

fundamental policy changes on the part of the respective political parties. Within eighteen months of returning to office in 1989, the People's National Party (PNP) leaders, who had been ardent advocates of the State's role as the engine of growth, clearly underwent a complete turn-around. The new disciples of the gospel of deregulation, privatization and divestment, now presented the State's role as that of "enabler" and "facilitator" while "the private sector is recognized as the principal engine of economic growth" – a metamorphosis impelled by the new context of a global economy. Meanwhile, a leader of the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) which had emasculated the system during the mid-1980s, has declared the party's strong advocacy and support for Local Government. More recently, the leader of the NDM, adopting a commendably Pauline posture, approached the chairman of the Committee on Tribal Warfare and volunteered his 'garrison constituency' as a guinea-pig in the quest for the means of eliminating such constituencies. These experiences validate the view that even the most strongly held positions are not set in stone. In addition, we have witnessed the confusion in commitment and loyalties expressed in the crossing and recrossing of the political floor by a member of Parliament. In light of this background, the Grace, Kennedy Foundation concluded that the time was appropriate for a Lecture which would provide a perspective on the political scene.

In this Lecture it is proposed to broaden the canvas by viewing the scene in its widest sense, that is, not only its partisan dimension but also in terms of its Westminster parentage and that influence on Jamaica's political as well as its public administrative system. I intend to note the behavioural differences between parent and child; and to reflect on the structure, functioning and behaviour of these component and interrelated parts. In doing so, I shall consider critically the reform efforts and agendas in respect of the Constitution, the Westminster-Whitehall derivative and the Public Administration, Local Government and Electoral systems.

1

Westminster-Whitehall Model and Derivative

Whatever doubts may be felt or expressed about the extent of the rooted and pervasive influence of British culture and institutions on all strata of West Indian societies, that connection has certainly left a significant heritage and deep impressions on their social, political and cultural life. Apart from their legal systems, two institutions spring to mind with a paternity or, perhaps more appropriately, maternal source which is incontrovertible.

One is the Westminster-Whitehall system of government and public administration; the other is cricket. Yet, whatever the similarities to their parent institutions in form or constitutional-legal framework, in practice these two imported local counterparts behave differently from their parents: the transplanted institutions influenced by exposure to the Caribbean environment and culture; the parents nurtured and evolving over centuries in a different environment, in which tradition and convention play significant roles. To anyone who has seen both teams play Test cricket, there are clear differences in style and approach to the game (and also in spectator behaviour). These differences have, however, been 'muddled' within recent years by the recruitment to the England eleven of, at times, highly significant proportions of non-English players, including West Indians, and the infectious extrovert behaviour of the resident West Indian section of the crowd during an England home match.

The Home Model

Essentially, as Edwin Jones observed in his inaugural professorial lecture, the Westminster-Whitehall or Cabinet-Parliamentary system is based on a strong liberal-democratic

ethos. This competitive parliamentary political system, in which major political groups share broadly similar ideological positions, recognizes Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, assigning an official role to the Leader of the Opposition. Implied also, and in fact a reality, is the consideration extended by the executive to back-benchers and to minority views.

- ② These attributes assume a foundation and context reflecting a "broadly homogenous society, the absence of major sub-cultural cleavages . . . and of the institution of violently opposed partisan tribes". It functions on the premise that the decision-making process is based on the existence of a bargaining culture and strong public opinion, with an emphasis on consensus evolved over centuries. Intrinsic also to the system are the tenets
- ③ of individual ministerial and collective Cabinet responsibility, requiring the members to 'hang together' or suffer the penalty of 'hanging separately'.

While the organs of government reflect, to some extent, a separation of powers especially in the long tradition of an independent, non-political judiciary, these arrangements do not, of course, attain the same extent of separation of powers (or personnel) as in the Presidential-Congressional system, exemplified by the USA. This is illustrated in the contrast seen in the selection of members of the executive branch (the Cabinet). In the UK they are required to be recruited from the legislature (Parliament); whereas in the US the President is precluded from drawing members of the Cabinet from Congress. Hence, in the United Kingdom, the dominance of the Executive vis-à-vis the Legislature in a system involving the 'supremacy' of Parliament and based on an unwritten Constitution legitimized primarily by convention.

The founding fathers of the American Constitution, reacting to the former colonies' recent experience of tyranny on the part of the British monarch, recognized the need for placing curbs on the exercise of power. So, turning for inspiration to French philosopher Montesquieu's concept of the 'Separation des Pouvoirs' in his *Esprit des Lois* (*The Spirit of the Laws*), the constitution drafters introduced an arrangement of checks and balances.

The British arrangement by which the Prime Minister and his or her Cabinet serve also as Members of Parliament facilitates the

passage and enactment of legislation and, for the most part, determines the outcome of policy initiatives presented by Ministers. Thus, the problems of 'gridlock' which brought the operations of the US Congress to a standstill on two recent occasions during 1995 and 1996 are avoided. On the other hand, critics have expressed strong concern as long ago as the mid-1940s, about the overriding power of the executive, in a system designated as Cabinet and, more recently, Prime Ministerial 'dictatorship'.

One other important feature of the system concerns the central position occupied by the Civil Service as, until recently, the primary support and source of policy advice for Ministers. This is a merit-based service, recruited on the basis of objective criteria and designed, by the use of open competition, to exclude the intrusion of patronage appointments. Its composition at the senior levels, originally oriented towards the 'gifted amateurs' recruited mainly from Oxbridge, has now graduated to comprise a class of professional executive managers. Critical to the functioning of the Westminster-Whitehall model for 150 years has been the foundation of a depoliticized Service structured on a triad of principles, namely neutrality, anonymity and impartiality. Gerald Caiden suggests that the civil servant's 'vow' of political abstinence, being deprived of certain rights normally enjoyed by citizens, such as speaking on party platforms and canvassing on behalf of election candidates, represents a *quid pro quo* in exchange for the protection enjoyed from anonymity. Thus, it is the Minister (not the civil servant) who is held responsible to Parliament and the public for the success or failure of policies and programmes.

We should note, however, two trends developing since the 1970s, which have altered the monopolistic role of the Civil Service as policy adviser and, more recently, this traditional and hitherto sacrosanct triad of principles. The first concerns the emergence of extra-bureaucratic policy advisory institutions and individuals in the form of in-house 'think tanks' and 'political advisers', normally consisting of experts who have a strong political commitment to the governing party. The expressed rationale for their use is the need to extend the range of policy options available to the government beyond the ambit of advice provided by the Civil Service

A former British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, justified the introduction of political advisers as:

... an extra pair of hands, ears and eyes and a mind more politically committed and more politically aware than would be available to a Minister from the political neutrals in the established Civil Service. This is particularly true for a radical reforming party in government, since 'neutrality' may easily slip into conservatism with a small 'c'.

Wilson adds: "For policies without politics are of no more use than politics without policies."

The other trend reflects the fact that, as Metcalf and Richards put it: Civil servants have also been forced to realize that their constitutional position is ill-defined, anomalous and vulnerable. The administrative responsibility for large organizations delivering services in important fields contrasts with the constitutional fiction of an anonymous, politically neutral service, totally subordinate to the political will of ministers. The gap between constitutional convention and governmental practice has widened considerably.

Indeed, during Mrs Thatcher's regime, there was some deviation from the hitherto strict adherence to the neutrality tenet, when a number of private sector personnel, who were clearly sympathetic to the Government, were recruited to the higher reaches of the service.

The Derivative Export

Let me turn now to look at the derivative export model, Jamaican style, and examine its similarities to, and differences from, its parent. Some of these differences are reflected in degree rather than in substance. Although by 1944 the British nexus with Jamaica was already almost three hundred years old, significant elements of Westminster democracy had not emerged until that year with the introduction of universal adult suffrage and an Executive Council which included elected members from the legislature – the 'ministers in embryo'. The evolutionary process of constitutional changes passing through the stages of

full ministerial and cabinet systems, internal self-government and culminating in Independence reflected a gradual whittling away of the presence and power of the colonial governor and ex-officio and nominated members of the Executive and Legislative Councils. These developments followed a pattern which would be institutionalized throughout the British Empire. In essence, the arrangements were based on the model which had evolved in Britain through a gradual erosion, by Parliament, of the power of the Crown with Parliament eventually attaining its position of supremacy.

Anthony Payne, a political scientist specialist on this region, has observed the Commonwealth Caribbean's legacy of liberal, representative institutions as a "political order based on the working of practices and commitments that have as their inspiration the Westminster system." According to Payne, this legacy includes, among its core elements, the convention of constitutionalism, the doctrine of civilian supremacy, the custom of competitive elections, the practice of pluralist representation and the 'presumption' of bureaucratic and police neutrality. It is clear, however, that in practice the components of this heritage do not all conform to the doctrine of the parent model. Note, for instance, the last of the elements mentioned: the presumption of neutrality of those in authority. Here we have an illustration of the concept designated 'formalism' by the American public administration scholar, Fred Riggs, that is, the divergence between formal statements which appear in constitutions, statutes, regulations and their translation into actual practice. A classic example of this is the notion of police neutrality in Jamaica.

Separation of Powers

There are defects in the working of Jamaica's governmental system which have been issues of concern for more than two decades. They include the interrelated factors of the syndrome of secrecy and weaknesses in accountability and transparency; the incidence of corruption; excessive centralization; the issue of politicization of the Civil Service. Perhaps the most contentious centre of controversy in the long discussions and arguments about constitutional reform has been the issue of the separation of powers. Indeed, for some analysts and commentators, this

aspect of the Jamaican Constitution is considered the primary source of most of the social, political and economic ills plaguing our society. Thus, in its General Policy Document No. 1, the National Democratic Movement sees "the excessive concentration of power in the hands of the Prime Minister" — with Parliament being reduced to a rubber stamp for laws which the Prime Minister "wishes to have passed" as "a major factor in the creation and entrenchment of tribalism and corruption." It is also regarded by the NDM as the source of the garrison system which explains much of the political violence. Further, the NDM argues, Cabinet members find little time to attend to the needs of their constituents. It is partly for this reason that the proposal is made that, as in the Presidential system, members of Parliament should not be eligible for Cabinet appointment. In the party's view, a fundamental change of this nature would ensure the "deepening of democracy". A similar recommendation was included in the Stone Committee Report of February 1, 1991. The NDM presses the view that the constitutional system should be radically changed and "replaced by a democratic system which is more accountable and responsive to the needs of the Jamaican people."

On the other hand, those who support retention of the Westminster-Whitehall system and reject the idea of it being replaced by the US model point particularly to the experience of gridlock which, from time to time, has hindered the effective functioning of government in that country. Thus, for instance, Delroy Chuck, a prominent JLP spokesman, recognizes the positive features of the Presidential-Congressional system such as the checks and balances which serve the purpose of avoiding the abuse of power. However, he emphasizes not only the problem of gridlock but also points out that the "qualities of tolerance, compromise and consensus" demanded by that system, "are not qualities readily found in our people."

Chuck invites attention to the failure rate of the American model when adopted in Asian and Latin American countries. He agrees that "What is required is a constitution that vests power in the people and in the Parliament" (*Gleaner*; November 22, 1995 and November 6, 1996). Fellow Attorney-at-Law, R.B. Manderson-Jones, in his *Case for a Republican Constitution for Jamaica* (1992), insists, "Gridlock between the

executive and the legislature is not an essential feature of a presidential system based on a separation of powers." Let me state at this point that I share the view that significant and fundamental reform could be achieved with the objective of enhancing the democratic ideal by way of radical improvements in the controls exercised by Parliament and extension of the facilities available to members. I believe that this can be achieved without throwing out the Westminster heritage, as I will show later.

Excessive Centralization

The syndrome of excessive centralization is a subject which has absorbed my attention for almost thirty years and one on which I have spoken and written, perhaps ad nauseam.

In Jamaica (and in the wider British Caribbean generally) older generations have been conditioned in a cultural context of non-participatory decision-making. This begins in early years with the parent-child relationship, emphasized in the dictum "children must be seen but not heard", continues through the relationship between teacher and pupil in the education system and culminates at the workplace. The syndrome is illustrated in the relationships between central government and local government authorities, between central core and line sectoral agencies, and in the processes of national planning. It is evident, too, in the perennial difficulty experienced in persuading ministries and departments to delegate decision-making areas to their regional and field branches, and senior staff to delegate to middle management and to junior personnel. It is the authoritarian personality in the private sphere manifesting itself in public sector practice and behaviour.

Thus, local authorities have for centuries been held on a tight rein of subordination and control — virtually a colonial relationship — despite the recommendations of several commissions and committees during the past fifty or more years, all emphasizing that the major contributors to the deficiencies and the poor performance of Local Government have been inadequate financing and lack of autonomy. It is perhaps significant (and not coincidental) that when an institution for social and economic planning was first created it was designated the *Central Planning Unit*. This unwittingly reflected the extent to which the processes of 'national' planning would focus on development from above from

the centre, with scant regard for consultation and participation at the community level. Interestingly, also, some Ministers have been accused of bogging themselves down doing the paperwork which should be done by civil servants - of behaving as if they were Permanent Secretaries or the Ministry's chief technical expert.

In the areas of human resources and financial management, sectoral managers such as Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Department in the Agriculture, Works and Health fields are held responsible for the performance of their agencies although they have relatively little control over their allocation of personnel and financial resources.

It seems that the Government has recognized the need to ease the reins in the decision taken recently to decentralize the Ministries of Education and of Health. However, it needs to be emphasized that an organization may well include an extensive regional and parish field sub-system which enjoys allocations of the major complement of the Ministry's personnel and financial resources. Yet such an arrangement does not necessarily reflect a genuinely decentralized system. The question to be answered is: Are any significant areas of decision-making delegated to field personnel?

The almost pathological reluctance to delegate serves as a serious demotivator for Civil Service personnel. The 'alibi' often expressed centres on the vicious circular process of unfitness to cope with the delegated authority. This breeds an erosion of self-confidence; As a result, a premium is placed on over-cautiousness, fostering a set of risk-shy individuals while attributes of creativity, innovativeness and dynamism are stultified. Ultimately, some of these men and women opt out of the system, either physically or psychologically, moving to the private sector or to statutory bodies or, worse, remaining but inactive. Hence, one of the core elements of the original Administrative Reform Programme (ARP) of 1984-88 involved the extension to sectoral ministries of a greater degree of decentralization and delegation of areas of authority normally exercised by the Ministries of Finance and of the Public Service (MPS) and the Public Service Commission (PSC).

Instead of performing primarily as the agencies of first instance making decisions on personnel management and also

position classification at prescribed levels, the MPS and PSC would assume the roles of monitor, supervisor and reviewer in relation to performance by the sectoral ministries on the basis of norms prescribed by the reviewing agencies. Unfortunately, however, this aspect of the ARP did not get off the ground. Anxiety and insecurity about their possible loss of status on the part of some senior officials who would be required to delegate together with leaders of some sectoral ministries being afraid of accepting the new areas of authority required of them presented insuperable problems. The idea of decentralization, however, has not been neglected. Among the principal features of the new Public Sector Modernization Project (PSMP) initiated in mid-1996, is the creation of Executive Agencies - an institution borrowed from recent British reform experience. Their chief executive officers and managers are being vested with authority and 'full control over their human resource and financial management'. More will be said about them later.

Politicization of the Civil Service

From the point of view of the general meaning of the term 'anonymity', a senior civil servant in a very small state, experiences much greater difficulty in remaining unknown and behind the scene than would be the case in a larger society such as the United Kingdom. In addition, particular officials are closely identified in the public mind with specific policies and programmes and, in the process of decision-making, rumours circulate about participants, identifying views expressed by them in confidence with the policy advice they have given to ministers.

In small, highly personalized societies such as those of the Caribbean, the political sympathies and loyalties of individuals tend to be widely known. Those who hold public office have a 'high visibility quotient' so that anonymity and confidentiality are virtually impossible. Senior civil servants are over-exposed in the political arena. Ministers are virtually continuously breathing down their necks; and tension and conflict between politicians and civil servants are thereby intensified.

Moreover, while this is not a significant practice in Jamaica, in the Leewards and Windwards it was not unusual during the 1960s and 1970s for Chief Ministers and their colleagues to attack and level accusations against individual civil servants in

public speeches. In Trinidad-Tobago, the then Prime Minister Dr Eric Williams accused a group of 'super' Permanent Secretaries (including his own) and the Government's Economic Adviser of conspiring to take over responsibility for governing the country from the elected representatives. "This small and ambitious technocratic elite" he claimed, had exercised initiatives beyond the scope of their authority in relation to certain projects. They were immediately exiled. The allegation about the exercise of initiatives is of particular significance in light of the criticisms traditionally levelled against British Caribbean civil servants of lack of initiative. Interestingly, Dennis Solomon, a lecturer at UWT's St Augustine campus, asked: "What could be more suspicious than a politician, particularly one twenty years in power, proclaiming the sanctity of bureaucratic powers?"

This episode also seemed to illustrate a tendency for ministers to be reluctant to accept responsibility for projects which have 'gone sour' and to pass the blame on to civil servants in the search for scapegoats. By any standard, this represents a fundamental departure from the Whitehall tenet of Ministerial responsibility and accountability.

In this context, I interpret impartiality to refer to both the treatment of the customers of public service agencies and of the personnel who staff them. In the Caribbean and other developing societies, ascriptive criteria (based on family connections and the like) are not entirely irrelevant in determining the manner in which individuals are served. Thus, for example, seemingly visible indicators of class, colour and status sometimes play significant roles in the decisions taken by clerks at the counters of agencies such as the tax offices and public hospitals on priorities in serving members of a queue of customers or whether selected individuals need to queue at all.

To some extent, resort to the use of such criteria has not been unknown in civil service recruitment and promotion practices. The late Professor Harold Laski, when speaking on the subject of 'Equality', would advise: "If you wish to be a success, to make your way in the world, you must be careful in the choice of your parents!"

The notion of neutrality is reflected in the rationale for a depoliticized bureaucracy in terms of its relationship with contending political parties: This is seen in the restrictions imposed

on the civil servant against involvement in partisan political activity and in the emphasis laid on his or her duty to serve each governing party on an equal basis.

In the United Kingdom the regulations prescribing limitations on the political activity of civil servants (based on recommendations of the Masterman Committee Report of 1949) varied according to the functional levels of the Service, being stringent in relation to officials working close to Ministers and those engaged in policy advisory functions. Thus, the committee attempted to resolve the conflict between the preservation, in the public interest, of a politically neutral Civil Service and the need to allow freedom to exercise ordinary citizen rights to as many State employees as possible. Following the recommendations of the Armitage Committee (1978), the regulations were significantly relaxed, particularly those relating to personnel at lower levels. CARICOM states have tended to apply their heritage of restrictions less liberally to all levels of personnel and, also rigidly, allowing little leeway for discretionary action.

A variety of views has been expressed about the civil servant's role in the Westminster-Whitehall system. At one end, Lord Welby put it succinctly, but crudely: "The business of a civil servant is to do what he is told." This dictum derives from the traditional notion of a dichotomy (enunciated by President Woodrow Wilson and other Public Administration scholars) between policy, the preserve of politicians, and administration - implementation - the business of civil servants. Former Prime Minister Michael Manley, addressing the Jamaica Civil Service Association soon after his accession to office in February 1972, attempted to delineate the respective roles of the two parties:

Politicians at their best, should be conceptualizers; they see their business as the interpretation of the people's dreams. Civil servants are about practical business. It obviously is the responsibility of the politician to formulate policies - to bring to Government a set of concepts, a set of ideas about what he would like to see happen; thereupon to see the reaction of the person who is the master of the statistics, of the brutal facts.

Welby's view is simplistic. Manley's does not fully explain the nuances involved in the working relations between the two

parties. One basic difficulty arises from the fact that some illusions about the functioning of political and administrative institutions, which have been largely dispelled in the United Kingdom long ago, continue to survive in the Caribbean. There is generally a long time-lag between changes (or the recognition that such changes have occurred) in the original British institutions and corresponding modifications in their Caribbean derivatives. The Caribbean perception of the British model also differs from the reality.

To illustrate: only relatively recently has it been recognized in most Caribbean States that civil servants, especially those at senior levels, are expected to be intimately involved in policy formulation and that the process of implementing decisions provides them with opportunities to interpret policy which has been determined by Ministers. There has been a failure on the part of many of those involved in the debate about the role of the Civil Service and the concept of neutrality to come to terms with the fact that even in the British parent system, civil servants are not automatons or, in Brian Chapman's words, faceless, pliable, sexless creatures without fixed ideas, or intellectual eunuchs. This failure stems partly from a reluctance to disengage from fixed and simplistic notions of a 'value-free' Whitehall Civil Service; a reluctance to accept the idea of a 'respectable' senior Civil Service which has a political role and is normally engaged in political (though not partisan) activities. Moreover, we should be reminded that top members of the colonial bureaucracy performed dual political and administrative roles: some Heads of Departments were members of the Executive Committee or Privy Council.

Brian Chapman has succinctly underlined this political role:

It is clear that some civil servants are engaged in politics. The word 'policy' is a recognition of this; it is what civil servants do when they play a part in determining ends, choosing means and fixing priorities.

Peter Self and Sir John Hoskyns address more directly the problems confronting the civil servant in meeting his 'unquestionable' duty to serve every governing party with the same loyalty, enthusiasm and effectiveness. As Self sees it, the task of the civil servant is not so much to be a eunuch but rather a political chameleon. And Hoskyns:

... the concept of political neutrality puts senior civil servants in an impossible position ... How can senior

officials work wholeheartedly for a Thatcher government for four or five years and turn about and do the same thing for a (Tony) Benn government? They can only do so, I suggest by cultivating a passionless detachment . .

Jamaica represents the classic case among CARICOM States of the regular alternation in office of a country's two major political parties; and this sequence has continued throughout the period of party government since 1944. Hence, civil servants functioning at the highest level were presented with ideal opportunities to demonstrate the Westminster-Whitehall neutrality principle in practice. During the early stages of this period, there were occasionally cases in which vague allegations and rumours circulated suggesting that a particular Permanent Secretary was biased in favour of or against the JLP or PNP, or that the party in power had victimized an official on partisan grounds. But such cases were rare.

The general ethos was epitomized in the example set by a number of Permanent Secretaries such as Egerton Richardson and Arthur Brown who were models of the appropriate behaviour of the professional civil servant functioning in such a context. In successive JLP and PNP governments, they served conspicuously as key advisers to Prime Ministers Bustamante and Shearer, Premier Norman Manley and Ministers of Finance Sangster, Nethersole, Arnett and Seaga.

We should note, however, that for the most part these top-level officials served during a period when a great degree of consensus characterized the policies of the JLP and the PNP when in office, until 1974. The primary differences between these governing parties in practice rested not on ideological positions nor on broad policy goals, but in the personalities and styles of the respective leaders and, to some extent, on the programmes designed to achieve these goals.

Thus G. Arthur Brown, in his address on receiving an honorary degree at the UWI, elaborated on the capacity of the civil servants to serve both political parties successfully:

There is a group of career people who see themselves as working for Jamaica. The career civil servant or public official will have problems if he seeks to substitute his preferences for those of the elected government. It is a matter of bringing professional judgement

and expertise to bear on their policies. I see a conflict only if the policies are immoral or illegal or offensive to one's conscience.

The critical change occurred after 1974 with the PNP's declaration of its ideology and policies of Democratic Socialism, particularly following its landslide re-election in December 1976. A few months before that election, Prime Minister Manley, in an address to the Civil Service Association, had commented on the notion of neutrality as follows:

The very word 'neutral' connotes the idea of a car whose gear is in neutral, that is 'cautious to commit'. It is a negative concept . . . If a third world country is to have a hope of survival, the first challenge is not that of this loftiness of survival, but the earthly ground-based reality of commitment without ever crossing the line of your professional integrity as a civil servant.

In Manley's concluding sentence lies the rub. The social and economic conditions of Jamaican and other CARICOM States certainly call for a political directorate and a public service which are committed to national goals of change. However, controversies are inevitable in the determination of the most appropriate ideology and policies for ensuring positive change, particularly in a multi-party milieu; with senior civil servants being expected to assume, chameleon-style, fresh commitments with every new government. Moreover – and this condition emerged during the 1970s – there is a danger of commitment being used as an alibi for sycophancy and time-serving. This is expressed in the assumption of a pliant posture, in the reluctance of some civil servants to question where questioning appears appropriate and to proffer advice and engage in implementation of decisions in a professional manner.

Since the PNP's return to power in 1989, the ideological gap between the parties has narrowed with the new government now embracing the philosophy of the market economy, the private sector as the engine of growth and continuation of its immediate JLP predecessor's accompanying policies of privatization, divestment and de-regulation. As a consequence of the greater degree of ideological consensus between the major political parties, the problems which confronted some civil servants during the 1970s

and 1980s would now, presumably, have lessened.

As for the wider public sector, concern about the controversial issue of commitment versus competence as one of the selection criteria in appointments to statutory boards and committees was intensified during the latter part of the seventies. Following the 1976 election victory, the PNP created a party Accreditation Committee, 'The Pickersgill Committee of Political Purity' (as it was dubbed) evidently had the task of screening candidates to ensure that appointees were of impeccable political purity. Minister D.K.Duncan of the new Ministry of Mobilization expressed the position without equivocation in relation to civil servants in that organization when he stated in Parliament:

In a Ministry of Mobilization in a socialist Government it is very difficult to employ somebody who is not a socialist. I make no apology. Every single employee in the Ministry of National Mobilization, his (sic) credentials as a democratic socialist are clear and pure.

Nowhere in the Caribbean has the institution of the special (in the UK, the political) adviser developed to the extent of the Jamaican experience following the PNP's return to office in 1972. In his remarks to the Civil Service Association in April of that year (reference to which has already been made), the Prime Minister, attempting to allay the anxieties of the Civil Service arising from the introduction of this new device, explained the rationale as "a deliberate attempt to involve citizens. . . to ensure that the Government does not become cut away from access to the citizen's point of view." Thus, the special adviser's role is to assist the Government in maintaining "pipelines into the opinions of the people at large . . . They are no threat to you."

It is clear, however, that the real reason for the resort to these 'irregulars' extends beyond the need to widen the choice of policy options available to the political directorate. There is no doubt that their primary purpose is to provide the directorate with the services of a group of persons who bring strong political commitment to, and support for, the governing party's ideology and policy goals.

Apart from being a source of anxiety for civil servants, the pervading presence of special advisers during the Manley regime

of the seventies provided a platform for conflict with the executive authority and responsibility of permanent secretaries. In cases where such advisers were accorded the role of omniscient experts or assumed an extension of the aura of authority vicariously provided by proximity to the primary source of power, conflict arose in their relationships not only with senior civil servants but even with Ministers.

An additional consequence was the contribution of these alternative or additional sources of policy advice to the declining influence of the higher Civil Service on the decision-making process. This decline had begun earlier, but was accelerated by the influx of special advisers. Early in the 1970s, Dr Paul Robertson (then a Research Fellow at UWI's Institute of Social and Economic Research [ISER]) and I conducted a study of the attitudes and behaviour of the senior civil service in Jamaica in which we interviewed all the Permanent Secretaries, the officials next in line, and a number of those at the third level – a total of one hundred interviewees. One of our questions concerned the level of influence they were allowed to exercise in the policy-making process. A significant percentage expressed strong feelings about their lack of influence. A similar question put to a number of Permanent Secretaries in Barbados, although not via a structured questionnaire, elicited the same response.

In my view, this decline in the influence of the higher Civil Service stems, to a great extent, from the significant trend of governments throughout the British Caribbean towards recruitment to their Cabinets of tertiary-educated graduates, including professionally qualified persons, and especially lawyers. Since 1970 the proportion of such members has increased to approximately 85 per cent in Jamaica and a number of other States. I would suggest that a well-educated political directorate – a much better educated one than before, particularly in Jamaica, and for the most part with qualifications similar to those held by their senior civil servants – exuding confidence, feels less dependent on these advisers. Accordingly, ministers relegate their 'advisers' to the less important functions of sorting out the nuts and bolts.

2

The Political Scene

The Escalation of Crime and Violence

Much of the latter part of the preceding chapter focused on the administrative arm of government, but it is obviously not feasible to delineate clear boundaries between the political and administrative arenas. There is, of course, a symbiotic relationship between them and, inevitably, some of the matters already discussed also concern the political arena.

One of the most significant issues of current concern in Jamaica is the escalation in the incidence of crime and violence, especially the alarming increase in the number of murders in the poorer areas of Kingston and St Andrew and St Catherine. Indeed, the total number island-wide in 1996, exceeded the previous record level of 1980, when the motivation was primarily political. There is continuing controversy about the underlying factors which have brought about this situation. For some analysts and commentators, the responsibility for its genesis, and to some extent for its persistence, lies in the hands of politicians. This is refuted by others who identify social, cultural and economic factors as the root cause of 'ghetto' violence and assert that there is no real evidence to support the indictment of politicians.

However different the views may be about how far politicians played the role of principal agents in activating this escalating violence, it is incontrovertible that at the base have been the deplorable social and economic conditions in which poorer communities subsist. And this is aggravated by their perception and, more, their observation, of the standard of living of others in our society and the wide gulf between the two. What is clear, however, and (despite denials) has been established by objective