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LABOUR COMMITMENT, SEXUAL DUALISM
AND INDUSTRIALISATION IN JAMAICA

by

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Preface

This paper is part of a study of labour force participation in Jamaican industrialisation and is directly related to an earlier working paper.¹ The present paper supports some themes discussed in section six of that paper - Wage Labour and the Legacy of Paternalism.

The process of proletarianisation is a crucial aspect of the more general process of capitalist industrialisation, for the successful emergence of a capitalist structure of production depends on the ability of employers to secure an efficient wage-labour force, since this is necessary for capital accumulation. There is some misunderstanding in the literature on the notion of proletarianisation. Usually it is meant that the labour force is dependent entirely on wage income for its subsistence. But that definition is inadequate, for if proletarianisation is viewed as a functional process it must mean that the wage labour force is generating a surplus. In other words proletarianisation implies a stable, efficient wage labour force, not just the existence of a growing number of wage workers who are supplying labour to wage jobs. This brings into the theoretical framework such characteristics of wage employment as (a) stability in jobs, or labour turnover, (b) rates of absenteeism, (c) intensity of work effort, (d) duration of working day and week, (e) flexibility of workers in terms of tasks to be fulfilled, and (f) skill acquisition and application. Seen in this way the process of securing a proletarianised labour force is much more complicated than implied by the simplified model in which proletarianisation merely means a work force of 'free' wage labourers. In that model little more needs to be said than that with the transformation of a pre-capitalist to some form of capitalist structure of production workers are dispossessed of land and have a greater need for cash income.² These surely are only necessary conditions for proletarianisation.

In the earlier paper various factors influencing the extent of labour force commitment were explored, particularly in so far as they influenced the extent of sexual dualism in the labour market. Proletarianisation implies a high level of commitment to wage-labour. Commitment is characterised by stability of employment, which is associated with low levels of absenteeism and labour turnover, and a workforce that has a predictable, reliable level of efficiency. It also implies that workers' perceived needs are geared to a money economy and that expected incomes are consistent with market wages - i.e. there must be some realistic opportunity to obtain the expected income level.

¹ G. Standing, Labour Force Participation in Historical Perspective: Proletarianisation in Jamaica, Population and Employment Working Paper No. 50 (Geneva, ILO, March 1977). A revised version of that paper will form chapter one of a forthcoming monograph entitled "Proletarianisation in Jamaica".

² For an analysis of this set of issues, see G. Standing, Labour Force Participation and Development (Geneva, ILO, 1978), pp. 60-65.

Formally, commitment to wage labour is a function of (i) the structure of incentives, (ii) the compatibility of employment with family, kinship and social structure, (iii) perceived needs, and related to that, (iv) the level and malleability of aspirations and expectations. In fact most of these are inter-related. Thus the important aspect of the incentive structure is not so much the wage level, nor the wage level relative to the earnings opportunities outside wage employment, but the relationship between actual and expected wages. So a group of workers conditioned to low expected incomes will tend to have greater commitment to labour for a given wage than other workers geared to higher levels of expectations and aspirations.¹

Similarly the compatibility of employment and social-family-kinship relationships is significant in so far as it affects the 'psychic costs' of wage labour. In societies in which the traditional pattern of securing a livelihood consists of 'occupational multiplicity', in which opportunities exist for genuine arbitrage of activities and in which casual work schedules predominate, the psychic cost of regular full-time wage labour involving a constant pattern of clearly defined tasks will be considerable, and the problem of securing a committed wage labour force from workers attuned to a life of occupational multiplicity will be correspondingly difficult. Similarly, if the type of employment conflicts with the cultural norms and social relationships outside wage employment workers will find it hard to give context and meaning to work effort. Moreover, to secure commitment the wage workers must not be significantly differentiated socially or isolated culturally from those whom they have the greatest frequency and depth of social interaction.²

The third influencing factor on commitment is the level of perceived needs. The classical concept of subsistence has proved somewhat ambiguous, but perceived needs include not only mere survival and reproduction needs but subjective, social or 'norm-related' needs as well. Accordingly an environment in which 'needs' are continuously being stimulated will tend to produce different patterns of labour force commitment and participation than one in which there is no such pressure.³ For instance, a situation could be envisaged in which the commercial stimulus of needs would raise labour commitment and household labour force participation because the consumer-worker family was in a continuing state of 'dynamic dissatisfaction'. Thus borrowing Kornai's terminology, urban society could be described as, essentially, a pressure economy in which individuals are

¹ Moreover as Manning Nash noted, "The incentive structure relevant to participation in and commitment to modern occupations is built up in the very process of participation and rarely exists anterior to the historical involvement." M. Nash, Incentives and Rural Society and Culture in Developing Nations, in E. Edwards (ed), Employment in Developing Nations (New York, 1974), p. 207.

² If so, they will find it hard to give what Nash calls "coherence to personality", *ibid.* See also M. Nash, The Recruitment of Wage Labour and Development of New Skills, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, May 1956, pp. 23-31.

³ *Ibid.*

pressed to spend or desire an expanding set of wage-goods, whereas in a rural economy the pressure is replaced by a shortage of wage goods which implies a need to get workers into the wage labour force by suction.¹

However the urban-commercial environment, while influencing the extent of perceived needs, may exacerbate the problems of non-commitment since there may well be such a divergence between working-class aspirations and foreseeable income-earning opportunity that potential workers are discouraged from any form of economic activity apart from that needed to secure bare survival. In other words, though commitment is a positive function of aspirations, since it is largely by raising the desire for higher standards of living that wage workers can be induced to labour effectively, the level of aspirations must be consistent with income earning opportunities. A divergence will exacerbate non-commitment to wage labour. First, the low skilled and the unemployed are likely to see little chance of achieving stable high-wage jobs and in their long search for wage employment are likely to sink into what sociologists term a chronic state of anomie, characterised by pessimism, discouragement, economic inactivity and passivity. Second, there is the phenomenon of voluntary unemployment among the educated.²

The issues associated with labour force commitment are central to the analysis of labour force participation in Jamaica, particularly in the urban areas, and largely explain the extent of sexual dualism in the labour market. Most of the main issues have been considered in the earlier paper, but the following considers in more detail the nature of industrial wage-employment and the mechanisms associated with it. The paper is based on interviews in 42 manufacturing firms in Kingston; these represented a cross-section of industries and size of firms, though no claim is made that the sample fully reflects the nature of Jamaican enterprises. However, many practices seemed to be features of so many firms that it is reasonable to draw general conclusions.

In the earlier paper it was argued that recruitment and training policies had encouraged the growth of female employment, as did the structure and nature of jobs. It is these aspects, along with the factors influencing absenteeism, turnover and work effort, that are the subject matter of the present paper.

¹ Standing, 1978, op.cit.; Also G. Standing, Urban Workers and Patterns of Employment, in S. Kannappan (ed.), Urban Labour Markets in Developing Areas, Genève, Institute of International Labour Studies, 1977).

² See chapter 5 of Standing, 1978, op. cit.

I. Introduction

In the previous paper the principal themes were that only a semi-committed proletariat had emerged in Jamaica and that the extent of sexual dualism in the labour market was relatively weak. In that context the employment practices within industrial enterprises, including the factors influencing the structure of jobs, have shaped the pattern of labour force participation and the distribution of employment.¹ Since the job structure is liable to affect, and be affected by, the level of commitment to wage labour and the degree of sexual dualism, in the latter part of 1974, the employment patterns and personnel policies of a sample of 42 industrial enterprises in Kingston-St. Andrew were studied. In those firms, selected to represent a cross-section of the manufacturing sector, few 'hard' data could be gathered, mostly because the firms had none. But the impressions and opinions of employers, personnel managers, and union officials, supported occasionally by statistics, proved most useful.² There were two issues of primary importance:

(i) Were there low levels of labour force commitment among workers and if so what was its incidence, the symptoms, and the underlying causes?

(ii) What were the factors leading to the distribution of jobs between men and women, and if changes were occurring, what were the mechanisms inducing those changes?

II. Commitment to Wage Labour

High rates of absenteeism and labour turnover are usually regarded as symptoms of a lack of commitment to industrial wage labour, and it has long been claimed that both are features of Jamaican employment.³ In most firms visited, employers complained about the instability of their work forces, but it was evident, both from the interviews, and, where they were available, from company work records, that in the great majority of firms absenteeism and "slackness" on the job were more prevalent than labour turnover, which contrary to prevailing opinion was not very high.⁴ Indeed the manager of one firm employing about 200 production workers complained, "One of our problems is that turnover is too low; we need to know how to increase it". However, for smaller concerns high turnover was a problem although a number of both large and small companies reported that voluntary turnover had declined in recent years with the declining opportunities for emigration.

¹ On the influence of the type and structure of jobs on the level and pattern of labour force participation, see G. Standing, Labour Force Participation and Development (Geneva, ILO, 1978), pp. 68-74.

² A questionnaire was used as a basis for interviews during visits made to these enterprises.

³ For instance, by Sewell in 1861. W. Sewell, The Ordeal of Free Labour in the British West Indies, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968 edition, p. 320. Also see IBRD, The Economic Development of Jamaica, report of a mission headed by J.C. de Wilde (Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1952).

⁴ Turnover also seemed low in garment firms visited by a team of consultants. Jamaica Industrial Development Corporation, Survey of the Garment Industry, (Werner Textile Consultants, undated mimeo, probably late 1960's). PREALC, on the other hand, seemed to accept the suggestion that "workers liked to change their jobs frequently", PREALC Report, Employment in Jamaica, Part I (Geneva, ILO, 1972), p.55.

Because absenteeism and high levels of labour turnover have been regarded as features of West Indian labour since 1838, employers have tended to develop an attitude of resignation and a corresponding unwillingness to recognise either that their policies are partly responsible or that they could improve the situation. Employment practices within industrial enterprises have to be seen as an outgrowth of the plantation and slave-owning traditions of the economy.¹ As noted earlier, after emancipation the difficulties of securing a stable labour force led employers to adopt two principal tactics which still dominate the Jamaican labour market. The first of these was reliance on task work and piece rate wage systems which in view of the difficulties of securing supervisory labour institutionalised semi-commitment to wage labour. The second was the continuing reliance on paternalistic employment relationships, as a result of which employers have been expected to look after the welfare needs of their workforces by providing a wide range of non-wage benefits as a means of securing and retaining the labour force. This has had two consequences which have both affected the pattern of labour force commitment and the structure of employment. First, the traditions of paternalism have meant that the wage labour relationships have not been clearly defined, so that the development of formal rules has been hindered. Secondly, the paternalistic nature of employment has tended to result in a high ratio of fringe benefits to wages, which has tended to hold the wage rate down and, probably more importantly in the context of an analysis of labour supply on the job, has contributed to high rates of absenteeism and low work effort and efficiency.

The emphasis on fringe benefits started with the estates, the assumption being that workers worked for wages only to secure a limited 'target' cash income, so that they had a backward bending supply curve. As such, a low wage-high fringe benefits ratio would have been appropriate to secure a stable labour force. Though the plantations set the pattern the practice of taking responsibility for the workers' welfare has persisted with industrial enterprises and has been extended by the introduction of various fringe benefits in government enterprises and foreign firms intent on being, for efficiency and political reasons, high paying employers. Many smaller firms followed their example, so that most firms have introduced a broad range of fringe benefits - pension rights, sickness pay, holiday pay, paid maternity leave, payment of medical expenses and even credit facilities - often coinciding with low wage rates. In effect the practice of concentrating on non-wage and 'security' elements in labour costs has been a means of tying workers to the employer, but this has meant that wage levels were kept lower than they otherwise would have been. The resultant low ratio of wages to fringe benefits has secured some semblance of stability, in so far as labour turnover has been checked, but to the extent that the practice has resulted in wage rates falling below the workers' efficiency wage and often below the opportunity cost of wage labour the supply of effort has remained

¹ Indeed plantations could be seen as preserving the vestiges of feudalism and providing a framework with which capitalist industrial enterprises had to operate.

low.¹ The low wage-high fringe benefits package has encouraged absenteeism and low effort on the job rather than turnover, but the exact response of workers has varied according to the type of wage system adopted. Task work and piece rates have been common in Jamaican industry and it was not surprising that employers of task workers complained more of absenteeism, while those paid hourly wages were more prone to 'slacking on the job'.

Task work encourages workers to adjust the timing of their work effort, and in an economy like Jamaica it has tended to allow workers to combine a regular wage job with a casual one or assortment of casual jobs, the pattern of occupational multiplicity which as noted earlier has long been a feature of Jamaican rural labour.² Task work, originally a response to low commitment to plantation wage labour and a feature of the smallholder farming in which various activities have traditionally involved communal or reciprocal labour on a piece rate basis, has contributed to the low commitment to wage labour by a large proportion of manual industrial wage labourers and in turn has encouraged the resignation among employers noted earlier. As a result poor employment practices have often gone unchecked.

III. Employment Practices: Absenteeism and Sickness

Paternalism combined with conditions of labour instability implied a lack of clearly defined worker-employer relationships and led to the persistence of inappropriate practices. Perhaps the most bizarre circumstances are those associated with arrangements for sickness. Paternalistic arrangements evolved at a time when malnutrition and poor health among workers and their families were rife. Consequently in an effort to secure a more stable work force (and possibly as an effort to invest in the improved health and therefore efficiency of their labour) employers tended to accede to pressures for generous allowances to cover periods of sickness. However the policies that were adopted have tended to exacerbate the levels of absenteeism associated with sickness and have become a factor perpetuating low levels of commitment to wage labour. In part at least, the problem has been one of self-realising resignation on the part of employers. Because they were led to expect high rates of absenteeism due to ill-health they saw little untoward in their experience and came to regard the phenomenon as one of the more lamentable but expected hazards of the Jamaican economy, to be circumvented rather than tackled directly. As a result many inadequate policies which were introduced when poor health probably was a major cause of absenteeism and worker 'tardiness' have not been changed, and even when efforts have been made to change them workers and the unions have resisted the efforts, making the expected costs of attempted changes for the employers greater than the expected benefits.

¹ The neoclassical analysis implicitly assumes that the supply of labour is reflected in the number of hours supplied for any wage rate. But, as argued elsewhere, workers will tend to adjust their effort and quality of work if the wage rate is lower than that to which they feel entitled.

² Standing, 1977, op. cit. pp. 6-8.

Thus scrutiny of some firms' employment practices showed that the policies were a direct cause of absenteeism. For instance, one large firm operated a scheme whereby all workers were paid for two weeks' sick leave a year, in addition to other benefits such as paid holidays, the only condition being that a specified number of weeks in any year had to be worked before workers were entitled to sick leave. The fairly intricate system involved sick pay being calculated as an average of wages paid during the previous thirteen working weeks, and the pattern of sickness absenteeism strongly suggested that sickness was not the real reason for much of the observed absenteeism. Thus an inspection of the sickness absenteeism figures for the firm over previous years showed quite clearly that 'sickness' rose sharply after the peak production period when wage earnings were highest and after the first few months of each year, the rate being about 30 times greater in the highest month than in the lowest. No doubt that was an extreme case of induced absenteeism in so far as, unlike that firm and several others, most firms in the sample studied allowed two weeks or fifteen days of paid sick leave or the option of pay in lieu at the end of the year. However, in Jamaica that practice will have encouraged absenteeism because it will have allowed male workers, in particular, to take casual jobs paying relatively high wage rates whenever they could find them - such as repair work, gardening, farming or mowing lawns - without risking losing their regular job.¹ On such days the workers could secure about double their normal earnings.

None of the firms had a policy to compare with that of one large, well-established foreign-owned company whose absenteeism figures were among the highest despite being a relatively high-wage employer. For sickness leave it allowed ten days a year at full-time daily rates - thus meaning that in slack periods a worker could earn more by being sick than by attending work - and a further 25 days at half-pay. Workers who did not take their quota in one year were permitted to add it to the following year's quota but there was no pay in lieu for workers who did not take their 'sick leave', while if the allotted days were not taken within two years the right to receive payment for them lapsed. Thus the arrangement encouraged high rates of absenteeism by effectively penalising those who attended work regularly. It was scarcely surprising to find that the firm had rates of absenteeism on most days that amounted to between 15 and 20 per cent of the labour force.

Most firms operated schemes for sickness compensation that were implicitly based on the naive assumption that workers could or would only go sick if they were genuinely sick, in so far as 'sick' workers were required to produce a doctor's certificate if they were absent for two days or more. Of course, as some employers had come to recognise, the assumption that a certificate was a guarantee of veracity was nothing of the sort, as some doctors were prepared to sell sickness certificates - and as they were able to charge for them had an incentive to issue them.²

¹ This was strengthened by the usual practice of only requiring workers to produce a sickness certificate for a period of sickness lasting more than two days.

² This apparently widespread practice was mentioned by five employers independently.

This practice and the arrangements for sick-leave in general have had several implications of direct relevance to the subject matter of this study. First, they have institutionalised low levels of commitment to regular employment and in doing so have encouraged workers, particularly men for whom such opportunities have probably been greater, to combine full-time wage employment with casual labour. Secondly, they have helped women workers to combine full-time work with maternal duties, for whenever their children have been ill or whenever there has been nobody to care for them women have been able to absent themselves from employment with impunity. In most economies it has generally been assumed that female workers have higher rates of absenteeism and job turnover than men, and this assumption has contributed to the discrimination against women in the allocation of employment opportunities and the growth of male-female wage differentials.¹ In Jamaica absenteeism rates of women have not been greater than of male workers and according to many employers tended to be lower, as might be expected in view of the fact that it is working-class women who usually have primary responsibility for child dependants.² As far as the sickness schemes are concerned they have tended to permit the type of absenteeism periodically required by women and at the same time encouraged a higher rate of male absenteeism than would otherwise have been the case. The tendency for female absenteeism to be relatively low had discouraged the development of discrimination against female workers and can be expected to have encouraged some substitution of female for male labour.

Turnover rates of women workers were also no higher than those of males and many employers reported that they were lower. In the past the concern of employers to overcome high rates of labour turnover, and the view of many employers that because of the distribution of family responsibilities women were more likely to make stable committed workers, led them to help female workers remain in their jobs on a regular continuing basis. This explains the widespread provision of what are, by international standards, generous arrangements for paid and unpaid maternity leave. They have been one method of securing a stable labour force, and the great majority of firms visited provided maternity pay and leave. For instance, one company allowed women one month leave at full pay and up to four months without pay, during which time their job was kept open for them; in addition, while pregnant and working, women were examined by the company doctor who was responsible for advising them when to stop working. In another company women were given three weeks full pay, plus any vacation and sick leave

¹ Evidence of absenteeism by sex is debatable, for the traditional assumption has been questioned. See, for instance, Women's Bureau, Facts About Women's Absenteeism and Labour Turnover (US Department of Labour, Washington D.C., 1969). The problem is that data suggesting that female absenteeism is no higher than male are not entirely appropriate evidence since they reflect an ex-post situation resulting from 'discriminatory' (selective) recruitment and promotion policies. So conceivably the women workers actually employed would have been selected for their relatively low probability of absenteeism and labour turnover.

² In a much earlier study of personnel policies in Kingston, Campbell also concluded that sickness-induced absenteeism was more common among male workers. E. Campbell, "Industrial Training Methods and Techniques", Social and Economic Studies, Vol. 2, No. 1, Sept. 1953, p.75. In both this and Campbell's study, 'sickness' was the main reason given for absenteeism.

pay outstanding and up to six months maternity leave at any one time. Several companies operated variants of that system, some giving two weeks paid leave, some three or four. In one case women were granted up to six months unpaid leave, with the firm giving the woman some financial assistance on an ad hoc basis; the women had to give two week's notice of when they wished to return to work. In several of the smaller garment firms women were given one month paid leave, even though the firms were operating on very narrow profit margins. But the most important point is that in all firms childbirth was regarded as a temporary interruption of employment rather than a reason for termination. And it was exceptional for women full-time workers under the age of about 35 not to have young children.¹ One employer went so far as to say that in his recruitment he had a preference for women with young children, for although the children were sometimes the cause of absenteeism such women worked harder because they relied on the income to maintain their children.

IV. Recruitment and Training

One contributory factor to the high rates of absenteeism and turnover were the recruitment practices of most employers, which were informal in most cases and often a haphazard process. This practice was encouraged by the chronically high levels of unemployment in Kingston where crowds of potential workers were often visibly available near centres of employment. Almost certainly those circumstances contributed to the tendency of some employers to rely on an "easy-hire, easy-fire" practice. Alternatively among those firms which had adopted formal procedures, rigid screening devices had been instituted, based on the assumption that as there was a labour surplus the employer could set high standards in their selection of workers. Both tendencies, in different ways, have contributed to the problems of turnover, absenteeism and low productivity. Indeed, with the easy-hire, easy-fire practice, management policies fashioned the expectations and attitudes of workers, accentuating their low commitment to regular employment.

In many small firms the lack of middle-management or supervisory labour to assist the owner-employer encouraged a casual recruitment policy because the employers felt the time taken to select workers on formal criteria had a high cost.² If they did adopt formal procedures they tended to be crude versions of policies practised in larger concerns (which in themselves were often crude).

¹ One could argue that the type of paternalistic 'formal sector' employment in Jamaica, far from being incompatible with fertility, provides incentives to fertility. Women who had children were given leave and their childbirth period subsidised, and the fact that their wages would have been lower because the maternity arrangements reflected a low wage-high fringe benefit division of total labour payments was irrelevant, since the wages would have been low regardless of whether or not they took maternity leave and pay.

² This shortage of 'managerial' assistance affected many aspects of production in small enterprises. Often the manager-owners were unable to recruit sufficiently qualified or reliable workers for the job, but many simply felt the risk of sharing responsibility was excessive.

In most firms, when vacancies occurred the existing employees were informed and were thus in a position to recommend or inform friends or relatives. In addition some firms had a register of applicants who had come to the factory or shop door to ask for work at some time in the past. Others occasionally made use of the Government Employment Bureau, although from experience of the type of applicants it sent, there was general disillusion with that institution. In many firms there was a preference for hiring friends or relatives of existing workers, especially if they came from the rural areas.¹

The practice of filling vacancies with employees' friends and relatives may reduce the employer's search costs and can foster a sense of commitment to the firm (in itself a feature of paternalism) as well as provide the advantage of a homogeneous labour force in social origin, in so far as workers who are employed with relatives or friends can be expected to have a lower probability of quitting. But there are inherent dangers for the employer in so far as the workers are more likely to identify their common interest and thus be less committed to the firm.

In selecting workers the screening methods adopted by most firms were generally ineffectual and inappropriate. Even for unskilled and semi-skilled jobs the practice varied from the most casual to rigorous tests and interviews. Those firms which used the most casual methods, such as hiring the first applicants to arrive, were typically employers of unskilled workers doing jobs that were seasonal in nature or that were short-term, contract work. Since many firms worked on that casual informal basis they tended to institutionalise semi-commitment to regular employment and encourage high levels of labour turnover. Indeed the practice among some employers to hire on a short-term, often day-work, basis had tended to encourage absenteeism from 'regular' employment, as noted earlier. And the consequently high rates of absenteeism in firms attempting to secure a stable labour force encouraged disciplinary attempts to prevent such practices, which led to worker resentment, ineffective work performance, sackings, and a high propensity to quit.²

Several firms used a mixed labour force of permanent and casual workers, filling their vacancies for permanent workers from the casual worker components, while hiring casual workers from among direct applicants. This allowed screening of workers to take place after rather than before the worker was hired, but no attempt was made to check up on the character or past experience of workers

¹ Interestingly, Campbell also noted this tendency: "One concern, a factory in the wood industry, preferred men from rural areas. The manager felt persons from rural areas were more suited for the physically strenuous type of work demanded by the majority of jobs in the factory, and management made special efforts to attract applicants for work from among the friends and relatives of their present employees outside Kingston." Campbell, 1953, op. cit., p. 30.

² In so far as this was rather more common of male workers it contributed to a substitution of women for men in semi-skilled jobs where both men and women were employed. To give an hypothetical example, suppose the probability of a woman getting a job was 0.4 and that three men were likely to quit or be dismissed for every one woman. Then if women initially accounted for 25 per cent of the labour force of 100, after 8 workers had quit and been replaced the female ratio would have risen to over 26 per cent.

hired on a casual basis. The engineer who was in charge of labour matters in one such company, a medium-sized food processing plant, candidly admitted, "We take a chance, but we just pull them in off the streets when we need to. It's easiest that way."¹ Several other employers who had adopted similar policies regretted doing so because they felt that they had exacerbated the high levels of turnover and absenteeism, but this company, a relatively high-wage firm paying hourly wages, experienced problems principally concerned with low work effort and efficiency. Absenteeism was not high, and 'lateness to work', which was a perceived problem, was almost invariably attributed to the bus service. The 'engineer-cum-personnel officer' had tried to overcome this by docking pay but had given up that policy in the face of the resentment it caused and the lack of any apparent effect.² According to him the problem was not only one of workers reporting late for work but of leaving their work areas during working hours, symptomatic of low levels of commitment. Dismissals were hard to make in so far as they generally created bitterness among the work-force and a degree of retaliation in terms of lower effort on the job. As a result the management was considering alternative hiring policies to see if they could secure a more 'reliable' work-force.

This firm was not typical, for most used some screening procedure, often based on a dubious form of credentialism which had little relevance to the nature of the available work. One large garment-making company screened applicants for a whole day through a mental dexterity test, several manual dexterity tests and personal interviews. During the first of several discussions with the personnel manager, he claimed the firm had recently announced to their workers that they intended to hire ten new workers. They interviewed 60 before selecting the ten "including a number who were only really squeezed in".³ This may have been an extreme example of credentialism but its functionality has to be considered in the light of the type of work the successful applicants were required to do, which was highly repetitive process work on a production line - literally punching holes.

¹ Perhaps not coincidentally, he was concerned about an outbreak of 'petty pilfering' of company products..

² This highlights an element of the Jamaican labour market difficult to .. adequately assess, except in so far as it has been a factor preserving many paternalistic labour practices. Workers had the means of imposing costs on employers attempting some action of which they disapproved, thereby making changes from well-established paternalism hard and costly. This produced the observed inertia on the part of employers.

³ Many of the applicants were screened by the personnel manager's assistant who administered the mental dexterity test, designed to indicate the applicant's ability to read, write, and handle numerical questions such as, "What are the missing numbers in the series: 2, 5, 7, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20"? Another of the penetrating questions began, "If there are more letters in PROTOPLASM..." When the applicants had sorted out these little teasers - or, as was apparently more often the case, been sorted out by them - they were required to take two manual dexterity tests, to which the personnel manager in his wisdom was thinking of adding a third.

The rationale for credentialism is that education is an approximate index of trainability, reliability, work ability, and various related aspects of labour commitment.¹ But in conditions of chronic labour surplus rigid application of credentialist recruitment criteria is liable to result in the selection of workers for jobs for which their educational qualifications and associated aspirations and expectations make them ill-adapted. For the relatively educated, repetitive process labour can be expected to have a relatively high psychic cost and the workers concerned are more likely to experience high levels of 'relative deprivation' and 'relative intensity of labour' than less educated workers doing similar work, partly because they would be more likely to feel that such labour involved a continuing denial of autonomy, responsibility, and creativity.² So credentialism is not necessarily an effective procedure for securing a stable labour force with high levels of labour efficiency and low rates of turnover and absenteeism. Indeed in the garment factory just mentioned absenteeism was regarded as a serious problem hampering production and the employers had conducted a statistical enquiry into the phenomenon. Moreover a feature of credentialism, at least in the Kingston labour market, is that it has a demonstration effect whereby many small-scale employers, having worked in or had contact with large firms, adopted similar screening practices. In several small firms visited the employers had even 'borrowed' the tests used in larger concerns. To the extent that this practice enabled small firms to secure educated workers it may actually have exacerbated their high rates of labour turnover, for such workers would have been most likely to want to move into the large, higher-wage firms.

Thus recruitment policies followed by firms, whether casual or based on strict credentialism, almost certainly contributed to the generally low levels of labour commitment. But more importantly in the present context they tended to favour the employment of women. In particular credentialism is likely to have led to a relative expansion of female employment because women have tended to be better educated than men. And even for men and women of approximately equal education, the type of semi-skilled labour for which credentialism has been most rigorously applied would have been likely to create a greater sense of relative deprivation among male workers, partly because their aspirations and expectations have been generally higher and because their need for a regular income has been somewhat lower.³ To that extent the male 'educated' workers expected to perform such routine labour would have been more likely than women workers to shift their 'effort bargain' downwards (i.e. reducing work effort), thereby encouraging employers to prefer female labour and raising the profitability and expansion potential of production lines using female labour.

¹ Educational qualifications, rather than formal written tests, was the more common yardstick adopted by employers. Of course, the implicit judgment underlying this form of credentialism is that it is a relatively costless means of securing a labour force fairly efficiently.

² For discussion of education and the status frustration effect, see Standing, 1978, op. cit., chapter 6.

³ Standing, 1977, op. cit.

V. Induction and Training

Both before it and throughout the period of industrialisation-by-invitation, employers in Jamaica have complained of a shortage of skilled labour.¹ The perceived shortage has not only extended to technical workers but encompassed managerial and most manual skills as well, though a government-sponsored Training Needs Survey suggested that the shortages were less than commonly assumed.² In part the shortage reflected the imported technology and employment practices of the large dominant enterprises, which have created and sharpened the dualistic wage-employment structure of the labour market. As the relatively skilled, qualified workers gravitated towards the large high-wage establishments, smaller firms were unable to compete successfully for skilled workers. But the dualistic labour force discouraged smaller firms from investing in training workers, and for many larger firms made such investments unnecessary.

As noted earlier, training in Jamaica has been largely unsuccessful. Part of the problem has been that formal schooling has been inadequate, but apprenticeship schemes, institutional training and various on-the-job methods of training have all failed to compensate. Since the 1940's apprenticeships have declined to insignificance, even in the sugar industry which long relied on that form of training.³ As early as 1953 Campbell remarked, perhaps somewhat prematurely, "For all practical purposes there is no apprenticeship in Jamaica".⁴ The major reasons for the decline of apprenticeship - apart from the fact that apprenticeship is inappropriate for a growing proportion of jobs - was the difficulty of retaining workers either before or after their training had been completed. This was due to the lack of formally defined criteria for defining skills so that partially skilled workers could claim to be skilled, and to the lack of legally binding rules preventing poaching. Thus those firms that did train workers often found that other firms were able to entice them away, sometimes by paying them a higher wage that merely reflected the fact that no investment

¹ From this it would normally be inferred that the Jamaican labour force lacked skills, but, even ignoring the possible exaggeration in the complaints, to be strictly accurate it ought to be added: "for given technological, occupational, and industrial structure".

² Unfortunately the Survey only covered a small number of establishments and vacancies. Government of Jamaica, The Training Needs Survey (Kingston, 1972). In her historical study Eisner commented, "One reason why factories did not pay in Jamaica was that so much expatriate personnel from skilled workers up had to be employed because of lack of trained Jamaicans." G. Eisner, Jamaica 1830-1930 (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1960), p. 316. But that view begs the question.

³ Harbridge House, The Tradesman Gap in the Sugar Industry (Kingston, Harbridge House, 1970).

⁴ Campbell, 1953, op. cit., p. 13.

in training had been necessary.¹ As a result most firms discontinued apprenticeship schemes, and indeed most other forms of formal training, and by the mid-1970's the only on-the-job training methods in use to any significant extent were understudying and modular training, neither being conducive to the development of a highly skilled work-force.

Such methods are tailored for semi-skilled 'static' jobs, which is the type of employment that expanded in the period of industrialisation-by-invitation. And although much of the imported technology necessitated reliance on semi-skilled labour the general inability to develop a highly skilled labour force, as a result of the persistent inadequacy of training schemes, undoubtedly encouraged the increasing use of semi-skilled workers and enhanced the relative economic position of firms and industries that relied largely on semi-skilled and unskilled labour. In a sense the relative shortage of skilled workers produced a lack of training, as well as vice-versa, and this prevented the emergence of a large 'primary' labour force of the type usually dominated by male workers.

Most firms in the sample studied relied on some casual or informal method of training, although some made no attempt to train workers at all, preferring to hire those already trained. Several garment firms did that, as did some of the larger well-established companies in other industries. In one of those the personnel manager candidly remarked that he found it preferable to offer his workers \$5 for each skilled worker they attracted to the company. Another smaller company admitted adopting a similar approach, although only paying "a couple of dollars".²

Many firms hired workers on a probationary basis, usually 90 days, after which, if satisfactory, they were put on the permanent payroll. In that initial period they were supposed to be trained, although this often meant learnt-by-watching. Exemplifying the ineffectiveness of this form of training was one of the larger garment firms, in which all workers were ostensibly trained on-the-job despite there being no training programme or policy as such. Sometimes new workers were given a few days practice with odd scraps of material, more often they were merely supposed to receive some informal coaching from a supervisor who was by no means a full-time trainer. Apparently there seemed to be some reticence about approaching supervisors for instruction, which was probably due to the fear on the part of the workers that such action would have demonstrated

¹ This was recognised by the government through the National Commission on Unemployment, which concluded, "The private sector is not shouldering its fair share of responsibility for industrial training. The minority of firms which do provide training facilities often do so only to see their best trainees enticed away by competitors who contribute nothing to training." First Report by the Secretariat of the National Commission on Unemployment (Kingston, unpublished, November 1968), p. 3. The Commission, which was later disbanded and which was seemingly ineffectual, proposed an Industrial Training Act to set up a National Coordinating Council for Technical Education and Vocational and Industrial Training.

² As the man responsible for hiring workers put it, "It certainly gets quick results". They also gave new skilled workers an 'introductory bonus' payment.

incompetence and possibly lost them the job. The supervisors for their part were apparently uninterested in training since they wished to concentrate on their own work - and as they were paid on a piece-rate basis it paid them to do so. "In fact", conceded the personnel manager, "training is a very small part of their job. They should, I suppose, do far more training than they do".¹ Perhaps the major difficulty in both this and other companies relying on similar practices was that the role of trainer was usually left to an experienced worker. But as those workers were paid on a task-rate basis to do process work just like most other workers, there was no incentive for them to do much training. For instance, in one of the cigar-making factories training probationary cigar-makers was the responsibility of several of the most productive and thereby potentially most highly paid women workers. As they lost income whenever they spend time training new workers and as they were training possible substitute workers who might displace them some time in the future (or reduce their potential earnings opportunities within the firm) it was not surprising that the owner-manager found he could retain only about 20 out of every 50 trainees at the end of the understudy period.² This highlights a means by which ineffectual training policies contributed to high rates of labour turnover and the lack of a skilled, stable labour force.

The use of informal understudying is certainly a cheap method of disseminating skills. Unsuccessful though they often were, their retention has to be assessed in the context of the continuing inability of many firms using more formal methods to experience much lower wastage rates at less cost. The example of the cigar firms is instructive, in so far as it was the wage leader in the industry which was able to rely on formal methods that depended on a high rate of retention to be successful. In other industries, however, the wage-leading firms did not even have to implement training policies since they were able to attract trained workers from their competitors or in some cases from firms in other industries.³ This practice only contributed to the general reluctance to initiate on-the-job training schemes, and in that atmosphere many firms in the 1960's, as well as the government, turned increasingly to institutional training.⁴ However, by the mid 1970's that approach was still of only limited

¹ He thought it would be useful to introduce a "progress form" for new employees, for which the supervisors would be responsible. The reason for this was that he had negligible "feedback" from the workshop floor. He confessed, "It is easy to forget about someone who is hired. And then after six months you hear that someone has not produced anything. Terrible".

² This was his estimate. This situation contrasted with the experience of another cigar factory where trainees were placed under the supervision of a full-time training officer, himself an experienced worker in the factory, where no retention problems were said to exist.

³ The outstanding example of this process occurring in Jamaica concerned the sugar factories. The flow of trained tradesmen to bauxite and construction firms had induced most sugar factories to abandon their apprenticeship schemes. Harbridge Report, 1970, op. cit.

⁴ A major extension of that approach came in 1966 when a loan was acquired from the World Bank to assist in the diversification of education, to be used primarily to develop technical courses.

usefulness, as was demonstrated by the continuing reliance on the casual informal methods in most of the firms visited.¹ The lack of any formal, clearly defined and generally accepted criteria for skill classification encouraged workers to drop out before completing courses to take jobs available to partially trained workers, and this in itself severely curbed the effectiveness of institutional training.²

VI. Job Structure and Labour Commitment

The continuing failure of training schemes, combined with the nature of the technology imported by multinational enterprises, meant that most workers in manufacturing, clerical, service and administrative jobs were at most semi-skilled. If training failed in part because of the lack of commitment to regular wage employment - particularly among men for whom much of the more formalised training was reserved - it also hindered the growth of labour commitment by not generating a sizeable labour aristocracy of skilled wage workers. In turn this encouraged the growth of static jobs for semi-skilled workers and a structure of employment that encouraged female employment.³ There were four reasons for this which were clearly illustrated in the firms encompassed by the survey.

First, in the absence of a male-dominated labour aristocracy, male-female wage differentials tended to be small, which encourages female labour force participation.⁴ In most firms female wage rates were lower for similar jobs, but the differential was usually small, while in some firms a traditional differential had shrunk or disappeared.

Second, the tendency to select workers on the basis of credentialism favoured female applicants for, as noted earlier, women tended to be relatively educated. Third, and crucially important, the relative probability of employment among different groups of workers depends on the respective 'effort bargain' for any wage. As such, employers recognised that the effort bargain of women

¹ Among employers there was considerable scepticism about the value of such institutions, which as in the garment industry largely relied on the active participation by the companies to be successful. Since participation had costs and since those firms best placed to contribute had least need to do so, this form of training was somewhat unsuccessful.

² Moreover, as noted earlier, among young workers there were a number of factors discouraging participation in such training programmes.

³ In contrast to the employment structure in Kingston in the late 1960's and 1970's, it is interesting to reflect on a comment made by Cumper on the basis of his observations in the 1950's. "In the West Indies", he noted, "there is little competition between men and women, the range of jobs which are open to both being small, partly perhaps because of the lack of the type of semi-skilled work for which either is equally suited..." G. Cumper, "Labour and Development in the West Indies: Part II", Social and Economic Studies, Vol. 11, No. , 1962, p. 3. More questionable even at that time was Davenport's assertion that in Jamaica "most of the jobs for wages are for men". W. Davenport, "The Family System in Jamaica", Social and Economic Studies, Vol. 10, No.4, 1961, p. 430.

⁴ As shown elsewhere, a large male-female opportunity wage differential, associated with the existence of a labour aristocracy and clearly distinguishable groups of skilled and unskilled workers, leads to an allocation of time whereby men become full-time, primary labour force participants while women concentrate on domestic activities, intermittently in the labour force as secondary workers. Standing, 1978, op. cit., pp. 74ff.

workers was likely to be greater than that provided by men.¹ The main reason for this is that women had lower income expectations - a trait encouraged by their traditionally higher rate of unemployment, knowledge of foreign earnings patterns in which women were expected to receive a low, almost 'supplementary' wage, and the fact that in the past few women in Jamaica earned high incomes which meant that working-class women were less inclined or able to make invidious comparisons with other women workers. As a result it is likely that women workers did not resent low wages to the same extent as male workers. In that context, women workers, most of whom have been unmarried with child dependents, had a more pressing need for income and were accordingly under greater pressure to work regularly and efficiently. The fourth reason for the relative expansion of female employment was that female labour stability tended to be greater, having similar or lower rates of absenteeism and turnover than men. The reasons are similar as for their greater effort bargain. Thus their fear of dismissal was somewhat greater since female unemployment was higher and their need for regular income greater. And male workers tended to have higher absenteeism and turnover because of their somewhat greater opportunity for casual day or task labour.

The limited evidence available supported the expectation of lower turnover and absenteeism among women. As early as 1952 a team of observers from the World Bank, complaining about a "lack of responsibility" among Jamaican workers, reported, "In many cases the Mission noted that the women employees seemed to have a greater sense of responsibility than the men."² Campbell also found that employers regarded women as more stable workers, one manager remarking, "Quality and quantity of work is good, but performance is unreliable. The supervisor's difficulties are caused by the instability of the workers. Amongst the women we find a high percentage of reliable operators."³ Campbell also reported

¹ Many employers had turned this to their advantage. In one case, the larger of two toymaking firms visited, the manufacturer, who was expanding production rapidly to meet the marketing opportunities opened up by the government ban on all imported toys, employed a workforce of women who were expected to work a 12 hour day for 7 days a week. When asked why he largely relied on female labour he claimed that it would not have been possible to get such sustained labour from men. As he put it, "It would have been out of the question." It would also not have been possible had the workers been unionised, and although figures on union membership in Jamaica were not available on a sexual basis it is generally agreed that women workers have been far less unionised and unionisable than men, for a variety of reasons. That in itself tended to force them to provide a greater 'effort bargain' in wage labour.

² IBRD Report, 1952, op. cit., p. 210. According to the Report, "The reason for this might be that in Jamaica the woman is often largely responsible for the family. Probably the gradual evolution of a more stable family life would go far towards developing a sense of responsibility in all workers... There is in fact some evidence for the belief that labour productivity is high among those workers who are formally married." The evidence in question was not mentioned, but it might have been the 1943 Census in which it was noted that married men earned more on average than single men. If so there would have been a problem of identifying cause and effect.

³ Campbell, 1953, op. cit., p. 67.

that sickness-induced absenteeism was more common among male workers.¹

In the firms studied in 1974, employers repeatedly stated that female absenteeism and labour turnover rates were lower than male. One footwear company claimed they had found female voluntary turnover was more likely to be connected with emigration, women rarely if ever leaving to look for other work, which was more common with male workers.² Most companies also reported that they had to dismiss rather more men than women, which corroborated Campbell's conclusion that "men were more likely to be discharged and were more likely to leave of their own accord than women".³

So the evidence suggests that women workers had the important 'skills' of stability and reliability, which employers especially value where a fully committed wage-labour force has not been developed. That almost certainly contributed to the relative growth of female employment in Kingston and can be contrasted with the situation revealed in studies in Africa where few women are in wage employment.⁴ Thus Capelle, in an examination of process workers in a garment factory in what was then the Belgian Congo, claimed that young women workers were unreliable and that older women had difficulty in retaining the necessary dexterity. Referring to the younger women it was noted,

The operators concerned displayed the same faults as young factory girls in Europe; thoughtlessness, the absence of dependants and therefore of real needs, changeable temperament and an almost total absence of a sense of discipline, made this labour force highly unstable. The problematic attendance rate and output varied without apparent reason by 30 to 40 per cent from one day to another, and with few exceptions the girls came to work for the sole purpose of obtaining enough money to buy a piece of cloth or satisfy some passing need.⁵

Little suggested that women's lower productivity in industrial jobs was due to

"differences in training because women's work on the farm requires strength and endurance and a job, such as hoeing, does not develop subtlety of touch. The women were also at a disadvantage over speed and efficiency because they have had less contact with Western gadgets or modes of thought and behaviour than men."⁶

In Kingston, on the contrary, it appeared that men were more often at a disadvantage in those respects, partly perhaps because they had less education and more 'idleness' in their youth.⁷

¹ Ibid. p. 75. This might be rationalised as being due to the more fatigue-producing nature of men's jobs, which is questionable, but as noted earlier absenteeism recorded as being due to sickness may have been misleading.

² Voluntary turnover among female workers had apparently declined in recent years, corresponding with the declining opportunities for emigration.

³ Campbell, 1953, op. cit. p. 83.

⁴ Such comparisons serve the useful purpose of dispelling the common assumption that work traits and patterns are based on sex per se.

⁵ M. Capelle, "The Industrial Employment of Women in the Belgian Congo", Inter-African Labour Institute Bulletin, March 1959. Little cited this disparaging passage without comment, despite the evident prejudice which the language indicates. K. Little, African Women in Towns (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973).

⁶ Ibid. p. 37.

⁷ Standing, 1977, op. cit., pp. 13-14, 23.

Another interesting contrast with the situation in Kingston is afforded by a study of a tobacco factory at Jinja in Uganda, which suggested that the preference for male labour stemmed from the fact that women were consistently slower than men at every task, although they tended to be able to work a greater number of hours in monotonous repetitive work without a break.¹ There male workers predominated. In Kingston, on the contrary, women comprised the great majority of production workers in tobacco factories and, according to management, had been a growing majority. For instance, in one cigar factory visited expansion over the years had coincided with an increasing proportion of women and in 1974 the great majority of workers in all but the box-making department were women. Among the production workers male box-makers were generally the highest paid, followed by the cigar selectors and the more experienced of the cigar makers. But the earning capacity of workers in that third group varied widely as they were paid according to the number and quality of cigars they made. Consequently some of them had an income greater than that received by box-makers. Most male production workers were making about \$4.50 a day (as of October 1974) while women wrappers, for instance, were earning about \$3.50 for an 8 hour day, but one woman cigar-maker, making about 400 cigars a day, was regularly earning about \$10.20. This was indicative of the fact that women workers were highly efficient and not just relatively low-cost labour. Labour turnover in the company was low, particularly among women, and the personnel manager considered women better adapted to do many of the jobs - "They have more flexible fingers" (female ringers), "Packing and labelling is a feminine sort of operation, you know" - while in his experience "younger workers are more vulnerable to make reject cigars".² And according to the manager of another cigar-making firm, "Women as workers are easier and better and more efficient. They don't go off and drink rum as the men often do. They make better cigars, and are more conscientious." With this view, he had found that over the years he had been employing "increasingly more women". As with a number of other employers, in his hiring policy he preferred to employ women who were "married" because in his view women with children tended to make more proficient and stable workers. According to him young 'unmarried girls' without children tended to work with a specific goal in mind and consequently left when they had saved sufficient "to go back to school" or to get "the plane fare", or for some other purpose. "In general", he claimed, "young girls 17 to 25 are irresponsible, between 25 and 35 they do reasonably good work, between 35 and 50 they are dependable, and after 50 they experience some loss of energy, although they are still dependable." Accordingly, in hiring workers he often selected women with family responsibilities. Again

¹ W. Elkan, An African Labour Force (East Africa Studies, No. 7, East African Institute of Social Research, Kampala, 1956); and W. Elkan, Migrants and Proletarians (EAISR, London, 1960).

² Analogous comments were made by managers in garment firms and in other industries.

this preference, which was reiterated by employers in other industries as well, can be compared with an African example. Thus in her study of industrial urban employment in Ghana, Peil found that female factory employment was mostly confined to younger single women, as the working of regular hours by married women was regarded as incompatible with marriage and the rearing of children.¹ This was far from true in Kingston.

If the semi-skilled, static nature of industrial jobs in Kingston contributed to the relative growth of female employment, there was also some suggestion that growing numbers of women had been moving into jobs traditionally reserved for men. In the early 1960's Campbell not only claimed that "the employment fields for men are wider" but that "women were rarely engaged for or promoted to supervisory posts."² If so the situation seemed to have changed in the ensuing two decades. In the sample of firms studied there were still more male supervisors than female and men's promotional opportunities in terms of skill and responsibilities were generally greater. But higher grades had been opened up to women, partly no doubt because of the paucity of appropriately skilled men for middle-management labour, the perceived shortage of which had been a major brake on the extended use of shift-systems. In many of the garment firms, although management was almost completely male (with one exception), the general practice of internal promotion of production workers had resulted in the majority of supervisors being women and in the largest garment factory only one of the eight supervisors was male. In the larger, more established firms there was some dissatisfaction with the practice of internal promotion, as it was felt that workers who were promoted tended to identify with their fellow workers and that the practice of promoting experienced production workers to supervisory posts was doubly unsatisfactory because it tended to remove the best workers from actual production and because there was no guarantee that a good worker made a good supervisor. However, while the system of internal promotion was being questioned by employers and in some cases replaced by the hiring of 'specialist' supervisors, there was no suggestion the women supervisors were being replaced by men.

In one firm making a range of chemical products, where there was a most articulate personnel policy managed by a staff of seven, the industrial relations manager was a man but five of the remainder were women. Although the majority of the factory work force were still men, the strong representation of women in the personnel department seemed to be spreading to other sections.³ Traditionally

¹ M. Peil, The Ghanaian Factory Worker: Industrial Man in Africa (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972). See also Little, 1973, op. cit., p. 38.

² Campbell, 1953, op. cit., p. 27.

³ The employment of female personnel officers was explained by the belief of management and the industrial relations officer that "a woman is better able to give a disappointing answer; a man could not do it quite as well. That sort of thing required sensitive treatment, and a woman is probably in a better position to do that".

all supervisors had been men, but an interesting situation developed in 1974 when workers in a section employing more women than men suggested that two impending vacancies for foremen should be filled by women. Thus a formal request for female 'foremen' was made by the department concerned and the personnel department interviewed eight women, testing them on their general knowledge of the work, arithmetic, writing ability and their response to difficult situations. This was the first time in the history of that particular well-established firm that women had been considered for middle-management positions, other than as administrative staff, but there was no resistance to the idea and according to the personnel officers it was likely to be repeated. This case highlighted a tendency noted in several other firms. Since a shortage of supervisory labour was reported to be a major constraint on the effective utilisation of machinery and labour in many firms visited, barriers to female promotion were weak. In some cases women were clearly taking over jobs previously held by men. For instance, in one factory a woman was being trained to succeed the retiring male personnel manager and in another, somewhat bizarre case, a state-registered nurse was in charge of personnel management in a large factory predominantly employing male labour. One way or another, by 1974 the situation described by Campbell no longer existed.

VII. Summary and Conclusions

The principal theme of this and the earlier paper is that, contrary to the assertion of Boserup and others, early industrialisation in Jamaica did not coincide with the growth of a male-dominated wage labour force.¹ Given the rapidity of the post-1945 industrialisation there was no skilled labour force with traditions of craftsmanship and skill hierarchy which could have influenced the division of labour within the industrial sector. Correspondingly there was no large 'labour aristocracy' of male skilled workers with high status and income as well a behavioural characteristics so typical of that stratum of workers. On the contrary, whereas men had no tradition of commitment to wage labour, women were more readily available to form a nucleus of an industrial proletariat, having had fewer work opportunities in agriculture and greater pressure to work.

The lack of a committed, skilled male labour force accentuated tendencies inherent in the pattern of industrialisation-by-invitation, for it encouraged the use of techniques using semi-skilled and unskilled labour. With such techniques there is a high premium on the 'skills' of worker stability, efficiency, and predictability, and, with the emphasis on recipe knowledge and formalised communications, on literacy. Within such production processes the static nature of most manual and clerical jobs severely restrict the psychic reward to work, thereby intensifying the workers' sense of deprivation and alienation.² The

¹ For a summary of Boserup's view, see Standing, 1977, op. cit.

² Standing, 1978, op. cit., pp 70f.

narrower and more static the jobs the more employers have to employ workers motivated by the need-for-income. Moreover, the high intensity of semi-skilled, process labour implies a high 'disutility' or 'effort price' of labour, which in itself raises the 'efficiency' wage rate, the wage at which the worker would work with maximum effort and productivity.

With technology and industrialisation imported and superimposed on an economy based on plantation and smallholder farming and commerce, there was no time for the establishment of a craft ethic among male workers. According to this ethic, in craft work part of the 'income' is the non-financial psychic reward, which effectively lowers the effort price of labour. Craft workers, such as woodworkers and then metalworkers in eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain, tend to develop a greater commitment to work than workers doing detail or standardised labour for whom, as sociologists such as Mills have cogently argued, the demand for income is almost the sole motivation to work. For the latter the craft ethic is replaced by a work ethic of instrumentality.¹ With semi-skilled and unskilled jobs that are 'narrow' and 'static', the lack of the intrinsic appeal required to secure a high degree of normative commitment from the workers, means that the extrinsic rewards of labour needed to ensure adequate commitment and effort have to be correspondingly greater.

Semi-skilled labour, therefore, involves a high effort price of labour which raises the wage rate needed to secure a committed, stable labour force. But another factor reducing the worker's effort bargain for any given wage rate is a divergence between prospective wage earnings and the income required to satisfy a level of consumption to which the working class is socially oriented.² If wage incomes, or prospective wage incomes, fall far short of a level sufficient to provide the means to satisfy that level of consumption - or at least the prospect of it - work effort will be reduced until, from the worker's point of view, an appropriate effort bargain is achieved.

Why then does it appear that women industrial workers in Kingston have provided a higher effort bargain than men? First of all, since women in the working class have usually had primary responsibility for the regular support of child dependants, they have been under greater pressure to work regularly and could thus be expected to find the instrumentality of existing work opportunities more acceptable. And because women workers have been more concerned with the purely financial aspect of wage labour they are unlikely to have experienced the same sense of frustration as men. The relative deprivation implicit in semi-skilled

¹ C. Wright Mills, White Collar (1956).

² In Kingston consumption patterns and aspirations were shaped by the widespread advertising and conspicuous consumption of the middle class. But the disparity between wages and the socially stimulated level of consumption aspirations has been such as to produce an attitude of resignation and anomie on the part of many workers.

and unskilled labour is likely to have been greater for men, precisely because men are likely to have been oriented towards more rewarding skilled, career jobs.¹ Thus women employed in static routinised jobs are likely to feel less relative deprivation than men employed in such jobs. In circumstances where men have little opportunity to secure an adequate income from their labour to satisfy the socially determined level of consumption or to satisfy the work ideals of creativity, autonomy, and rising skill and responsibility, they can be expected to respond to the normative conflict by providing an indifferent application of effort in their labour, by a high rate of labour turnover and/or absenteeism, or by resorting to intermittent or ineffectual labour force participation (particularly in regular wage labour) - all of which are conducive to the substitution of female for male labour.

The traditions of paternalism in Jamaica and the low wage/high fringe benefit ratio of worker earnings not only institutionalised semi-commitment to wage labour by both men and women workers, but benefitted women by providing them with a wider range of work-related benefits. This encouraged a greater degree of work stability on their part, while encouraging high absenteeism and low work effort among men, partly because employment practices and the reliance on task work allowed the tradition of occupational multiplicity by male workers to persist. And the fact that men tended to have opportunities to do casual labour as well as their regular job tended to lower male workers' effort bargain in full-time wage labour.

So women workers have tended to have a lower efficiency wage and a higher effort bargain than men because they have been under greater pressure to earn a regular income, have had lower income expectations, and have experienced higher levels of unemployment and fewer opportunities for occupational multiplicity than men.² For these reasons, and because women workers have tended to be more educated, so allowing them to benefit from the practice of credentialism, industrialisation in Jamaica has coincided with a substantial relative expansion of female employment.

¹ Frustration implies continuing orientation towards some goal, and if women are not oriented towards the goal of career, skilled jobs they will tend to experience less frustration in semi-skilled jobs. This is purely a question of social orientation, not a sexual characteristic.

² It should be noted that Kingston has long contained more women than men, and despite lower economic activity rates women have comprised half the labour force. This in itself will have encouraged employers to utilise female labour and will have tended to raise women's effort bargain (and lower their aspiration wages).

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