the most appropriate type of education for the children of the ex-slaves. On the island the legislators and planters expected that these children like their parents would eventually become state labourers. They therefore suggested that a system of education be specifically formulated which would prepare them for such a role. The type and quality of education should be one based on the premise which would teach them to accept their new status by modifying their aspiration as it related to their occupation and behaviours.

As the planters and authorities continued their debate, several obstacles soon came to the fore. One of the main obstacles to the education of the children of the Afro St. Lucian population was the fact that most parents, just out of slavery and not having a stable source of income were unable to pay the fees required by many of these schools. However, this situation would be resolved with the introduction of charitable institution like the Mico Schools where children of the Afro St. Lucian population would be afforded the opportunity of obtaining an 'education' at a minimal cost and for many it was free of cost.

As early as 1840 when John Reddie, Chief Justice of St. Lucia spoke at the opening of the assizes on 12 February, 1840, two years after emancipation he praised the Mico Schools, which he said were training up the children of the peasantry and some of the peasantry themselves to habits which fostered industry and usefulness. The colonial authorities viewed the educational system on the island as one that stressed and concentrated on internal tranquility. An article in the Palladium supported the views of the Chief Justice:

Education giving knowledge... is also the least of internal tranquillity and order; as the peasantry acquired useful knowledge so will they be tractable and the expenses of Judicial and Police establishment be diminished to the relief of the colonist generally.¹²

Chief Justice Reddie hoped that through education the peasantry would in time turn their attention to what he termed 'better things' and stop 'the most disgraceful practice of rioting and reviling and prosecuting the church.'¹³ Others like Governor Col. George Graydon in his inaugural address in 1841, described a system of education that would serve the four duties of men: duty to God, to the government, to the country, and to one another. However, when the Col translated the duties into practical aspects, he recommended a study of the English language as a study of books on agriculture and on other particular branches of trade suitable to the colony.¹⁴

As the educational programme continued to be implemented there likewise continued to be individuals who strongly objected and voiced their displeasure to the level and type of education being taught to the children of the Afro St. Lucian population. They felt that the schools were attempting too much with these children whose place they strongly advocated was on the sugar

¹² Palladium 25 February 1840.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Palladium, 3 March, 1841, Report of Legislative Council Meeting.

estates alongside their parents, labouring, cutting cane, and not seated in school learning and being taught subjects which would be of no benefit to them now and later in their life. James Drysdale was among the authorities who felt that the teachers especially those at the Mico Schools attempted 'too much' and were often criticized for their method of educating the children of the Afro St. Lucian I population.¹⁵ Drysdale stressed that their structure should be limited to the rudimentary and elementary branches of education for more real practical benefits. "Instead of lessons in astrology or obtuse questions of scriptural geography,"¹⁶ he further asserted that, "Reading, writing, rules of Arithmetic with some slight knowledge of geography were all that was required."¹⁷ He believed that to attempt more was not only fruitless but would not fit the scholars for the situation in life which they were destined to fill on returning to their parents¹⁸.

¹⁵ P.P X 1857, Report in the Blue Book, 1855.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

The Mico Schools and Denominational Prejudices

In June 1838, the first Mico School officially opened its doors in River Doree, Troumassee to infants 2 ½ to 8 years of age. The following details were extracted from an advertisement taken from the Palladium, Volume 1, Saturday, 14 October, 1838 and provided particulars on the institution's operations. School fees for both departments were for 3 days per week. Children whose parents were unable to pay would be taught for free. The following advertisement provided the age range and school hours for each specific group.

Mico Institution

Infant school shall be held for the reception of only children from the age of 2 ½ to 8 years and the juvenile from 8 to 13 years.

Infant hours 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Juvenile hours 2:00 p.m. to half past 4:00 p.m.¹⁹

Within a few years, schools were built in other parts of the island namely Roseau, Gros Islet in the north, Laborie on the west coast, the southern town of Vieux Fort and in Soufriere in 1840. However, the operations of these schools would be greatly affected by a number of factors which inadvertently contributed to a decrease both in school performance and permanency. These included the withdrawal of the Negro Education Grant in 1845, the reluctance of the local legislators to bridge the financial gap it created and the difficulties of securing alternative sources

¹⁹ Palladium Volume 1, Saturday October 14, 1838.

of funding.²⁰ The discontinuation of the grant and the formal renunciation of any financial responsibility for the educational welfare of the formerly enslaved population dealt a severe and debilitating blow to the various religious and non- religious bodies which provided education for these individuals.

The seven Mico Charity schools received the greatest setback with the reduction and termination of the grant and was forced to close nearly all its schools. However, the Charity continued its operation of primary schools partly because it was realised that if its school terminated work with these children, the Roman Catholic Church would then dominate the educational domain. In the predominantly Catholic island, the ‘denominational prejudices’ offered an ‘insuperable obstacle’ not only to the establishment, but also to the extension of educational facilities.²¹ The Mico Charity schools with their strong Protestant bias were firmly entrenched while the few Roman Catholic Churches were at first virtually excluded from teaching and sharing in the general administration of the schools or government financial provision for education. Consequently, the Mico Schools were often viewed with suspicion and hostility.

Though there existed a large Catholic population on the island there were only a few Catholic churches. The priests were often fearful but more so distrustful of the proselytizing possibilities of the education that was being offered in the schools operated by other denominational bodies especially that of the Mico Charity. Children therefore became mere pawns between these two groups. The Catholic Church took the situation extremely seriously and went as far as instructing

²⁰ Dispatch 18 March 1841.

²¹ P. P 1861, XL Hincks to New Castle, 15 June 1860.

parents not to send their children to the Mico Schools. In some cases, the priests even threatened to refuse the rites of the Church, such as baptism and matrimonial blessings to those who did not follow their orders.

This constant rivalry and animosity between the two bodies continued as Catholic officials unabated accused the Mico Schools of encroaching unto their ‘flock.’ According to Cachet, “though the Mico Schools provided tremendous opportunities for public education for the children of the labouring population during the post emancipation era, they were constantly under scrutiny from the Roman Catholic churches on the island. These schools opened their doors to all children irrespective of religious denomination.”²² Many Catholic students attended these Mico Schools as they were originally the only schools on the island. In its infancy the Mico schools was purported to stand according to Breen “for the freehold advantage of intellectual physical and moral training.”²³ However, it was not long before Catholic authorities on the island felt that Mico schooling, founded upon Protestantism, precluded the proper education of Catholics.

On 15 March, 1841, a major intervention by Monsignor Smith (Bishop of Port- of- Spain) would change the direction of education on the island. After visiting the Mico School in Castries, Monsignor Smith expressed the desire that Catholic teachers be appointed to teach religion to Catholic children in the Mico Schools. Subsequently, he wrote a letter to the Secretary of State in which he complained about the interference of Mico School teachers with the religious education

²² Cachet, 123.

²³ Breen, 260.

of Catholic children and requested that Catholic children not be allowed to attend any Bible classes given by Protestant teachers. However, the Mico teachers did not comply with the Bishop's wishes. The Catholic parish priests continued in their opposition to the operations of the Mico schools solely based on the premise that the Mico teachers were 'bigoted and anti-Catholic' and that they were ignoring the Catholic education of the Catholic children attending their schools. Fr. Charles Gachet though admitting that the Mico Schools provided educational opportunities for the children of the labouring population was however one of those adamantly opposed to Protestant operations on the island and frequently advocated that the influence of those schools be curtailed.

In 1842 Catholic priests began organising private schools especially for girls where French, needlework and religion were taught. This open rivalry between the Mico School and the Catholic Church would form the basis upon which the Church would be drawn into education on the island. The Sisters of the Cluny invitation to conduct schooling was a way of counteracting the influence of the Mico Schools. By 1844 the Sisters of Cluny had made significant effort at transforming the educational platform which was dominated by Protestants. The project received the approval and support of Bishop Smith and Mother Javouhey (Mother Superior of Port- of -Spain) and the first formal form of education with Catholic teachers took place under the auspices of 'Filles de Marie.'

The 'Filles de Marie' began with a few local sisters and two Trinidadians. The first six sisters were sent to the island on 21 June, 1847. However, this boarding school catered only to girls. A preschool was also established with an aim of assisting poor young females. In 1854, the St. Joseph's Convent High School for girls opened. However, most parents were unable to afford to

send their children to this school. Only a certain class of girls, mainly white upper and middle class in addition to a small number of wealthy ‘coloureds’ could have afforded attending the Convent.

The authorities despite some setbacks achieved some level of progress in the education of the children of the Afro St. Lucian population. However, a major impediment was the continual and escalating hostile and prejudicial atmosphere that existed between the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant Clergy. In 1851 the Protestants on the island numbered a mere five hundred and twelve. In this predominantly Catholic island the denominational prejudices offered an “insuperable obstacle not only to the establishment but also to the extensive educational facilities.”²⁴

Roman Catholic priests did not take too kindly to the efforts made by other religious groups at intruding on what was traditionally the territory to which they had exclusive ‘spiritual rights.’ They not only opposed Mico School interference in the education system but also objected to the role played by the Anglican Church accusing them of forcing their doctrines onto a group of unsuspecting and ‘gullible’ population. They strongly opposed the efforts made by the Anglican schools in seeking converts from among their flock by attempting to educate the children along Protestant lines. Such pressures were exerted by the priests even when there were no Roman Catholic schools in the immediate vicinity which the children could attend. Coleridge reported that on the island where the Roman Catholic Church had no schools themselves, they forbid any of their friends to attend one in company with Protestants.²⁵

²⁴ P.P 1861 X L Hincks to Newcastle 15 June 1861.

²⁵ Ibid, 131.

In a letter to the Board of Education dated 14 September 1858, Reverend Abbe Cadou, Cure of Choiseul, drew the Board's attention to the situation which existed between the Catholic and Protestant clergy on the issue of education. He described the situation as one of paramount necessity in his parish and noted that there were "two Protestant teachers and a Protestant minister in his parish" and that:

Catholic children attending the lessons of the latter never attended mass or religious instruction. Instead according to the religious officials, they engaged in idleness and vice, due to the fact that these Catholic born children are taught by anti-Catholic teachers. The only means of addressing the situation and striking at the root of this immorality was to establish a school in the parish under the direction of a Catholic teacher.²⁶

The continued and underling factor stemmed from the fact that the island with its large Catholic population only had a few Catholic schools and this posed a problem to the Catholic clergy. They were often fearful of the proselytizing possibilities of the education that was being offered in schools operated by other denominational bodies. Therefore, Catholic priest on the island continued 'advising' and often times threatening parents against sending their children to these schools even though they did not have access to a Roman Catholic school.

Mico operations on the island came to an end in 1881 and by 1890 all Mico schools were closed. This was due to the terms outlined by the Mico Trust which did not allow Mico schools to comply with the Education Ordinance of 1881. According to certain provisions of the Trust, Mico Schools could not accept Government grants although their own funds were dwindling. The acceptance of any Government funding would threaten their independence in that Government would be involved in the process by which the schools were administered. The Mico schools therefore took

²⁶ Letter from Reverend Abbe Cadov, Cure of Choiseul to the Board of Education 14th September 1858.

the decision to close its schools. The physical structures were handed over to Government and were renamed Government Schools, however they continued to be administered according to Mico tradition.

On 30th March, 1890, the same year Mico schools closed their doors, St. Mary's College for boys located on Micoud Street, opened its doors to twenty-seven boys, ages six to fifteen. By 1915 the number had risen to eighty students. However, "A few of the boys were reasonably familiar with English, but most had hardly what we may call 'a nodding acquaintance' with that language and a good many knew not one word of it."²⁷

²⁷ Tapon, 1915, 4

Chapter Three

Patois: Condemnation, Detestation and Suppression

Though rivals in the educational system, the Roman Catholic, Protestant and Anglican clergy were united in their condemnation and detestation of patois. To these churches the major obstacle which drastically hindered the progress made in the education system was the persistence of patois. Patois was the medium of communication among the Afro St. Lucian population. Henry Coleridge, an editor, addressing this lingering situation stressed that, “the chief thing that I would aim at if I were Governor would be to the encouragement of the knowledge of the English tongue, for the majority of the population speak a different language from the remaining handful of their masters.”²⁸ As far back as 1826, he noted his concerns that nine tenths of the population spoke a different language to the rest of society. In 1837 Inspector Charles Latrobe reporting on the progress of the first two years of work under the Negro Education Grant (1835-45) observed a considerable handicap to the progress of education in Saint Lucia and Dominica and stated, “Yet so various and so great are the obstacles in the way of general education in both islands resulting from the language current among the Negroes ... no favourable report can be expected on the subject till some of these are overcome.”²⁹

The local authorities believed that a Creole language acted as a means of concealing the speaker's intention as evident in the 1849 riots and began a program aimed at the eradication of Patois as the medium of communication predominantly among the children of the Afro St. Lucian population.

²⁸ Nelson Henry Coleridge, Six Months in the West Indies, 1825, London: J .C Murray, 1926,131.

²⁹ Gordon, 1963, 32.

A long-standing vocal critic of the use of patois was Henry Breen, who dismissed the patois as ‘gibberish’ and referred to it as ‘the refuge of ignorance’ which was merely the French language stripped of its many and dignified ornaments and travestied for the accommodation of children and toothless women.³⁰ French was the language commonly spoken on the island and continued to be spoken in all judicial proceedings. It was not until January 1, 1842, that French ceased altogether to be used in courts of law³¹. He noted that:

The Negros language is a jargon form, from the French and composed of words or rather sounds adapted to the organs of speech in the black population. As a patois, it is an even more unintelligible than that spoken by the Negroes in the English colonies. Its distinguishing features consists in the suppression of the letter ‘r’ in almost every word in which it should be used, and the addition of ‘ki’ and ‘ka’s’ to assist in the formation of the tenses.³²

In an attempt to guarantee that English be viewed as a compulsory element in the education system and Patois the language of an ‘ignorant population’ and eradicated from the island the following measure in the form of a tax was implemented as indicate in the following Ordinance of 1851:

...to raise funds for promoting the end of the inhabitants of the colony.... Rates were levied on sugar, rum, and molasses for the Road and Bridge Fund, and on charcoal, logwood, firewood, hides, coffee and cocoa for the Education Fund which was also augmented by fees for hawkers’ license and boat licenses.³³

However, a few years later this Ordinance was repealed and replaced with the 1859 Ordinance. By this Ordinance the Board of Education placed the following into law. (See Appendix B, Appendix 3).

³⁰ Breen, 185.

³¹ Ibid, 184.

³² H. Breen, St Lucia Historical, Statistical and Descriptive, London: 1844, 184.

³³ Board of Education Special Report on Educational Subject, Volume 2, Great Britain Board of Educational System of the Chief Crown and Possessor of the British Empire.

Despite numerous setbacks and difficulties, the government in 1867 insisted that English be the sole medium of instruction in school throughout the island. The government introduced regulations which stated that no grant would be made to any school in which English language was not effectively taught and that all classroom instructions must be given in English.³⁴ In order to develop an interest in English, readers were provided usually free of costs to the students. However, this initiative did little to improve the situation. Students experienced difficulties with the content since the objects and events which they described were peculiar to the European environment and were totally unfamiliar to the West Indian students. A report of the Government of St. Lucia, 1872, supported the unsuitability of these readers and noted that:

.... the reading books in use are unsuited to the country. Many of their illustrations and allusions refer to objects which the students Familiarity is taken for granted, but which neither pupil nor teachers have ever seen and most of them are never likely to see; while on the other hand, no instruction is conveyed nor interest excited with reference to the phenomena around them.³⁵

However, in spite of this report little effort was made over the years to overcome this situation and other deficiencies in the educational system primarily as it pertained to the dominance of patois among the children. In the 1870s, teachers who had previously given instructions in the French language were now expected to do so in English. The government made giving educational instructions in the English language mandatory in all government schools. It was stipulated that when English was not taught efficiently by the teachers to the students in a manner which would encourage them to speak the language the government grant would be withdrawn. This new directive meant that the government was reducing the French influence on

³⁴ M.K. Bacchus, 150.

³⁵ Report on the Government of St. Lucia, British P.P Volume, 42, 1872, London of Britain, 23.

the island in order to establish an English one. The children of the Afro St. Lucian population were therefore seen as the engineers of such an objective.

CHAPTER FOUR

Eliminating Patois and Promoting English Language through Rewards and Incentives

The problems associated with education continued to be a blame game, each group accusing the other of perpetrating and exacerbating the situation. On 24 October 1890 Inspection F. B. G Moore stated:

With regard to the patois which is such a serious impediment to the programme of Education in the colony. I am of the opinion that teachers would do well to avoid the use of patois language altogether. Some teachers are too fond of saving themselves the trouble of practical explanation, by giving their command to children in patois. This only entails greater trouble in the long run; and moreover, so long as children hear their teachers employ the patois, they will never be brought to understand that it is a corrupt and vulgar dialect which can be of no use to them in the afterlife, and of which they ought to be ashamed.³⁶

Colonial Report on Education No. 53, 1891 blamed the continued use of patois on the lack of pastors and parents to speak English and demanded that English be spoken by children whilst out of school. It reported that the children only hear English spoken while they are in schools as Patois was the language spoken at home.

However, the report of the Acting Inspector of Schools in The Voice, 13 June 1895 openly attributed and cast blame at the situation which persisted on the continued management of schools by Frenchmen who did not promote or encourage the teaching of the English language coupled with the outright lack of inspection by managers. The paper went on:

³⁶ Education Officer, 24 October 1890, F B Moore, Inspector of Schools to the Honorable Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson.

...that 8 of the 13 primary schools on the colony should have as their authorised managers Frenchmen – who do not know a word of English, in which the teaching of these schools is bound by law to be carried out. Would they countenance the absurdity of the Re. m. Loward who lives in Castries and has little call to go out of it being accepted as the Manager of schools at places so far distance from Castries. And from each other as Roseau, Mabouya, Cannelles and Mon Repos.... The effectiveness of those management is shown by any abstract of school returns published in the official Gazette of the 7th instant.³⁷

In 1889 Edward W. Begrit as like the previous reports of 1890 and 1891 blamed patois for the poor results and recommended that government withdraw or lower the grant given to schools where patois was encouraged by managers or teachers.

Up to the end of the nineteenth century there seemed to be little progress in the total elimination of the patois. An article entitled Report on the Primary Schools for 1898 published in the Voice blamed this infliction upon the action or lack of action on the part of non-Catholic clergy. Fred E. Bundy, Inspector of Schools in an Article of the Voice of St. Lucia, 13 April 1898 on The Report on the Primary Schools for 1898 reported that:

Despite the drawback that French and Patois cannot be eradicated so long as they are and most probably for another generation continue to be the medium of communication between most the clergy and their parishioners and notwithstanding that the exclusive management of many of these schools is in the hands of persons who do not profess to understand a word of English as are the seven schools in the parish of Soufriere, for instance in a little goodwill on the part of the government would doubtless affect much to take the story out of the Sir Cuthbert Quilter's sarcasm whether it was intended to have a less general application that "before the pupils of St Lucia could hope to handle English money they must learn to speak English ..."³⁸

³⁷ The Voice, June 1895.

³⁸ Fred E Burely, Inspector of Schools. Education Office 28 February 1898. Voice of St Lucia, 13 April 1898, Volume 15, 735, Report on the Primary school for 1898.

Therefore, in an effort for the children to reject patois and learn the English language, the inspector of schools for the island developed a programme offering incentives. This took the form of a competition where prizes were awarded to school children in the Creole speaking Districts I, II, III and IV who made the most progress in speaking English. In a letter dated 19 May 1899 to C.A. King, Administrator of the island, Mr. Bundy provided the following report on the examination. This programme proved to be successful in several schools where it was implemented. (See Appendix B, Appendices 1 and 2)

The prize to be awarded was £3. The children of English-speaking parents were not eligible for the prize as the main targets were children mainly of the Afro St. Lucian labouring class. The Inspector Fred, E. Burdy was of the opinion that if the programme was correctly implemented it would be a means of helping forward the elimination of Patois on the island.

CHAPTER FIVE

Impediments to Education: Truancy, Street Children, Juvenile Delinquents and Wharf rats

With the depletion of the public treasury which resulted from the economic decline of the island, the legislature expected parents to make greater contribution to the cost of their children's schooling through the payment of school fees. When the government acquired the schools, it passed an Ordinance which required every child to pay school fees in an effort to recover some of the cost of assuring this added financial responsibility. However, the insistence on payment of school fees often resulted in many parents withdrawing their children from school. In addition, parents had to meet expenditure on schoolbooks, clothes and school fees and these costs were becoming unbearable for many families. This was a direct result of the loss of benefits which families received from their children's work on the plantation or their assistance with the cultivation of family farms or plots. Parents could not afford to do without the assistance of their children who had reached the age where they could contribute financially. Parents often required their children for domestic purposes and at other times to perform paid labour. This practise however negatively affected students' attendance throughout the island particularly in areas within close proximity to sugar estates.

At the Dennery School there were as little as 6 or 7 children attending school by 1861, it must be noted that some of these students were unable to read neither English nor French. This situation was attributed to the proximity of the Mabouya Valley which was a great temptation for parents and children who saw it more advantageous working on the sugar plantation than attending school. This school so had never been a success; there were only 27 students registered at the beginning of its operations and the numbers never increased.

In the early 1890s school attendance of children of the Afro St. Lucian population continued to be of major concern. Children were only sent to school on days that they were not needed at home. Usually all hands in the family were needed in the daily chores at home and in working the land. Most parents could not afford to clothe their children properly and sending them to school was an extra expense they could not afford. To purchase one shirt and a pair of trousers costing 1 shilling and 6 pence, parents usually had to 'school the clothes'.³⁹ It was a customary practise for parents to give a down payment of 6 pence and then sent 3 pence every week until the full amount was paid for. It often took a full year or longer before parents could afford clothes for all their children due to the scarcity of daily wages of 6 pence for a woman and 9 pence for a man. Money earned was often in the region of 6 shillings and 3 pence for a family with a working mother and a father and about 9 to 12 children to maintain.

Another major impediment to education stemmed from the fact that the enrolment as well as attendance of children at school was extremely low. Children whose parents were unable to provide an education for them or those who opted not to attend school usually found themselves in various gangs roaming through the streets and wharf areas of Castries, the capital. Throughout the years following emancipation the number of these children males as well as females increased rapidly and this development led to often violent confrontations between these gangs and the residents of the area. These youngsters often engaged themselves in such activities as drinking, cursing, gambling, fighting, stealing and prostitution. In 1895 the situation got to such a critical point that residents as well as businesspersons in and around the immediate vicinity of Castries were calling for some form of action to be taken by the authorities in an attempt to curtail this

³⁹ A form of lay away or credit.

growing nuisance. An article in The Voice of St Lucia, Thursday 4th November 1895, highlighted this escalating problem. (See Appendix B, Appendix 4).

However, little was done by the authorities in rectifying the problem of getting these children off the streets and into schools. The number of absentee children of primary school age around the island continued to increase as the number of juvenile delinquents crowded into the streets and wharfs of Castries. These children who crowded the wharfs came to be known as ‘wharf rats’ and often associated themselves with notorious criminal elements that used their services to pickpocket citizens who found themselves near the wharf. In 1898, the number of wharf rates was reduced slightly by twenty according to an article in The Voice of St Lucia, which reported that:

Twenty wharf rats signed on as mule minders on board the Manchester City.... These boys are to get 30/ from this trip to South Africa, where they will be turned adrift without any right to claim return passage.⁴⁰

This number only represented a drop in the bucket, for according to that same article “hundreds more would have gone had they been required.”⁴¹ Many of these children it had been discovered were sent to beg on the streets of the capital by parents who could not afford to feed nor care for them. Many others had left their homes in the country areas with the aim of making a living working as porters or errand boys working the wharfs. However, these jobs were difficult to come by and hundreds found themselves instead engaged in criminal activities, living on the streets. Many of these children were under the age of twelve; some were as young as seven years.

⁴⁰ The Voice of St. Lucia, Thursday 7 December 1898 Volume 15, No. 769.

⁴¹ Ibid

An excerpt from an article in The Voice, dated 4 October, 1900 provided the details of a disturbing yet preventable occurrence on the streets of Castries involving a group of street children. See Appendix B, Appendix 5 and 6).

There continued to be many reported and confirmed cases of large numbers of children who were not attending schools but instead frequented areas around the town becoming a menace to society. They according to authorities were growing up in “ignorance, idleness and vice and threatened to become a nuisance and a damage to the town.”⁴² In light of the serious nature of the increasing number of children who frequented the wharfs and streets of the capital, a notice was issued by Fred E. Bundy, Inspector of schools in 1889. This notice advised parents on the provision of the Elementary Instruction Ordinance of 1889. The notice highlighted the provisions to be implemented in an effort to curb the numbers of school aged children who roamed these areas. Section 3 of the Ordinance read:

1. it shall be the duty of the parent of every child to cause such child to receive elementary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic.
2. if such parents fail to perform such duty he shall be liable to such orders and penalties as are provided in the Ordinance.

In conclusion it stressed that from and after the 1st day of July next proceedings will be taken before the District Court against parents and guardians who do not comply with the provision of this Ordinance.⁴³

⁴² The Voice of St. Lucia, 10 March, 1898.

⁴³ The Voice of St. Lucia, Thursday 10 March 1898, Volume 14, No. 78, Public Notice, Signed Fred E Bundy, Inspector of Schools.

Though every effort was made to improve the use of English a Report on the Primary Schools of St. Lucia in 1904 noted that in more than 60 percent of the schools English was spoken and written as if it was a foreign language by the students. The situation continued to be grave that G.T Cumberbatch commented, “The children think in patois, they cannot think in English... It is a melancholy reflection to consider that in a colony which has been in the uninterrupted possession of England for over a century, there should be such ignorance of the language of the country to which it belongs.”⁴⁴

Up to the first half of the twentieth century, the situation persisted and the authorities viewed such as major impediments which had to be removed in order to achieve their goal, to eradicate Patois being spoken by the Afro St. Lucian population and their children. This could only be achieved in their option through the eradication of Patois as a medium of communication among the rising generation, the children. The authorities envisaged that this could be achieved once these children were taught using English as the only medium of instruction.

Outside the towns of Castries and Soufriere few children understood English before reaching Standard IV. Not more than 1000 or 1500 of the children of school age, outside of these two towns could speak or understand English; in spite of the fact that all subjects were taught in English. The problem or contributing factor was that the method of teaching was almost purely mechanical. Little effort was taken to train the children in the knowledge of English, instead teaching and learning was confined generally to the few simple words of command. Out of school, the children

⁴⁴ Report on the Primary Schools of St. Lucia for the Year 1904, G.T Cumberbatch to Sir George Melville, K.C.M.G. Administrator. May 11, 1905.St. Lucia Gazette 1905. Vol 74, Saturday, December 16, 1905 [No 40].

heard and spoke nothing by Creole.⁴⁵ Up to 1938 problems associated with the education of the children of the Afro St. Lucian population persisted.

⁴⁵ Report of the West Indies Royal Commission, Proceedings evidence and documents relating to the Windward Islands. The Leeward islands and Jamaica, 1879, 1898, Volume L1, 1-91, MC 104-412.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has focused on examining the education system as it pertained to the children of the Afro St. Lucian Population 1838-1938. This study covers one hundred years and provides a chronological, historic journey which highlighted the struggles, hindrance as well as the denominational prejudices experienced by such groups as the Protestants and Anglicans as they attempted to provide some form of formal education to the children of the Afro St. Lucian labouring population. An examination of the attitudes of the planter class and their reluctance and opposition in providing any form of education to the children of the labouring population was provided. The study also focused on the establishment of denominational schools with emphasis on the Mico Schools. A detailed description of the schools' operations as well as the numerous setbacks experienced by the Mico Charity Schools which included constant harassment and intimidation. Rivalry and animosity between the institution and the Catholic Church and enactment of the Education Ordinance of 1881 eventually led to their closure and the increased operations of Catholic institutions

The various motives for white colonial condemnation and detestation of patois as the medium of communication among the labouring population and their children were expounded upon. The authorities utilized various strategies in their pursuit at eliminating the patois and mandatory speaking of the English Language in and outside of school through rewards and other incentives. In addition to denominational prejudices and the interference of patois, truancy due to the increase numbers of street children and wharf rats affected the successful implementation of the educational programmes which contributed significantly to high rates of absenteeism and the persistence of patois up to 1838.

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APPENDIX A

Appendix 1

Return of Schools in the British Colonies belonging to the Mico Charity. West Indies, 1838.

Return of Schools in the British Colonies belonging to the Mico Charity - the amount of the past expenditure - estimated expenditure for the year ending February 1838 - and anticipated funds.

	Number of Schools.	Numbers under instruction.		Total expended last year 1837 to 1838 end of Feb. 1838.	Sum received from Government last year 1837 and by the Mico Charity 1837 and 1838.	Sum expended by the Mico Charity.	Sum expended by the Charity beyond annual Income.	Sum received from Government in 1838 which are not yet expended.	Estimated expenses of year ending Feb. 1838.	Sum received from Government for the year ending Feb. 1838.
Jamaica	71 ^{44 established} _{27 projected & withdrawn}	47/45	3394	13690.3.7	2000.---	11690.3.7			8100.---	
Mauritius	6	306	251	1112.7.2	1700.---	332.7.2		1000.---	5000.---	
Barbadoes	3	No return		1000.---	800.---	200.---			2000.---	
Trinidad	Teachers arrived on 13. April 1837			329.1.11		329.1.11			3000.---	
St. Lucia	Teachers now making to complete an arrangement.				4000.---		9330.11.3	4000.---	1000.---	14,000.
Dominica	Dile								1000.---	
Bahamas	1. The school has been lately transferred to the Trustees of A. A. S.								200.---	
Antigua	The Trustees sent out a Teacher to Antigua but afterwards withdrew the instruction as Antigua is too poor to support it. The Trustees are now waiting to see if they have since found that an establishment is the want of Antigua.								1000.---	
Tobago	No arrangement yet got made.								400.---	
Expences of Trust in London.				exp. 340.4.6		340.4.6			200.---	
	81 Schools.	5051	3645	16879.7.2	20500.---	12099.7.2	9330.11.3	5000.---	21900.---	14,000.

Source: Catalogue reference: CO318/131 folio 40. Crown Copyright

Appendix 2

Plaque at the River Doree Grace Church



Source: <https://islandeffect.com/the-wonderful-beautiful-little-church-of-river-doree/>

Appendix 3

Grace Church River Doree which housed the first school built after Emancipation.



Source: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/303402394057>

Appendix 4

St. Joseph's Convent



Source: https://www.delcampe.net/en_GB/collectables/postcards/antilles/saint-lucia/st-joseph-convent-st-lucia-undivided-back-p-used-729430922.html

Appendix 5

St. Mary's College boys



Source: <https://thevoiceslu.com/2019/06/a-historical-account-of-smc-detailed-in-c-georges-new-book/>

Appendix 6

St. Mary's College



Source: <https://thevoiceslu.com/2019/06/a-historical-account-of-smc-detailed-in-c-georges-new-book/>

Appendix 7

Three 'wharf rats.'



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/pennymeadbooks/photos/splitting-up-a-fine-collection-of-st-lucia-postcards-this-one-is-captioned-three/2753205148096489/>

Appendix 8

Afro St. Lucian children relaxing after a game of cricket.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/sweetstlucia/photos/a.180659701986484/923724174346696>

APPENDIX B

Appendix 1

Report on the examination purpose:

The following provides the names of the first prize awardees and the school they attended:

District I to District III

First Prize District I – Castries and Gros Islet
George Herbert, Castries, R.C. Boys School 301

First Prize District II – Anse La Raye, Canarise, and Soufriere
Isabella Albert, Soufriere R.C. Girls School 308

First Prize District III – Choisuel and Laborie
John C Pascal, Choiseul Boys School

First Prize District IV, Vieux Fort, Micoud and Dennery
Anna Devaux Vieux Fort R C Girls School

Source: Report on the Examination Purpose, 18 May 1899 to C. A King, Administrator of the Island.

Appendix 2

The Voice of St Lucia, 10th March 1898 carried the following notice:

Title – Circular to Managers and Teachers

In order to encourage the use of the English language, His Honour the Administrator offers the following recommendations to the managers and teachers of the primary schools.

1. there shall be found in each school a class known as the English class to consist of children of the third, fourth, fifth and sixth standards.
2. special lessons called the English lesson of one hour each, shall be given to the English class, two or three times a week;
3. the principal object of the lessons shall be the intelligent use of the English language by the children. The children therefore ought to be encouraged as much as possible to converse in English on the subject matter of the lessons, and the teacher should confine himself chiefly to the correction of faults in pronunciation, grammar, and expression. In this way the English lesson will be essentially different from the usual reading lesson.
4. the Tropical Reader No. 1 shall be the bases for the work to be done in this class. Copies of the Tropical Reader will be supplied by the government to all the schools.
5. the subject of conversation shall not be confined simply to those contained in the reader, but shall extend to all matters closely connected with the everyday life of the children.
6. a special register shall be kept of all the attendance of children of these lessons.

Source: Fred E Burdy, Inspector of Schools, 1898.

Appendix 3

Ordinance No. 1, No. 6, 1859

That it shall not be lawful for either of the said committees to afford assistance, out of the Funds allotted by the Board to such committees, to any school, seminary or other institution for the advancement of learning in which the English language shall not be effectively taught and which the institution shall not be conveyed in the English language to all pupils who sufficiently understand the same of which the master or other superintending authority shall refuse to allow the committee affording or intending to afford such assistance, or person appointed by the Governor for such purpose to visit and inspect such school, seminary or other institution at all reasonable time, and to exercise the pupils attending the same.

Source: Ordinance No. 1, No. 6 enacted by His Excellency Francis Hicks, Governor of Saint Lucia, 14th January 1859.

Appendix 4

An excerpt from an article in The Voice of St. Lucia 4th November 1895.

We want a vagrancy Law. The number of people who do no avowable world for their living in Castries is rapidly increasing and the increase in entirely among the adolescents of both sexes. One has only to observe how quickly a crowd of lads and girls will gather together on the occurrence of anything ever so little out of the common to gauge the proportion of vagabond boys and abandon girls bear to the rest of the community. The remedy for this evil is strictly physical. These young people have either never come under any home influence or moral restraint or have looked to religion as an irksome system of mechanical practice of which as they never penetrated the sacred symbolism, they soon tire and let themselves go to the seductions of pleasure, vice and unbridled licences.

Source: The Voice, Thursday, 14th November 1895, Volume 1, No. 559.

Appendix 5

Excerpt from Voice of St. Lucia 4th October 1900 on six little vagabond girls.

Six little girls between the ages of apparently of 9 and 12 who were brought before the District Court on the charge of having set upon and severely beaten a woman who was quietly washing clothes at the river. The Police Sergeant who prosecuted declared that these girls were depraved and beyond belief, that besides leading a vagabond existence, they were a standing disgrace and nuisance in Castries. They wandered about the street all day, annoying people and trying to pick quarrels with the weak or infirm and their nights spent under the balconies disturbing peoples sleep by using the most disgusting language to attract vagabond boys. They were in a filthy condition, ragged with incipient sores.

Source: Voice of St. Lucia, 4 October 1900, Volume 16, No. 812.

Appendix 6

Excerpt from The Voice on 14th November 1895 on vagabond street children.

These children were sentenced to 2 months imprisonment each. In the majority of such cases, offenders were imprisoned up to one year in juvenile facilities which did not cater for such young offenders. After serving their sentences many of these young individuals would return to these same streets and wharf areas and grew up and become seasoned criminals where they in turn enticed girls and boys into their gangs...

Source: The Voice Thursday, 14th November 1895, Volume 1, No. 559.