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Jamaica: Its Postcolonial Predicament

With the upcoming celebration of the 58th anniversary of Jamaica's independence, it is timely to take another look at the groundbreaking book by Orlando Patterson, *The Confounding Island: Jamaica and the Postcolonial Predicament*. The book's discussions on the slavery experiences are also particularly relevant to today's reckoning on the enduring legacy of slavery.

As the columns by Jim Daniels have pointed out, Patterson's book is an important one and will interest anyone who loves Jamaica with all its complexities and contradictions.

He explores many of the vexing questions about the country and, as he puts it, its "outsized" impact in areas both good (music, sport) and bad (violence and failures of development). He addresses many of the questions that I had on my numerous visits to the island for work there with social work experts and students.

The book is by no means an easy read. It is a serious academic work in every sense of the word—thoroughly referenced and with scholarly sociological theory as its base. Although my own graduate education is in an allied area, to fully comprehend Patterson's work would require me to do more reading and study in sociology.

A chapter that particularly



Dr. Lynne M. Healy

interested me is Patterson's exploration of violence in Jamaica, its causes and impact on development and well being. He examines the links between toleration and perpetuation of violence against women and children within the household and violence at the community level that continues to impair Jamaica's development and the prospects for a peaceful existence. The widespread

practice of physical discipline of children and abusive male-female relationships, he argues, ultimately contribute to wider community violence, although he acknowledges other factors such as drug trafficking, unemployment and poverty.

As Jim Daniels stated in his January column, Jamaica's slave system was especially brutal and the violence continued after emancipa-

tion. The legacy of the brutal slavery experience includes the "belief that all forms of discipline and persuasion ultimately rest on force." Patterson continues that "this valorization of corporal punishment was also culturally perpetuated in child-rearing practices," and that "violence within the family then breeds violence toward others outside the family."

It is interesting that a study in South Africa showed a circular effect—that escalations in community violence lead to increased domestic violence. Jamaica and other Caribbean countries have already taken steps to address family violence; Jamaica, for example, established an Office of the Child Advocate, modeled after the one in Connecticut. Patterson's arguments may provide an opportunity to further address child discipline not as compliance with American standards or United Nations human rights dictates, but rather rejection of the negative inheritance from the slavery experience.

Patterson examines some of Jamaica's confounding development issues. A real positive is that Jamaica, in spite of high levels of poverty and low per capita income, scores well on many indicators of well being. Life expectancy is high, putting Jamaica far above what would be expected for its economic

status. Patterson also cites global "happiness" studies that continue to show the Jamaicans are largely quite happy and rank among the happiest of the world's nations. There remain, however, concerns about the failure of well-intentioned programs to improve conditions for people living in poverty.

Patterson discusses his own experience as an advisor to Michael Manley and admits failures of some of his ideas. He details a project from the 1970s that aimed to improve the lives of those living in urban slums. Rather than new housing, he advocated for a basic needs approach to development that would include improvements to water, sanitation, health care and other services, with selective repairs and upgrading of existing (and admittedly minimal) housing in the slum areas.

He argues that the project was sabotaged by politicians who preferred more visible and grand projects, particularly building new housing units, although these have benefitted relatively few people and contributed to political violence in the garrison communities as the chance to secure a housing unit depends on political loyalty. It is difficult to harness the political will to make such programs work when pressures from powerful groups interfere.

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Jamaica Medical Mission



Crowd waiting to be let in to see the 54-member medical staff at the Medical Mission service center in the Parish of St. Mary

By Jim Daniels

The Jamaica Medical Mission to St. Mary is celebrating 31 years of uninterrupted service to the people of Jamaica. Launched and still led by Stuart Mowatt, who incidentally is a member of the Calabar High School class of 1961, it has marked out for itself a remarkable devotion to bringing medical care to thousands of

people in the parish of St. Mary.

In Miami, a faculty member of Miami Dade Community College School of Nursing, Professor Marie Etienne, DNP, MSN, saw, seized, and affirmed, along with other nurses in 2005 that one person can make a difference. Dr. Etienne, who was born in Haiti, and came to the

U.S. at the age of 14 always saw herself as a servant-leader and believed a career in nursing would provide opportunities to fulfill her aspirations. That year, she was persuaded by a friend to visit the Haitian and Dominican cane cutters and their families in the Dominican Republic spread over some 350 Bateyes (cane cutting communities)

because they were in dire need of access to healthcare; so, she responded:

"We went on the first mission trip to the DR in 2005 to assess the need and take care of the people in the Bateyes," Etienne said. The team saw over 1,000 patients in the week they were there and realized the level of need was great. The

migrant workers had no access to healthcare and were, "être traités comme des esclaves," (were being treated as slaves). The team's visit led by Dr. Etienne shined the light of exposure on the conditions of the migrants. Haitian cane cutters in the Dominican Republic (DR) are accorded no legal status and children

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Medical Mission

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born in the country do not receive birth certificates and are not granted citizenship. The sugar cane farming sector of the DR depends fundamentally on Haitian migrants who represent 90% of the labor force in sugar-

cane cutting and were paid one dollar per day.

The medical team included a diverse blend of medical and health care competencies and others who offered their availability in a supporting role. "In 2006 I decided that we needed to get nursing stu-



A contingent from NC: Hygienist Debbi Myers, Medical Extern Shaian Lashani, and Dr. Paul Dowsett, MD

dents involved because there are certain things you can teach students in the classroom and certain things you can't," said Etienne. Twice each year a team of 28 to 30 people provided care to over 1,000 patients ranging from children to the elderly people in the Bateyes.

In 2010, the earthquake struck Haiti killing over 200,000 people and the mission's focus shifted from the DR to Haiti. "Our attention turned to the needs in Haiti as relief efforts and other nurses who were members of the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) came together to share in the relief response treating wounds, stabilizing the injured, triaging patients according to symptoms, and whatever else was necessary.

Etienne in heroic fashion went to Haiti about 5 times that year going back and forth. She also went to one of the universities to teach the nursing students basic skills and show how they can be

empowered to take care of their own country.

Also in 2012, the team returned to the DR because the healthcare needs persisted and because of the continuing deplorable living conditions of the cane cutters.

The people in the Bateyes were doing their level best by any means necessary to survive but in 2013 the team decided not to go back because the DR's Supreme Court ruled that the government could proceed to deport all persons who are in the country illegally. That put a lot of fear into the workers needing health care.

"Many Haitians arrive in the DR through open borders without legal documents and stay in the country this way. The living conditions of these communities are extremely poor, and immigrants generally live in impoverished barracks that have no electricity, no basic sewage services, and no potable water. There are no health services, recreational spaces, or

schools. The workers work on average 12 hours per day and face the threat of deportation when they attempt to organize to obtain basic rights.

"God puts us here to serve other people and if we can put a smile on someone else's face; if we can change someone's life we should not think twice about it and as long as I have the opportunity I will continue to serve because the joy that comes with it is overwhelming.

This joy is priceless. We feel we are saving lives and making an impact. The people know that someone cares about them and that they are not forgotten.

Those receiving care were both Haitians and Dominicans. We served both Haitians and Dominicans because it is not just Haitians that live in poverty, it just happens that the people who cut the sugarcane are at least 90 percent Haitians," Etienne said.

Postcolonial Predicament

Continued from Page 1

My own journeys to Jamaica have been to collaborate (and twice to teach) with the very excellent University of the West Indies. This is an institution that certainly brings a lot of pride to the Caribbean. Patterson, however, recommends that Jamaica reduce its spending on tertiary education to free up more resources for lower levels from pre-primary to secondary.

He argues that the University benefits relatively few and draws most of its students from the more privileged sectors of the society. Primary and secondary schools are short of resources, teachers are sometimes poorly trained, and educational outcomes are poor from many of the schools. This continues to fuel inequality, unemployment, and alienation.

More needs to be spent to improve schools for the whole population. This is one of his key suggestions for advancing development success. In several interesting and enjoyable chapters, Patterson explores and celebrates several of Jamaica's "outsized" contributions to global sport and culture, especially its outstanding track athletes

and music.

The spread and popularity of reggae dispel the myth that globalization creates a monolithic world culture drawn only from the U.S. and Europe. Instead, the culture of this country of fewer than 3 million people has shaped musical traditions across the world.

The book ends on an optimistic note. Patterson applauds Jamaica's success in taking control of its debt situation and expresses faith in the promising new leaders in the country. Throughout the book he notes the strength of Jamaican democracy and a press that is one of the most free in the world.

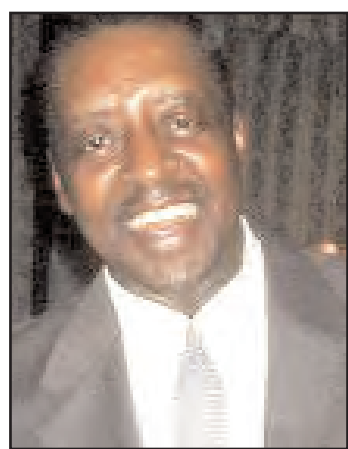
Certainly, there will be new hurdles to overcome. Climate change poses serious risks and the devastation of the tourist industry by Covid-19 will take time to overcome. These will undoubtedly test the capability of the leaders and the patience of the people.

[Lynne M. Healy, Ph.D., Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor Emerita, University of Connecticut School of Social Work, Hartford, CT; also, main representative to the UN, International Association of Schools of Social Work].

Accuracy Of Past Narratives Questioned As New Truths Are Uncovered

The virus of this pandemic has forced the population of the USA to isolate, quarantine, and read more, even if it's using the Internet and paying special attention to national and historical narratives. The monuments that are reminders of an inglorious/glorified and vilified time in the creation of this nation are being scrutinized, appraised, and dismantled or relocated to a less prominent locale.

The protest and suggested changes to some parts of the existing narratives are a noteworthy welcome and much desired change to the existing social order that targets the value system imposed on the Africans brought here primarily for unpaid labor. These protests also



Leon Fraser

question the validity and accuracy of the past narratives that we were given as the gospel truth; even the gospel truth now more than ever

has to be questioned as well in light of uncovered new "truths".

As we scrutinize and compare the ledger of the Caucasians against ours there are some enablers of African descent that must be put under the microscope. Lessons learned and imminent changes do not end up 'swapping black dog for monkey.' The captured image of a black man under the knee of a supremacist has galvanized the nation, solidified friendships of gen X, Y and Z, and widens the chasm between the boomers and others. The bravery and steadfastness of the young woman videotaping the moment cannot be complimented enough; without this evidence the police report would've been the only record of the incident and everything

would've continued as before.

This galvanizing moment was a long time coming and its one of the peaks that follow the troughs of progress which can be graphed from the flashpoint of Emmitt Till's death, another peak of advocacy. A crucial summit of galvanized awareness can be graphed as well to the heyday of Marcus Garvey in the early 1900s.

True historians will check the records of the "Negro world," a paper published and distributed by the UNIA, as well as a paper published by the other organization, "Crisis," which was edited by one of the co-founders of this other entity. To support black-owned businesses is not a new slogan by

National Action Network or the Muslims. During the oppression of African-Americans in this country, black-owned and operated businesses were the ones most welcomed to us.

No other individual to date in this time has mobilized so many persons of African ethnicity to fill the streets of Manhattan as well as Madison Square Garden, bearing in mind that the masses that came could barely read the written word. This was also the genesis of the Harlem Renaissance, to which many others have been given credit or taken credit. Caribbean immigrants were integral in this renewal but not given credit.

Companies that were responsible for the publication of false

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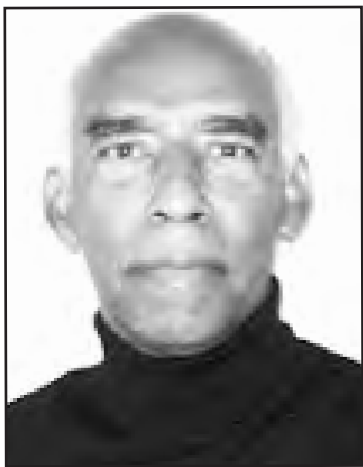
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I Alone Can Fix It

It goes without saying that what will rise to the top of the list of things that will be remembered long after Donald Trump's reign of incompetence has ended, will be the absence of national, cohesive leadership in dealing with the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic.

John Dickerson, the CBS 60 Minutes program contributor, wrote recently in the Atlantic magazine, "The origins of Trump's disastrous response to the defining crisis of his presidency can be traced to his pronouncement at the 2016 Republican



Jim Z. Daniels

national convention that he *alone* could fix America's problems."

This might very well be a solid assessment of Trump's failure to live up to an aspiration he verbalized. However, it is more likely that the superscription of his presidency will be encapsulated in his response to a question posed at one of his news conferences regarding whether or not he took responsibility for the slow pace of preparing to deal with coronavirus testing. He said, "I don't take responsibility."

All of this is shockingly

emblematic of Trump's persona. He enthusiastically accepts praise for the low unemployment reports prior to coronavirus, but rejects the notion that the trade wars with China, and the restrictions on agricultural exports have hurt the farming sector.

This is embedded personality disorder. But Trump has a twisted understanding of what is needed to be president of the United States. When he is engaged in international overreach such as threatening the European Union, the criticism of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's leadership. He has rescued a rapper from the Netherlands and criticized Bubba Wallace for calling attention to the noose in his dressing quarters at the NASCAR track. Perhaps he sees himself as just being 'one of the people.'

The alarming truth is that Trump sold himself as a busi-

nessperson who could solve America's problems and return the nation to his perceived notion of what it means to be great. His leadership in the areas of solving complex problems is abysmally lacking. He has never been asked to describe what is it in the US and Iran nuclear agreement he dislikes. Has he ever read it?

He yearns to apply strongman methods to gain compliance with his directives necessitating the US Supreme Court to check his understanding of the Constitution. Sir Francis Bacon said it best, "Nothing may more hurt a nation but that cunning men pass for wise."

As the English-speaking Caribbean community celebrates their independence in August--Jamaica's will be year 58, in this contextual background former University Professor Lynne Healey provides her insight into Professor Orlando Patterson's book on Jamaica.

Obituary

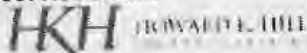
Walker, Carmen Montique



Carmen Montique Walker, age 79, of Bloomfield, CT passed away peacefully, on Thursday, July 2, 2020 in her home. Carmen was born on May 11, 1941, in St. Thomas, Jamaica. She was the daughter of Frank Montique and Delmathea Stibble. She was raised in Jamaica until she came to America in 1966 where she made a better life for herself

and family. Carmen retired from Saint Mary's Home in 2013, after 45 years of service. Carmen loved to cook, shop, travel, shop, hanging and talking on the phone with friends and shopping some more. Oh! And she loved dancing. Her favorite holiday was Christmas when the house was filled with family and the smell of good food. Carmen also loved attending church, North United Methodist, where she participated in all sorts of activities and events. She leaves to mourn her passing her husband Carol Walker of Bloomfield, CT, 5 children, Linval, Carlton, Michael, Oran and her only girl, Janet; 16 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

A celebration of her life will take place on Saturday, July 18, 2020 at Henry L. Fuqua Funeral Service (A Division of Howard K. Hill Funeral Services) 94 Granby St., Bloomfield, CT 06002 at 9:00am with a calling hour from 8:00am-9:00am. Interment will follow at Mountain View Cemetery 30 Mountain Ave., Bloomfield, and CT 06002. To view the full obituary and leave a message of comfort for the Walker family please visit: www.hkhfuneralservices.com



2020 Taste Of The Caribbean, Jerk Festival Cancelled Due To Coronavirus

HARTFORD, CT: The Fifteenth Annual Taste of the Caribbean and Jerk Festival, one of Hartford's largest, family-friendly events, which would have been held at the Mortensen Riverfront Plaza, Downtown Hartford, on Saturday, August 1, 2020, has been cancelled because of the long-lasting effects of the ongoing Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Due to continued restrictions on public gatherings, and in the interest of public safety, the 2020 edition of the Taste of the Caribbean and Jerk Festival will not be held.

We are following the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, now in place, to limit the spread of the virus and to help keep you, our loyal patrons, safe and healthy.

For further information, please contact Melinda DeBeatham, president, Taste of the Caribbean, Arts & Culture Inc., at (860) 830-2677.

Narratives Questioned

Continued from Page 2

narratives cannot and should not be allowed to earn any type of income from publishing the updated inclusive documentation of the struggles of African-Americans to overcome the odds here in the United States/Shades of America.

In all the existing happenings, when there is a dearth of leaders, the group that had a mandate to prepare candidates for the leadership role, part of the "talented tenth" seems to be cast adrift.

An analysis of the subservient role that they have chosen must be used to discard the existing objectives, create new 21st - 22nd ideals and plateaus for subsequent generations to strive for.

Old wine in new bottles will be good for the palate, but old misguided philosophies that have helped in our subjugation and captive cognitive structures must be smashed and discarded as the chaff is blown away so that new growth can take place.

Otherwise, after the flashpoint flare ups, where will the leader emerge from? What follows?

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"Are you an immigrant of West Indian descent living in Hartford or the surrounding area? If so, please consider participating in a research study conducted by a UConn Honors Student on the economic experiences of West Indian Migrants.

For more information, please contact Shanelle Jones at westindianresearch21@gmail.com or Professor Charles Venator at charles.venator@uconn.edu. Click on the following link to participate in the survey: [West Indian Immigrant Survey.](#)"



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