

SELF MANAGEMENT, SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

The Experiences of the Castle Bruce Workers, Dominica, West Indies

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INTRODUCTION

The Island of Dominica is situated in the Eastern Caribbean Sea, between the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. This island-nation (independent since November 3, 1978), is 304 sq. miles in area and contains about 78,000 inhabitants. About 70 per cent of these inhabitants are classified as living in rural communities. The economy of the island is predominantly agricultural, with a minimum of tourism. There are no mining activities. The main agricultural crops, which are for exports, are bananas, citrus and coconuts.

In spite of its size, Dominica mirrors intensely most of the contradictions facing developing countries today. It has a high rate of unemployment, especially among the youth, while there is a tremendous amount of infrastructural work to be done. It imports 30 per cent of its basic food requirements, while most of its land resources remain idle, or are alienated into export crop use. All of this is captured in the low per capita G.N.P. of US \$ 300 (1978) and the general stagnation in economic activity. Indeed, the G.D.P. at the end of FY77 was estimated at US \$ 34 million, a massive 16 per cent below its 1972 level.

Agriculture, the mainstay of the economy, is organized along dual lines of estates (over 100 acres) and peasant plots (under 5 acres). The former are predominantly geared into export crops, which are marketed

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under well-organized and financed commodity boards. The peasants, however, produce both domestic food crops and export crops. Their participation in export crops is their most ready source of cash as the market for domestic produce is disorganized and poorly financed. When peasants do produce a marketable surplus, the price is usually depressed due to the glut on the market.

Another interesting feature of the organization of agriculture is the living patterns that have evolved. Many rural communities arose on the outskirts of large estates, to whose owners they became the main source of labour. This has meant that the economic life of the rural community would be completely tied to the fortunes of the large estate. As the estate land was used for export crops, the village itself had, to a great degree, to "import" food from the capital city, Roseau, at an even higher price than its landed value. The cash balances to pay for such basic imports as flour, rice, sugar and dried fish, came from the wages paid by the estate. Thus, the estate and villages created an interwoven microscopic economy.

Such was the case with the Castle Bruce Estate and the Castle Bruce village of 2,000 inhabitants in 1972. The Castle Bruce Estate was at that time one of the few "foreign Corporation-owned" estates on the island. Under the title of the Melville Hall Estates, the Commonwealth (former Colonial) Development Corporation¹⁾ owned and operated two estates in Dominica.

At Castle Bruce, C. D. C. cultivated only 500 of the 1,800 acres of land it owned in the valley. C. D. C. grew mainly bananas and coconuts and employed at the peak 250 individuals.

In the early 1970s, C. D. C.'s profit margin began to decline due to a combination of wages pressures, falling overall productivity, and depressed banana prices. As a response to this, C. D. C. began to change its production pattern more in favour of coconuts, which required less labour. In July 1972, C. D. C. attempted to retrench 86 of its total labour force, which at that time totalled 148. Such a reduction in the cash flow in the village would have depressed the local economy, intensifying even more the degree of malnutrition and other health problems which already existed. On this basis, the workers and the resident manager, Mr. Atherton Martin, himself a Dominican, resisted the measures of C. D. C. An 18-month struggle pursued, during which time the estate was closed, the land was sold to the Government, and the Government attempted some conventional land settlement schemes which failed. During this time also, the work force of the former estate, and some unemployed workers, organized themselves into a self-managed unit, planned the reorganization of the productive assets in ways compatible with the economic interest of the village, and fought for access to the land. Finally, in May the members of the Castle Bruce Farmers Cooperative gained access to 153 acres of land. By 1977, they had cultivated 350 acres of the former estate.

¹⁾ The Colonial Development Corporation, created in 1948, was the mechanism through which the British developed agricultural enterprises in its colonies with the main purpose of exporting agricultural produce to the United Kingdom.

PRODUCTION AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY

In 1974, when the workers had gained access to their first 153 acres of land, they were immediately faced with the problem of making their production unit economically viable. Of the total acreage, 53 acres were cultivated and 100 acres were in virgin forest. Twenty-three were in bananas, which could be sold for cash; another 23 acres were in limes. However, the former owners had so badly neglected the lime fields that the trees had been overgrown with vines. It was necessary, therefore, to resuscitate these trees before they could be brought back under production. The only other crops that could return some revenue were cocoa and coconuts. This was the extent of the current productive capacity of the farm at that time; a cash flow generously estimated at EC \$ 10,000 for the year.²⁾

Now these resources were supposed to support 96 workers which would have meant a wage bill of EC \$ 69,000 at the old C. D. C. wage rate of EC \$ 3 per day. The workers of Castle Bruce were quite cognizant of this fact and reacted appropriately. Had a capitalist firm been faced with this problem, the logical solution would have been to reduce the work force. Thus a few more workers and their families would have gone without food so as to make the enterprise viable. Being a worker-controlled production unit, the Cooperative was in a position to sacrifice wages and not workers. An across-the-board wage reduction was introduced, which not only equalized the wage rates between men and women, but also reduced the wage spread from 1 to 11 to 1 to 3. Thus the highest paid worker, the manager, now earned income at a rate that was three times that of the lowest paid wage rate.

TABLE I. Wage cuts in Castle Bruce; 1974 (in EC\$)

Category	Reduction in rate	Total Yearly Saving
Field Operators (85)	44%	\$ 36,504
Supervisors (8)	33%	\$ 3,640
Secretary (1)	28%	\$ 520
Office Manager (1)	60%	\$ 2,340
Farm Manager (1)	83%	\$ 10,400
TOTAL	55%	\$ 53,400

Source: Estimated by the Evaluation Team of the Castle Bruce Farmers Cooperative, May, 1974.

Other equalizing measures were introduced. Some workers received payment in kind. Field operators were for work extending beyond the regular 7-hour day, whereas supervisors and those workers in higher categories were required to perform such tasks without additional pay. The net result was a greater equalization of take-home pay.

²⁾ The official exchange rate at that time was US \$ 1.00 = E.C. \$ 2.50 E.C. = Eastern Caribbean Currency.

The second aspect of viability of the self-managed unit was in its efforts to bring the 100 acres of forest under cultivation. This was facilitated by two grants: one from the Inter-American Foundation totalling US \$ 60,000 and the other from the CADEC division of the Caribbean Council of Churches, totalling US \$ 22,000. In the first year of operations, the revenue from the farm amounted to about 33 per cent of the total costs incurred during the year. Thus 2/3 of all costs incurred were covered by grants. The wage bill amounted to about 50 per cent of the total costs with 25 per cent of the work force engaged in clearing the forests and preparing it for cultivation.

Another large cost was, of course, capital equipment. In the first 10 months, EC \$ 22,000 was expended on equipment. This included the purchase of a chain saw, a pick-up truck, and a 5-ton truck, which became necessary as production activity increased. By the end of 1975, the cooperative had over 200 acres under cultivation and was well on the way to being a viable enterprise.

By 1976, all the grants had ceased and the cooperative was operating on its own steam. Obviously, the rate of acquisition of capital equipment fell drastically. Although the grants had been very beneficial to the Cooperative, they simply postponed the day when the workers of Castle Bruce would have to struggle with the financial intermediaries to gain access to part of the nation's savings. That day had arrived. It became very evident that to continue to develop, the actions of the workers of Castle Bruce would now require social transformation on a much wider scale. They had to join forces with others struggling to redirect the use to which the nation's accumulated and borrowed surplus was put, and the terms under which those who controlled finance capital are willing to part with it. The Castle Bruce workers had no experience in this field and were thus opened to new channels through which external influences would be used to either promote or reorient the cooperative.

Due to the example of the Castle Bruce workers, eight more producer cooperatives were formed. These were smaller in membership and assets, and were organized primarily by the unemployed rural youth. In 1978, these nine cooperatives organized a secondary unit, the National Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives, which took up the struggle to gain access to more capital. However, the overall economy was shrinking, and with the national saving rate of 3 per cent of G.D.P. and a heavy dependence on foreign capital, the consequent growth of the producer cooperatives and most other agricultural enterprises was effectively checked.

In August 1979, Hurricane David totally devastated the entire island, effectively destroying all crops. All of the producer cooperatives suffered losses in assets. However, the working experience continues to be indicative of the potential of collective self-organization, even in the period of national disaster and reconstruction.

PATTERN OF PRODUCTION

Traditionally, the agricultural production of the estate was totally directed to fulfilling the export market and made no contribution to

the food supplies of either the village or the nation. The major crops that occupied the land at that time were limes, bananas, and coconuts. As the workers took control of the productive assets, the cropping pattern became influenced by three factors:

- The marketability and profitability of crops
- The adaptability of crops to soil, climate and topography.
- The "social value" of crops to the community; the role of certain crops in the daily diet of the local community and their nutritional needs.

Although export crops were maintained for their cash value such local crops as tannia, dasheen, and plantain were easily adapted to the production pattern. Table II indicates the changes in the amount of land devoted to the respective crops over the first two years of the Cooperative.

It should be noted that the increase in the acreage devoted to export crops was due mainly to the acquisition of additional lands which were already planted in these crops. On the other hand, the increase in the acreage devoted to food crops was due mainly to new lands (cleared forests) which had been brought into production. Some acreage, formerly devoted to traditional crops were replaced by other food crops.

In all, the increase in acreage devoted to export crops over the two years was 66 per cent as compared to a 127.6 per cent increase for the major food crops during the same period. Table III summarizes this position.

TABLE II. Total acreage devoted to the major crops and the percentage change for the years 1974/75, 1975/76

CROP	ACREAGE		% Change
	74/75	75/76	
Bananas	12.0	17.5	+ 45.8
Tannia	10.0	12.0	+ 20.0
Dasheen	5.0	10.3	+103.0
Plantain	7.0	24.7	+252.0
Ginger	1.0	2.25	+125.0
Limes	19.0	41.25	+117.0
Coconut	14.0	16.25	+ 16.0
Yam	0.75	2.0	+166.0
Potato	4.0	11.0	+175.0
Peppers	0.25	1.75	
Avacado	2.5	2.5	
Mango	3.0	3.0	
Cocoa	6.5	5.5	- 15.0
Total Cultivated Acres	85.25	160.5	+ 91.5
Acreage in Forest	67.75	42.5	- 37.2
Total Farm Acreage	153.0	203.0	+ 32.7

Source: Final Report of the Evaluation of the Castle Bruce Farmers Cooperative, September 1976, p. 34

TABLE III. Comparison of the acreage devoted to export crops and selected food crops

CROPS	74/75	75/76	% INCREASE
Export Crops ¹⁾	45.0	75.0	66.6%
Food Crops ²⁾	26.25	59.75	127.6%

¹⁾ Includes bananas, limes, and coconuts

²⁾ Includes tannia, dasheen, plantain, and sweet potato

One factor influencing the change in the production pattern has been the cultural practices that have been employed. Most of the weed control is done by hand. Indeed, there has been a decrease in the percentage of the acreage that had been subjected to weed control only. In the period June 1974 to June 1975, approximately 9.4 per cent of cultivated acreage was subjected to weed control. This compares with 5 per cent for the period June 1975 to June 1976. The decline is due to a combination of factors including:

- The increasing high cost of herbicides
- The labour-intensive nature of the Cooperative's operation
- Neglected fields with severe weed problems were treated and no longer required herbicides
- The development of an efficient inter-cropping system which reduced the weed population at the lower level of the canopy.

The high cost of fertilizer limited its use considerably and may have caused some decline in yields. Composting, however, played a very important role in the recycling of nutrients into the soil. In areas of newly-cleared land, the practice was to burn small branches and leaves while allowing the larger roots to rot in the ground. Burning recycled the nutrients at a rapid rate as well as causing an apparent reduction in the population of disease causing organisms. Root tubers, such as dasheen and tannia, which did not compete, were planted among the logs. Although this was cumbersome, it was thought that removing the root system of large trees would entail considerable effort, disturb the topsoil, and leave the land wide open to erosion.

One of the major problems that continued to go unresolved was that of pest management and control. The traditional food crops were resistant to most pathogenic and insect organisms, but attempts to introduce new crops such as vegetables were not very successful due to this problem. As a result, concurrent vegetable seed trials and training sessions were conducted with the assistance of members of a technical support unit. The purpose was to assist workers in identifying appropriate fields and seed varieties for commercial use, in identifying the pest management problem, comparing the results of the known treatment methods and no treatment, and conducting research on other aspects of growing vegetables. Although seed trials and training sessions did not result in any sustained vegetable production, there was value in the

information and production skills obtained. In other areas, such as the nematode threat to bananas, planned crop rotation effectively controlled this problem.

The inter-cropping system at the Cooperative had evolved in a well balanced manner. Inter-cropping maximized the use of land and available light to the fullest. In the situation where mechanization played no important role, inter-cropping was fully developed to maximize returns per acre, control soil erosion and weeds. Table IV summarizes the major crops in the system.

TABLE IV Major crops in the inter-cropping system

Crop	Inter-cropped with
Banana	Tannia, Coconut
Tannia	Plantain, Limes, Cocoa, Banana
Dasheen	Plantain, Limes, Coconut
Plantain	Tannia, Dasheen, Sweet Potato,
Ginger	Limes
Coconut	Bananas, Dasheen, Peppers
Limes	Tannia, Dasheen, Ginger, Yams, Sweet Potato

Source: Final Report of the Evaluation of the Castle Bruce Farmers Cooperative. September, 1976. p. 38

Because most of the crops grown were part of the intercropping system, it had been difficult to accurately establish the exact yield of a particular crop on a per acre basis. Total yields for selected crops from the inter-cropping system were ascertained in the 1974/75 production year, and an attempt was made to estimate the yield per acre on a pure stand basis. As is indicated in Table V, the estimated yields at the Cooperative compared favourably with those obtained in other major Caribbean Islands.

TABLE V Comparison of yields between the cooperative and other Caribbean Islands. 1974/75

Crop	Castle Bruce Yield (Ton/acre)	Jamaica and Trinidad avg. Yield (Ton/acre)
Bananas	6	9
Coconut	0.63	0.75
Plantain	6	6
Dasheen	6.5	4
Sweet Potato	4.5	5
Tannia	5.5	4

Source: Final Report of the Evaluation of the Castle Bruce Farmers Cooperative. September 1976.

MARKETING

As an extension of the Colonial production pattern, there has always existed in Dominica an integrated network for the marketing of export crops, especially bananas. However, the distribution of domestic crops has always been left in the hands of small peasant higg-lers. When the Castle Bruce Cooperative began to move into the production of domestic food crops, it was forced to develop new marketing channels. Dasheen, plantains, bananas, and limes were some of the major crops marketed in the early stages of the new production line. The cooperative had acquired a small pick-up van and was transporting produce mainly to the local market in Roseau, the capital, and to a few hotels. The members themselves did all the selling.

The first significant change came in 1975, when the Cooperative made contact with a buyer in the neighbouring Virgin Islands and the Island of St. Kitts. The demand was for over 13,000 lbs. of mixed food produce per week. This was much more than the cooperative itself was producing, and the latter was forced into purchasing produce from the peasants in the surrounding area.

This was in very many ways a good development. The Cooperative began to be of some service to about 180 peasants by providing an outlet for their small quantities of produce. The members were soon hard at work disseminating information about produce quality, cultural practices, and the need to fulfill commitments so as to maintain one's market share. This task of communication was not without its difficult times. In some cases, peasants were distrustful of the delayed payment scheme. The Cooperative usually paid peasants about a week after it had purchased their produce. This was not an unusual position, incidentally, since in the case of the regular buyers they would have been paid after a two week delay. However, this was part of the distrust that permeated any exchange relationship among local villagers, a social distrust that the Cooperative in itself had limited capacity to overcome. Sadly enough, this particular relationship was shortlived, as this outlet collapsed by the end of 1976, primarily as a result of shipping difficulties.

This situation had been partly foreseen, and in early 1976 the Cooperative had commissioned a study into the feasibility of obtaining a 100-ton boat so as to promote trade with other self-managed groups on neighbouring islands.³⁾ The study was completed and accepted in September 1976. The only remaining difficulty was an inability to raise funds to finance the venture.

In 1978, the National Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives was able to obtain a site in the city to be used as an outlet for the produce of all self-managed units. The opening of the outlet was, however, postponed indefinitely as the producer units attempt to re-establish their productive assets in the wake of the August 1979 natural disaster.

³⁾ See Report of Consultants on the Feasibility of Obtaining a Cargo Vessel for Inter-Island Trade, September 1976

ORGANIZATION AND DECISION-MAKING

The main principles on which the Cooperative was founded are expressed as follows:

- a. Self reliance in development efforts
- b. Full workers control of the production system
- c. Participation in production activity and not share ownership as the basis for participation in the controlled use of the assets.

The organizational structure that evolved, has been the result of the internal struggles to give concrete expression to the different interpretations of these principles.

In the pre-Coop formation period, (1972-74) there existed a simple two-tier decision-making structure:

- a. The General Assembly of Workers
- b. The Steering Committee of the Proposed Cooperative.

The General Assembly deliberated on long-term planning decisions, establishing the parameters within which the enterprise should function. These included the specific area of the estate that the cooperative should seek to control; the production plan, the income distribution schedule, and the decision to remove unequal wage rates between men and women. The Steering Committee represented the workers in negotiations with the Government and the Land Management Authority, from whom the land was finally leased.

As access to land was gained, and production began, the system moved to a three-tier structure, viz:

- a. The General Assembly of Workers
- b. The Management Committee which replaced the Steering Committee
- c. The Work Groups comprising a supervisor and field operators.

It is within this three-tier structure that the dynamics of power and decision-making initiatives were conducted throughout the life of the Cooperative.

The significant number of short-term technical decisions during the first trimester of operation tended to promote the Management Committee to a position of primacy among the three units. This Committee comprised the field supervisors, the field manager and the office manager. In December 1975, it was observed that the Management Committee was in danger of evolving into an elitist unit on account of the facts that:⁴⁾

⁴⁾ The Castle Bruce Evaluation Team, »Progress Report of the Evaluation of the Castle Bruce Cooperative«, December 1975

- a. The members of this Committee on the average had access to more information than any other worker.
- b. The members of the Committee had been exposed to more training and educational opportunities.
- c. The Committee itself was becoming the catalyst for centralizing the Cooperative's decision-making structure.

In early 1976, an important shift occurred which had the effect of decentralizing the decision-making process. The work groups and their supervisors began to make more decisions out in the field. For instance, once it was agreed to cultivate vegetables in a certain area, the entire mechanics of that operation was then planned, paced and developed by the work groups that were responsible for that area. Thus, the Management Committee began to lose its decision-making primacy to the third level expressed above, i. e., the Work Group. It should also be recorded that at this time there was an attempt made by the supervisors themselves to equalize their wage rates with the rest of the Work Group.

This decentralization drive, however, was accompanied by a new centralization drive through the once-dormant Board of Directors. This Board had never played a significant role in the Cooperative's affairs before. The Cooperative Law of Dominica, under which the Castle Bruce Cooperative is registered, does not recognize many tenets of a true self-managed enterprise. This Law required the establishment of a Board, and prescribed to it a most powerful role. This requirement had been dutifully ignored by the workers since it was found to be contrary to the expressed principles of democratic organization, full participation in and responsibility for all collective decisions on the part of the workers. In actuality, the Board comprised the same members as did the Management Committee.

The promotion of the Board of Directors as a primary decision-maker was supported by some members who had been given "training" in conventional cooperative management. In early 1977 these efforts were also defeated. This episode served mainly to draw the attention of the workers to the inadequacy of the Law under which the enterprise operated, and to demonstrate the essential problem of a wider social transformation in which the legal code can be made to recognize association in production on the basis of work participation and not just on the basis of capital ownership.

What about the status of the first level of the decision-making structure, i. e., the General Assembly? We reread the minutes of meetings of this body between 1972 and 1976 to try to grasp the changing nature and length of time spent on deliberations. The nature of the decisions brought before the General Assembly had indeed changed. In the pre-1974 period, the General Assembly deliberated mainly on the ideology of the cooperative, and the strategy for combating the actions of the Government and other interested parties in denying them access to the land. These discussions, according to the minutes, were very long and detailed, and culminated in an open consensus regarding collective action. In 1974-75, the predominant discussions were of a technical nature, i. e., production plan, wages, and the allocation of the instru-

ments of production to the work groups. In the 1975-76 period, the significant decisions brought before the General Assembly centred more on human relationship in production, i. e., censoring members and re-organizing the work groups.

From rereading the minutes, one gets the distinct impression that there has been a discreet tendency towards a quicker vote and less discussion. One reason postulated for the decline in in-depth deliberations is the lack of information on the common level. In the pre-formation period, the relevant information for those decisions were within the structure of the common knowledge. Everyone knew the history of the group, everyone knew manoeuvres of both C. D. C. and the Government, and everyone was fully informed as to each new development. In the 1974-75 period, it was expected that not all workers would be versed in the particulars of each decision. There existed, therefore, two solutions. Either bring only general decisions and ratifications to the general body, a solution that was encouraged by the Cooperative Law, or create a mechanism that would equip workers with the details, the considerations, and the alternatives involved in decisions of this nature. It was hoped that the Education Committee would facilitate such a solution.

In an Interim Report the challenge to this Committee was noted as follows:⁵⁾

"The strength of this Committee's work will play a significant role in the future in determining the nature of the deliberations of the General Assembly... However, should the Committee fail in its objectives, the General Assembly is likely to degenerate into a rubber stamp organization and be treated with much contempt by the Management Committee."

The main problem with the Education Committee was that neither the workers nor the leadership were fully conscious of the significant functions it should perform. The Education Committee was under the guidance of the Secretary of the Cooperative, who had done a course in Trinidad (1974) in Cooperative Management. The material gathered there was used as teaching tools in her early work with the Committee. Later on, the Committee concentrated mainly on the literacy programme, but it never became integrated into the functioning of the unit as a fusion of theory and practice. Indeed, the entire Cooperative should have been in the Education Committee. The promotion of the Board of Directors may have also contributed to the dormancy of this important committee at that time. A revitalized committee became feasible once more with the intensification of the decentralization drive.

The mixture of a drive towards decentralism and a drive towards centralism in decision-making reflects the two contradictory influences. On the one hand, we have work groups becoming more familiar with the mechanics of operations and seeking more efficiency in the making and the execution of decisions. On the other hand, we have a select few,

⁵⁾ "Interim Report of the Evaluation of Castle Bruce Cooperative," April 1975, p. 14.

unintentionally being exposed to greater information/analysis outside of the correct context of Castle Bruce.

The Castle Bruce Cooperative has had many opportunities to send persons away on seminars, workshops, and training courses. All of the participants in such trips were interviewed. They thought that the trips were a very rewarding personal experience, but they were equally doubtful as to how it would help the cooperative in any specific way. They all believed that if a member gained some new skills, it must help the cooperative generally.

These comments have pointed up another aspect of the Cooperative's Education Programme. The Cooperative is not in any position to pick and choose where to send its members for training—there are not many training programmes geared specifically to the Castle Bruce context. Most programmes are designed for the Conventional Rochdaleian Cooperative. Thus, the Cooperative is really faced with the problem of debriefing its trainees and disseminating the skill-information of the individual to others within the context of the material practices of Castle Bruce.

What has occurred with the Castle Bruce trainee is that if the individual was not in an influential position, his effect was likely to be nil. However, if he was in a position of influence, it was possible that the Cooperative would feel the results of his training through the redirection it was likely to experience. Since most of the training programmes usually invited "leaders" of the Cooperative, Castle Bruce was being partially reoriented by some external institutions.

The rebuttal to such reorientation remained with the General Assembly of Workers. It was influenced on the surface by the rate of dissemination of information and the prevalent level of knowledge of the affairs of the production unit, its history, and its original principles. In the instances where all this became nonfunctional, then such rebuttals were fostered at the most basic level, in terms of the effect of the reorientation on the material conditions of the workers.

CONCLUSION

In the period 1977—79, the membership of the Castle Bruce Cooperative was reduced by approximately 33 per cent. This was due primarily to voluntary attrition as some members retired and others moved away. The workers have seen the potential and the limitations of their collective actions. As such, while the workers were struggling to resolve their internal contradictions and to maintain the economic viability of their enterprise, they also began to explore their role in the wider aspect of social transformation. It became evident that much of their contradictions arose from the influences of the rest of the society on them. It was also evident that their survival required that they not be contained by the system, but that they play an active part with both their economic and political power to bring about some degree of social transformation.

To this affect, the Cooperative launched some activities that had a social impact. For instance, its members would travel to other plantations, speaking with other workers of the necessity to reorient the

agricultural production for true development of the island economy. It has hosted very many workshops and seminars with other interested groups in other parts of the Caribbean on the question of rural transformation through the reorganization of agricultural production. It has actively promoted the National Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives, an umbrella organization of nine producer cooperatives promoting this form of association in production. It has also struggled to reorient its surplus to community needs by demanding to pay the rent on the land, not to the Government leasor, but rather to the local community to be used in the development of the community.

The disaster of Hurricane David, which on August 29th 1979 totally devastated the agricultural economy of the island, has created new problems for all Dominican farmers. It is now, more than ever, that the early collective efforts of the Castle Bruce workers should be re-examined. Agricultural reconstruction requires a massive popular effort. It also provides an opportunity to re-orient the entire sector towards sustained development. The Castle Bruce Workers have had significant experiences in both the reorganization and reorientation of an agricultural production unit under the most adverse of conditions. As they themselves struggle to reconstruct their productive assets, it is hoped that the lessons of self-management have not been lost on the rest of the agricultural sector in Dominica.

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