

John Eyre, the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865, and the Racialisation of Western Political Thinking

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The main purpose of this study is to analyze the process of so-called racialisation of the Western thinking in a concrete historical context of British colonial experience in the second half of the nineteenth century. For most authors, the concept of racialisation was related to the Europeans' response to their encounter with overseas populations in the course of global Western expansion from the early modern age. Frantz Fanon described the phenomenon of racialisation as a process by which the European colonists created the "negro" as a category of degraded humanity: a weak and utterly irrational barbarism, incapable of self-government.¹ However, I am convinced that the post-colonial studies established by Eric Williams and his followers emphasizing the role of racism as a strategy of vindication and reproduction of Western hegemony over overseas societies and civilizations tend to neglect or disregard the emergence and the whole intellectual development of the racial vision of the human history and society with various functions, impacts and role within the Western civilization itself.

Ivan Hannaford stressed that the idea of ancient Greeks to see people not in terms of their origin, blood relations, or somatic features, but in terms of membership of a public arena presented a crucial political achievement and breakthrough in human history.² It created the concept of free political space we live in since the time of Pericles. When the idea of race and racial hierarchy prevailed in the time of romanticism, "*the civilization was perceived to advance not through the public debate of speech-gifted men and the reconciliation of differing claims and interests in law but through the genius and character of the Völker naturally and biologically working as an energetic formative force in the blood of races and expressing themselves as Kultur ... The idea of populous gave way to the idea of Volk*".³ In this sense, political thinker Michael Oakeshott remarked that race was worth looking at as an antonym to politics.⁴

Therefore, the intrusion of racial thinking into the political praxis reflected the vulnerability and eclipse of ideology of modern liberalism placing the political community on purely formal, universal, and rational

¹ F. FANON, *Černá kůže, bílé masky*, Praha 2011.

² I. HANNAFORD, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West*, Baltimore 1996, pp. 10–11.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 233.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

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foundations. Put simply, the existence of a concrete colonial multiracial society compromised the project of enlightened society of equality, patriotism and shared civic solidarity. Because of potentiality of political disorder, chaos and disturbances ruling in the overseas territories, it seemed that multiracial coexistence could have been achieved only by replacing of liberal order by a repressive system of racial hierarchy. British Empire, envisioned by Jeremy Bentham, William Wilberforce, or James Mill as a “*global moral and liberal force*”, learned this lesson and faced this challenge in the short span of time between Indian Mutiny and Scramble for Africa.

The contradiction between racial and liberal approach to political order could have been discerned in the acrimonious debate on the case of Governor Edward John Eyre and his determined suppression of the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica in 1865. Methods used by Edward John Eyre to suffocate the revolt split the British political and intellectual establishment for several years and had important constitutional consequences for the British Empire as a whole.

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Edward John Eyre was the third son of a clergyman Anthony William Eyre, vicar of Hornsea and Long Riston, who married Sarah Mapleton, the daughter of a physician in Bath.⁵ Edward John Eyre was born on August 5, 1815, in Whipsnade, a small village in the county of Bedfordshire. Despite his relatively modest beginnings (Eyre could be considered to have been a typical Victorian “self-made” man exploiting fully opportunities provided by Empire) Edward John Eyre claimed to belong to an ancient family with roots in the time of Norman Conquest.⁶ He was educated at schools at Thorpach, near Rotherham, at Grantham, at Louth (where Alfred Tennyson studied few years before him), and at Sedbergh.

Eyre intended to enter the army, but that was thought too expensive a profession the family could not afford.⁷ At advice of one friend of his, he

⁵ H. HUME, *The Life of Edward John Eyre, late Governor of Jamaica*, London 1867; B. SEMMEL, *The Governor Eyre Controversy*, London 1962; G. DUTTON, *The Hero as Murderer: The Life of Edward John Eyre, Australian Explorer and Governor of Jamaica, 1815–1901*, London 1967; S. S. OLIVIER, *The Myth of Governor Eyre*, London, 1935.

⁶ Family legendary narrative said that at the battle of Hastings William the Conqueror was found lying on the ground breathless by an ancestor of the Eyre clan who unloosed the bars of the King’s helmet so that William could breathe, upon which he cried out, “*De l’Eyre*”. After the battle, William found his savior (who left his leg during the fight) and declared solemnly: “*Henceforth thou shalt be called De l’Eyre, because thou hast given me the air I breathe, and he gave him for his crest a leg in armour cut off above the knee as his was.*” HUME, p. 2.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

decided to move as a settler to Australia when he was seventeen years old. His ship *Ellen* anchored in harbor of Sydney on March 20, 1833. Eyre dealt quite successfully in trade in sheep and cattle; he bought a farm and was engaged in transporting stock from New South Wales to the newly-established colonies of Port Phillip and South Australia.⁸ Eyre purchased land on the Murray River, in South Australia, and set to farming his own estate.⁹

In October 1841, Edward John Eyre accepted the offer to become Resident Magistrate and “Protector of Aborigines” at Moorundie on the Murray River. In this capacity he was responsible for restoring peaceful relations between settlers and natives. In a letter to one friend in England, Eyre wrote: “*I have frequently slept unharmed and without fear, the only white man among 500 armed natives; I have travelled among them by day and by night; I have owed my life to them again and again, and I never received from them anything but the greatest possible kindness.*”¹⁰ Edward John Eyre published his experiences and knowledge in the extensive treatise *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Aborigines and the State of their Relations with Europeans* in 1845.¹¹ Eyre’s approach to Australian aborigines could be characterized as highly sympathetic and paternalistic: “*For the account given of the Aborigines the author deems it unnecessary to offer any apology; a long experience among them, and an intimate knowledge of their character, habits, and position with regard to Europeans, have induced in him a deep interest on behalf of a people, who are fast fading away before the progress of a civilization, which ought only to have added to their improvement and prosperity. Gladly would the author wish to see attention awakened on their behalf, and an effort at least made to stay the torrent which is overwhelming them. It is most lamentable to think that the progress and prosperity of one race should conduce to the downfall and decay of another; it is still more so to observe the apathy and indifference with which this result is contemplated by mankind in general, and which either leads to no investigation being made as to the cause of this desolating influence, or if it is, terminates, to use the language of the Count Strzelecki, ‘in the inquiry, like an inquest of the one race upon the corpse of the other, ending for the most part withz the verdict of ‘died by the visitation of God’.*”¹² Eyre’s knowledge and deep in-

⁸ Ibidem, p. 15.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 16.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Published in Eyre’s *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia and Overland from Adelaide to King George’s Sound in the Years 1840–1*, 1–2, London, 1845 (accessible: <http://archive.org/stream/journalsofexpedi05345gut/old/xpcs210.txt>; July 23, 2012).

¹² <http://archive.org/stream/journalsofexpedi05345gut/old/xpcs210.txt>; July 23, 2012.

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sight into the life of Australian aborigines and his humanitarian attitude were widely appreciated.¹³

Eyre undertook several exploratory trips into the vastly unknown interior of the continent. During the eight years of his stay in Australia, he visited many parts of New South Wales, Port Phillip, South Australia, Western Australia, and Van Diemen's Land. In the years 1836, 1837, 1838, 1839, and 1840 Edward John Eyre conducted expeditions across from Liverpool Plains in New South Wales to the county of Murray, from Sydney to Port Phillip, from Port Phillip to Adelaide, and from King George's Sound to Swan River. He discovered Lake Hindmarsh in Western Australia (in 1838). Accompanied by an aboriginal Wylie, Edward John Eyre became the first European who crossed southern coast of Australia from east to west, travelling across the Nullarbor Plain from Adelaide to Albany in 1841 and 1842.¹⁴ For this achievement Eyre was awarded the founder's gold medal of the Royal Geographic Society in 1847.¹⁵

In 1845, Edward John Eyre brought to England with him two young aboriginal Australian boys at his own expense. They accompanied him to Buckingham Palace, where they were introduced to the Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.¹⁶

¹³ For instance, Victorian writer Charles Kingsley remarked after Eyre's great trip across the southern coast of Australia: "*Of this Mr. Eyre, who made this unparalleled journey, I know but little, save this: He knew more about the aboriginal tribes – their habits, language, and so on – than any man before or since. He was appointed Black Protector for the Lower Murray, and did his work well. He appears to have been (teste Charles Stuart, from whom there is no appeal) a man eminently kind, generous, and just. No man concealed less than Eyre the vices of the natives; but no man stood more steadfastly in the breach between them and the squatters (the great pastoral aristocracy) at a time when to do so was social ostracism. The almost unexampled valor which led him safely through the hideous desert into which we have to follow him served him well in a fight more wearing and more dangerous to his rules of right and wrong. He pleaded for the black, and tried to stop the war of extermination, which was, is, and I suppose will be, carried on by the colonists against the natives in the unsettled districts beyond the reach of the public eye. His task was hopeless. It was easier for him to find water in the desert than to find mercy for the savages. Honor to him for attempting it, however.*" HUME, pp. 17–18.

¹⁴ "*In the whole civilized, or, indeed, uncivilized portion of the globe, not even excepting the eternal ice-bound regions of the Arctic Ocean, where lie bleaching the bones of many of England's noblest children, is there a tract of country to be equaled for desolation to that southern portion of the Great Australian Continent discovered by Nuyts in the ship Gulde Zeepaard in the year 1627.*" Ibidem, p. 46.

¹⁵ Obituary: Edward John Eyre, *The Geographical Journal*, 19 (1), 1902, pp. 99–100.

¹⁶ One of the above mentioned Australian boys proved "vicious temper" and was sent back home, the other was put to school under the care of the Quaker philanthropist, Dr. Hodgkin. Unfortunately, he caught cold and died from a pulmonary disease at the age of seventeen years. HUME, p. 95.

Early in the autumn of 1846, Sir Henry George Grey, Secretary of State for War and Colonies from 1846 to 1852, offered Edward John Eyre the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor of New Zealand. Eyre was stationed at Wellington, and was responsible for the administration of New Munster, the southernmost of the provinces into which New Zealand was divided. Sir George Grey, the Governor, resided at Auckland and administered the government of New Ulster, the northernmost of these provinces.¹⁷ After six years Eyre declined the office of first Superintendent proposed to him by some local influential colonists and left for England with his family. In 1854, Sir Henry George Grey appointed him Lieutenant-Governor of St. Vincent, in the West Indies. While still holding this office (till March, 1861) Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, asked him in 1859 to administer the government-in-chief of the Leeward Isles during the absence of the Governor.¹⁸

In 1861, Edward John Eyre returned to England with a reputation of a highly successful, experienced and efficient colonial administrator. Therefore, it was not surprising that at the beginning of 1862, Henry Pelham Fiennes Pelham-Clinton, Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Colonies in Lord Palmerston's Liberal Cabinet, entrusted him to administer the Government-in-chief of Jamaica and its dependencies during the absence of Sir Charles Henry Darling who had been compelled to come back to England because of ill-health.¹⁹

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Jamaica was discovered by Columbus on the morning of May 3, 1494, during his second expedition.²⁰ In 1509, Don Juan d'Esquimel (lieutenant of Diego Columbus), with seventy men, took possession of the island and established a settlement at Santa Gloria (later Port Maria).²¹ In 1558, it was stated that the native inhabitants of Jamaica had entirely perished.²² After 1580, due to extensive trade with cattle, swine, and horses and cultivation of sugar and tobacco the island economically flourished despite the attacks of French and English corsairs.²³ Oliver Cromwell expelled the Spanish administration from Jamaica in 1660 after a five-year military

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 96.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 101.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 108.

²⁰ Columbus named the island St. Jago in honor of St. James, the patron Saint of Spain, but it retained its original Indian name of Xaymaca (meaning abundance of wood and water).

²¹ J. J. WOOD, *Jamaica: Its History, Constitution and Topographical Description*, Kingston 1884, p. 5.

²² Ibidem, pp. 7–8.

²³ Ibidem, p. 8.

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campaign.²⁴ Spain formally ceded Jamaica to England in 1671. The population at the time of the British Conquest would have been 1,500 Spaniards and Portuguese, with about an equal number of Mulattoes and black slaves.²⁵ Some of the Spaniards and Africans fled to the mountains and evolved into populations of the Maroons. The island was very suitable for sugar cultivation and strategically well-situated to control the maritime space between Spanish Central America, Cuba and Hispaniola.²⁶ In January 1664, the first Assembly of Jamaica consisting of thirty members was convened by the Lieutenant-Governor Sir Charles Littleton. In 1686,²⁷ the immigration of Jewish population gave important commercial stimulus to the island. Jamaica overshadowed Barbados and became gradually the most valuable British colony before the conquest of India. In 1773, the value of British imports from Jamaica was five times greater than those from all the American colonies (British North America was suffering a period of economic depression in this time).²⁸ Sugar was the key to economic prosperity in the second half of the eighteenth century. Richard Pares called the years between the Peace of Paris (1763) and the outbreak of American War of Independence (1776) “the silver age of sugar”.²⁹ In 1775, total sugar imports constituted about fifth of all British imports and were worth more than five times tobacco imports.³⁰ Charles Leslie wrote in the mid-eighteenth century, that “*Jamaica is a Constant Mine, whence Britain draws prodigious riches*”.³¹ Port Royal, the main urban establishment of Jamaica, was even called “*the finest town in the West Indies, and the richest spot in the universe*”.³² Slavery became an integral part of Caribbean sugar economy. It was estimated that between 1662 and 1807 three and half million black Africans were transported as slaves to the New World by British ships – that was over three times the number of white settlers.³³ Jamaican planter Edward Long provided an exceptional testimony of this dramatic period of Atlantic economic development in his *History of*

²⁴ I. HERNON, *Britain's Forgotten Wars: Colonial Campaigns of the 19th Century*, London 2002, p. 77.

²⁵ WOOD, p. 9.

²⁶ J. LAWRENCE, *The Rise & Fall of the British Empire*, London 1994, p. 31.

²⁷ WOOD, p. 21.

²⁸ N. FERGUSON, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, London 2003, p. 77; I. WALLERSTEIN, *The Modern World System III*, London 1989, p. 212.

²⁹ R. PARES, *Merchants and Planters*, in: *Economic History Review*, Suppl. 4, Cambridge 1960, p. 40.

³⁰ FERGUSON, p. 77.

³¹ T. G. BURNARD, ‘*Prodigious riches*’: *the Wealth of Jamaica before the the American Revolution*, in: *Economic History Review*, Vol. 54, No. 3, 2001, pp. 506–524, p. 506.

³² WOOD, p. 22.

³³ FERGUSON, p. 80.

Jamaica (1773). In December 1799, a conspiracy among black slaves having come with their masters from revolutionary Saint Domingue (where Toussaint Louverture became black military leader and dictator) was discovered.³⁴

Slavery ended in the British Empire on August 1, 1834, with the passing of the British Emancipation Act, which led to emancipation of slaves on August 1, 1838.³⁵ The hostility of a majority of the Assembly of Jamaica and of the local planters to the decision of the British government became so intense, that they threatened “*the transfer of their allegiance to the United States, or even to assert their independence, after the manner of their continental neighbors*”.³⁶ However, than the planters had to accept inevitable. 311,070 slaves were emancipated and the amount of compensation awarded was 5,853,975 pounds.³⁷ With the abolition of the monopoly of the Britain market for sugar in August 1846, the economic situation of planters deteriorated and – as Eyre said – they were “*sadly fallen from the proud and wealthy position formerly occupied by the West Indies Proprietors*”.³⁸ Sugar prices dropped. By 1851 over one third of the sugar imported to England was of foreign origin.³⁹ Between 1804 and 1854 the number of sugar estates fell from 859 to 330 and sugar production dropped by a half.⁴⁰ From economic and political point of view, Jamaica became peripheral zone in the new world order of capitalist expansion of the nineteenth century despite some efforts of British government to modernize the colony.⁴¹

The black populations without proper employment suffered from excessive burden of taxes. Their access to the “back lands”⁴² was denied by the white minority, who dominated Assembly and magistracy.⁴³ Theoretically, former slaves gained the right to vote, but a relatively high census exclud-

³⁴ WOOD, p. 32. See G. W. BRIDGES, *The Annals of Jamaica*, London 1828, pp. 241–273.

³⁵ “*All slaves in the colonial possessions of Great Britain should be forever free, but subject to an intermediate state of six years’ apprenticeship for praedials, and four years for domestics.*” WOOD, p. 42.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 39.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

³⁸ A. B. ERICKSON, *Empire or Anarchy: The Jamaica Rebellion of 1865*, in: *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 1959, pp. 99–122, p. 101.

³⁹ Ch. BOLT, *Victorian Attitudes to Race*, London 1971, p. 79.

⁴⁰ HERNON, p. 78.

⁴¹ The Royal Agricultural Society was established under the presidency of Governor Lord Elgin. Immigration from India was authorized and first groups of Indian workers arrived in 1845. New breeds of cattle were brought to Jamaica. The Jamaica Railway was opened for traffic. WOOD, p. 45.

⁴² Plots of land out of cultivation.

⁴³ ERICKSON, p. 102.

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ed most of them from the franchise. For instance, in the course of election of 1864, 1,903 inhabitants of island were permitted to vote out of a total population of over 436,807 (blacks outnumbering whites by a ratio of 32:1) and select forty seven members of Assembly. In 1865 the island contained 350,000 black, 81,000 colored and only 13,000 white inhabitants.⁴⁴ A two-year drought preceding 1865 hit gravely the economic state of Jamaica, especially of the poor emancipated black slaves. The only forums available to Africans were the native Baptist and Methodist Churches.⁴⁵ Knowledge of Christian doctrines led many Blacks to interpret their social position highly unfavorably. One black slave told a missionary in the 1820s: "*Buckra (the white man) left him God in England, and devil in Jamaica stir him to do all this wickedness.*"⁴⁶

The mixture of the "Great Revival" of Baptism and Methodism with the African religion and striving for social justice produced widespread millenarian emotions and imagination.⁴⁷ Self-proclaimed prophets, religious leaders and agitators appeared. One of them, Baptist minister George William Gordon was an illegitimate son of a black woman and of rich white planter, attorney and member of Assembly.⁴⁸ He educated himself, became a prosperous businessman and married Lucy Shannon, the white daughter of an Irishman. Gordon was highly appreciated for his generosity and benevolence.⁴⁹ He was himself elected into the Assembly, helped to establish the Jamaica Mutual Life Assurance Society and preached from his own chapel in Kingston.⁵⁰

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Edward John Eyre arrived to Jamaica in 1862 as stand-in for Charles Darling. After two years Darling moved to Victoria and Eyre was confirmed in May 1864 as his successor.⁵¹ Eyre was suspicious of the activities of Baptists, dissenters, agitators and "troublemakers", especially of the actions of George William Gordon, whose dismissal from the magistracy he secured.⁵² Gordon despised Eyre and declared in the Assembly: "*If we are to be governed by such a Governor much longer, the people will have to*

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 100.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 102.

⁴⁶ LAWRENCE, p. 23.

⁴⁷ FERGUSON, p. 191.

⁴⁸ E. B. UNDERHILL, *The Tragedy of Morant Bay: A Narrative of the Disturbances in the Island of Jamaica in 1865*, London 1895, pp. 89–109; HERNON, p. 78.

⁴⁹ HERNON, p. 79.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 80.

⁵² Eyre described (on May 17, 1865) Gordon as "*the most consistent and untiring obstructor of the public business in the House of Assembly*". ERICKSON, pp. 104–105; BOLT, p. 82.

fly to arms and become self-governing.”⁵³ Clinton Black wrote about Eyre: “He associated only with the white ruling class to whose interests he was sympathetic. He was incapable of mixing with and understanding the black population, nor did he understand the multi-racial future that was the only possible one for Jamaica.”⁵⁴ Such remark could have been unfair, Eyre’s close link to white plantocracy seemed paradoxical if we consider his attitudes during his previous appointments. A deeper psychological analysis of Eyre’s personality and behavior during the critical period (including his state of health which was not good)⁵⁵ should be revealing. One observer wrote that Eyre became “during the two years preceding the occurrences at Morant Bay, the most unpopular Governor who had held office in Jamaica for many years, and his unpopularity was not confined to the emancipated peasantry, it pervaded all classes of the population”.⁵⁶ Dr. Edward Bean Underhill, Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society of Great Britain, wrote a letter on January 5, 1865, to Cardwell, head of the Colonial Office, to highlight the desperate state of the Caribbean colony; he described the extreme poverty of the black inhabitants and their inability to obtain justice in the local courts and protection against persecution and ill-treatment.⁵⁷ Underhill emphasized that “there is not sufficient employment for the people; there is neither work for them, nor the capital to employ them ... Sugar cultivation on the estates does not absorb more than 30,000 of the people ... But the agricultural population of the island is over 400,000”.⁵⁸ Cardwell asked Eyre to make an investigation of Underhill’s charges. Governor invited publicly on March 3, 1865, local officials, planters, and ministers to comment Underhill’s observations. Almost unanimously, they attributed destitution of local black people to “laziness, ignorance, immorality, and to the low price of coffee and sugar”.⁵⁹ Eyre warned that “European proprietors, but above all European residents of position, education, and wealth, have dwindled down to an insignificant number; their places have not been taken by colonial-born persons of corresponding status and ability ... This state of things is getting worse year by year. The European element is continually decreasing, and my firm conviction is that, the day will come, though it may yet be distant, when Jamaica will become little better than a second Haiti”.⁶⁰

⁵³ HERNON, p. 80.

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

⁵⁵ ERICKSON, p. 107.

⁵⁶ UNDERHILL, p. 9.

⁵⁷ UNDERHILL, p. vii; ERICKSON, p. 106.

⁵⁸ UNDERHILL, p. xiv.

⁵⁹ ERICKSON, p. 106.

⁶⁰ UNDERHILL, p. 39.

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In June 1865, a placard written by an unknown author appeared in the Jamaican parish of Hanover involving a strange prophecy: *"I heard a voice speaking to me in the year 1864, saying, 'Tell the sons and daughters of Africa that a great deliverance will take place for them from the hand of oppression', for, said the voice, 'They are oppressed by Government, by magistrates, by proprietors, by merchants', and the voice also said, 'Tell them to call a solemn assembly and to sanctify themselves for the day of deliverance which will surely take place; but if the people will not harken I will bring the sword into the land to chastise them for their disobedience and for the iniquities which they have committed.' ... The calamity which I see coming upon the land will be so grievous and so distressing that many will desire to die. But great will be the deliverance of the sons and daughters of Africa, if they humble themselves in sackcloth and ashes, like the children of Ninevah before the Lord our God; but if we pray truly from our hearts, and humble ourselves, we have no need to fear; if not the enemy will be cruel for there will be Gog and Magog to battle. Believe me."*⁶¹

A black farmer Lewis Miller squatted on a parcel belonging to Jonas Hart and rejected to pay rent on the estate. Lewis Miller argued (wrongly) that the land was the property of the Queen and therefore, it should be rent-free.⁶² He was summoned to appear before magistrates at Morant Bay, town in parish of St. Thomas in the East of Jamaica, on October 7, 1865.⁶³ Lewis Miller happened to be the cousin of Paul Bogle, an influential black agitator and member of Baptist Church. Paul Bogle assembled his own armed private militia including about 150 men with sticks, bills, spikes, guns, and cutlasses and marched (preceded by a musical band) into Morant Bay.⁶⁴ Some skirmishes before the courthouse followed. The local official Baron von Ketelhodt decided to arrest Paul Bogle on October 10, 1865, but the police officers (six policemen and two constables) were attacked and overpowered by a group of 300 men at Stony Gut, where Bogle regularly preached. Paul Bogle allegedly declared that he would *"kill all the white men and all the black men that would not join them"*.⁶⁵ On October 11, 1865, about 400 or 500 armed black men entered Morant Bay. The troop of the Volunteers of the parish summoned to protect the town opened fire and violence started. Fifteen or eighteen whites and loyal

⁶¹ FERGUSON, p. 191.

⁶² ERICKSON, p. 103.

⁶³ Ibidem, p. 103.

⁶⁴ FERGUSON, p. 192.

⁶⁵ HERNON, p. 83.

black men were killed on the spot. Baron von Ketelhodt was “murdered in the most brutal and savage way”.⁶⁶

On October 17, 1865, Paul Bogle sent a circular letter reminding a spirit of “*levée en masse*”: “Everyone of you must leave your house, takes your guns, who don’t have guns take your cutlasses down at once ... Blow your shells, roal your drums, house to house, take out every man ... war is at us, my black skin, war is at hand from to-day to tomorrow.”⁶⁷ The insurgents, numbering up to two thousand men, swayed the countryside up to thirty miles from Morant Bay. Many inhabitants of farms and villages fled to bush, some estates were plundered. Local Maroons refused to join insurrection and backed the government.⁶⁸

Henry Theophilus Bogle, nephew of Paul Bogle, and some other persons allegedly testified that about two weeks before the rebellion, secret meetings were held, oaths administered and the leaders of revolt elected.⁶⁹ Eyre insisted that the outbreak at Morant Bay was local, but the seditious spirit was general, and that germs of potential revolt could be found especially in those parishes frequently visited by George William Gordon.⁷⁰ Eyre later expressed suspicion that the event at Morant Bay had been a premature development of a plan of a more general rising like at Saint Domingue during the French revolution where whites had been massacred and expelled from the island.⁷¹ Former Governor strongly argued that there was abundant testimony with regard to the black people having expressed an intention to exterminate all the whites and brown people: An intended slaughter of the whites and colored inhabitants of Jamaica was to have been carried out on Christmas.⁷² For Eyre, the assumed rebellion should have been equal in scale and ferocity to the Indian Mutiny just eight years ago:⁷³ “Many are said to have had their eyes scooped out;

⁶⁶ Ibidem, p. 85.

⁶⁷ FERGUSON, p. 192.

⁶⁸ HERNON, pp. 86–87. E. BLAKE, *The Maroons of Jamaica*, in: *The North American Review*, Vol. 167, No. 504, 1898, pp. 558–568, p. 558: “*The Marrons of Jamaica are an interesting people. Though coming of the same race as the negroes, they look down on the latter and hold them in contempt, their theory being that Maroons were never slaves to the English.*”

⁶⁹ W. F. FINLASON, *The History of the Jamaica Case: Being an Account, Founded upon Official Documents of the Rebellion of the Negroes in Jamaica: The Causes which led to it, and the Measures Taken for its Suppression; the Agitation Excited on the Subjects, its Causes and its Character; and the Debates in Parliament, and the Criminal Prosecutions, Arising out of it*, London 1869, p. 130.

⁷⁰ Ibidem, p. 134.

⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 129.

⁷² Ibidem, pp. 134, 147.

⁷³ LAWRENCE, p. 193.

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heads were cleft open and the brains taken out, The Baron's fingers were cut off and carried away as trophies by the murderers. Indeed the whole outrage could only be paralleled by the atrocities of the Indian Mutiny. The only redeeming trait being that, so far as we could learn, no ladies or children had as yet been injured."⁷⁴

The tragic events and atrocities committed by both sides in India during 1857 and 1858 influenced widely the British thinking and perception of the racial issue. It seemed that policy of modernization, human system of government, philanthropy, education, and evangelization had completely failed. The *National Review* expressed a new widespread opinion: "*The child and the savage lie very deep at the foundations of their (Indian) being. The varnish of civilization is very thin, and is put off as promptly as a garment.*"⁷⁵

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Governor Edward John Eyre did not lose a moment. After receiving news from Morant Bay, Eyre called an emergency meeting of the Privy Council and declared martial law (on October 13, 1865) covering the whole of the county of Surrey, which included the parish of St Thomas-in-the-East, but not Kingston (where civil law remained). Regular troops of West India Regiment, 6th Regiment, marines from the warship *Wolverine*, militia and groups of Maroons were involved into the suppression of the revolt.⁷⁶ More troops were sent from Barbados and the Bahamas. Rapid and well coordinated actions of army, Volunteers and Maroons contained rebels in few days. Organized resistance ceased practically on October 15, 1865. However, the martial law remained in force for a month. During this time, 439 blacks were killed in fight or executed, 100 men were imprisoned for terms ranging from six to twelve years, more than 600 persons (including women and children) were flogged, and about thousand dwellings were burned.⁷⁷ 85 prisoners were shot without a proper trial.⁷⁸ Governor Eyre was convinced that this "reign of terror" had prevented a "new Mutiny", presenting a nightmare of British colonial administrators.⁷⁹ He empha-

⁷⁴ HERNON, p. 85.

⁷⁵ LAWRENCE, p. 192.

⁷⁶ HERNON, pp. 87–88.

⁷⁷ ERICKSON, p. 104.

⁷⁸ UNDERHILL, p. 65; FERGUSON, p. 194.

⁷⁹ "*The insurrection of slaves is the most dreadful of all commotions. The West India Negroes exterminate by fire and sword the property and lives of their masters. Universally the strength of the reaction is proportioned to the oppression of the weight which is thrown off. Fear is the chief source of cruelty. Men massacre others because they are apprehensive of death themselves. Revolutions are comparatively bloodless when the influential classes guide the movements of the people, and sedulously abstain from exciting their passions. They are the most terrible of all contests when property is arranged on*

sized that “one moment’s hesitation, one single reverse, might have lit the torch which would have blazed in rebellion from one end of the island to the other, and who may say how many of us would have lived to see it extinguished”, put simply, the colony found itself “on the brink of a volcano”,⁸⁰ precisely like Saint-Domingue in 1792, or British India in 1856.

Paul Bogle was caught by a party of Maroons on October 23, 1865, and hanged from the arch of the ruined courthouse in Morant Bay.⁸¹ On October 16, 1865, George William Gordon was arrested in Kingston (where martial law was not in effect) and removed on the board of *Wolverine* to Morant Bay, where martial law was in force. On October 21, 1865, he was tried and condemned for treason. On October 23, 1865, he was executed by hanging.⁸² Eyre accused Gordon that he “did not hesitate to tell the peasantry of this country that they should do as the Haytians had done”.⁸³

On October 20, 1865, Eyre sent the official dispatch to Edward Cardwell, Secretary of State for the Colonies, having described “a most serious and an alarming insurrection of the negro population ... attended with great loss of life and destruction of property” in the colony.⁸⁴ Cardwell’s first reaction was to support Eyre’s policy. In his letter from November 17, 1865, Cardwell expressed his “high approval of the spirit, energy, and judgement with which you have acted in your measures for repressing and preventing the spread of insurrection”.⁸⁵ Later, however, Cardwell became more circumspect. On November 23, 1865, he demanded more information on the measures of suppression and mentioned the Gordon case.⁸⁶

Meanwhile, the events in Jamaica were hotly discussed in political circles and gained wide publicity. Some reports were highly exaggerated. Placards posted about the streets of London spoke for instance of “nine miles of dead bodies” strewn the road.⁸⁷ The case became “the

one side and numbers on the other. The slaves of St. Domingo exceed the atrocities of the Parisian populace.” A. ALISON, *History of Europe*, New York 1842, Vol. 1, p. 49.

⁸⁰ HERNON, p. 96.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 93.

⁸² FERGUSON, p. 194.

⁸³ FINLASON, p. 128.

⁸⁴ HUME, p. 237; ERICKSON, p. 105; B. A. KNOX, *The British Government and the Governor Eyre Controversy, 1865–1875*, in: *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1976, pp. 877–900, p. 878.

⁸⁵ HERNON, p. 97. See as well *Jamaica, Addresses to his Excellency Edward John Eyre, Esquire*, Kingston, 1865, 1866.

⁸⁶ HERNON, p. 97; ERICKSON, pp. 108–109.

⁸⁷ HUME, p. 238.

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touchstone of ultimate political convictions".⁸⁸ On November 18, 1865, *The Times* attacked "agitators from Haiti", and "the natural barbarity" of Africans:⁸⁹ "It seems ... impossible to eradicate the original savageness of the African blood. As long as the black man has a strong white Government and a numerous white population to control him he is capable of living as a respectable member of society. He can be made quiet and even industrious by the fear of the supreme power, and by the example of those to whom he necessarily looks up. But wherever he attains to a certain degree of independence there is the fear that he will resume the barbarous life and fierce habits of his African ancestors."⁹⁰ Mised philanthropists, missionaries and advocates of "negro suffrage" menaced the lives of local white and loyal colored populations, because they undermined a strong, if necessary despotic, colonial government.⁹¹

On the other hand, the *Economist*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Oxford Chronicle*, or the *Saturday Review* criticized the Eyre's severe actions, backed Baptist ministers, and doubted on the justice of the sentence on George William Gordon.⁹² For Radical and Progressive jurist and historian Frederic Harrison, "on the one hand stands the cause of personal liberty, the inviolability of law, just procedure, official responsibility, equal justice, and ancient precedent. On the other hand, that of arbitrary rule, military jurisdiction, wild injustice, martial licence, race prejudice, and strange prerogative. Let us see on which side the English public will be".⁹³ In a similar vein, John Stuart Mill wrote: "There was much more at stake than only justice to the negroes, imperative as was that consideration. The question was, whether the British dependencies, and eventually, perhaps, Great Britain itself, were to be under the government of law or of military license."⁹⁴

Mass meetings were held in Blackburn, Liverpool, and Birmingham.⁹⁵ Quaker, Radical, and Liberal Statesman John Bright declared: "I say, if murder has not changed its name and be yet a crime visited with punishment in this country, then I hope that the Governor of Jamaica and his accomplices will have to stand at the bar of justice for the murder of

⁸⁸ Leonard Huxley; C. HALL, *The Economy of Intellectual Prestige: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, and the Case of Governor Eyre*, in: *Cultural Critique*, Vol. 12, 1989, pp. 167–196, p. 168.

⁸⁹ ERICKSON, p. 111.

⁹⁰ BOLT, p. 76.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

⁹² ERICKSON, pp. 111–112.

⁹³ BOLT, p. 75.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 85.

⁹⁵ ERICKSON, p. 112.

Mr. Gordon.”⁹⁶ The Parliamentary Under-Secretary Edward Forster said in a public discussion that Eyre was “*mainly responsible for this disgraceful slaughter so dishonoring to our character – so unjust in itself and so fraught with difficulty ... if we are to attempt to govern Jamaica as Christian rulers for the future*”.⁹⁷

It seems, however, that one of the main reasons why Eyre became a favorite target of the Liberal and Progressive Press might have been his alleged link to Conservative circles than a support for the cause of black rebels of Jamaica. Some Eyre’s radical critics explicitly distanced themselves from so-called “negro worship”.⁹⁸ Historian Edward Spencer Beesly declared openly: “*I protest I am no negro-worshipper, I don’t consider a black man a beautiful object, and I daresay he sings psalms more than is good for him. Some negroes may be men of ability and elevated character, but there can be no doubt that they belong to a lower type of the human race than we do, and I should not like to live in a country where they formed a considerable part of the population.*”⁹⁹

Cardwell, who was under the pressure of parliament and of the 250-strong deputation from the Anti-Slavery Society on December 9, 1865, had no choice.¹⁰⁰ On December 4, 1865, he asked Lieutenant-Governor Sir Henry Storcks at Malta to go to Jamaica to head the Royal Commission of Inquiry (Russell Gurney, Recorder of London, and J. B. Maule, Recorder of Leeds, were the other members) and to take over military and civil power.¹⁰¹ Eyre was suspended during the investigation of charges of colonial misrule. Henry Storcks arrived in Kingston on January 6, 1866.¹⁰² The Royal Commission examined 730 witnesses in the course of fifty-one days. Edward John Eyre defended his severe and exceptional brutal measures before the Royal Commissioners as follows:

“I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your various despatches relative to the late rebellion, asking for further information and explanations to enable her Majesty’s Government to understand the nature and extent of the outbreak, the state in which the other districts of the island were at the time, and the grounds for continuing martial law, and trials by military tribunals, after the rebellion had been got under control. In order to arrive at a just conclusion upon these points it is necessary to premise, First. That the negroes from a low state of civilization and being

⁹⁶ Ibidem.

⁹⁷ KNOX, p. 887.

⁹⁸ BOLT, p. 83.

⁹⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁰ KNOX, p. 881.

¹⁰¹ UNDERHILL, p. 120; KNOX, pp. 877–880; HERNON, p. 98.

¹⁰² UNDERHILL, p. 128.

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under the influence of superstitious feelings, could not properly be dealt with in the same manner as might the peasantry of a European country. To produce any adequate effect upon such a population, numbering as they do some 350,000, as against about 13,000 whites who are scattered amongst them in isolated and unprotected positions, and widely separated from each other, it was of paramount importance that punishment for such serious offences as rebellion, arson, and murder should be prompt, certain, and severe. It could only be made so by the continuance of the military tribunals until all the parties captured as principals had their cases inquired into and dealt with summarily.

It is true that within a week from the first outbreak the rebellion was got under control, but a large number of the instigators of and actors in it were still at large, scattered throughout an area of between 400 and 500 square miles of mountainous and woody country.

To have withdrawn martial law, and have substituted the delay and uncertainty of civil tribunals before the chief rebels were punished, would have done away with the impression which it was so necessary at the time to make upon the minds of the negroes throughout the island.

Secondly. That as a race the negroes are most excitable and impulsive, and any seditious or rebellious action was sure to be taken up by and extend amongst the large majority of those with whom it came in contact. This was abundantly proved in St. Thomas-in-the-East, the wave of rebellion having extended from Morant Bay, twenty miles to the north-west (between Arntully and Monklands) in two and a half days, and from Morant Bay, forty miles to the east, and north-east as far as Long Bay, in three and half days; at Monklands, seventeen miles (north-west) from Morant Bay, Mr. Patterson, Justice of the Peace, was obliged to fly for his life, and his place was plundered on the 14th October. At Mulatto River, thirty-five miles (north-east) from Morant Bay, Mr. Hinchelwood, Justice of the Peace, was obliged to fly for his life, and his house was burned on the 13th October.

Thirdly. That as a race the negroes are most reticent, and it is very difficult to obtain from them full or specific information upon any subject; hence it is almost impossible to arrive at anything like correct details of their plans or intentions. Even where they wish to give warning to persons they desire to save, it is usually done in an ambiguous manner ... It will be easy to understand from this trait in the negro character, that a conspiracy may exist, and even have extensive ramifications, without the Government or any white individual being in any way aware of it.

Fourthly. The negroes exercise a reign of terror over each other, which deters people from giving information of any intended outrage, or from assisting in any way to frustrate its perpetration ...

Fifthly. Not only was the rebellion universal throughout St. Thomas-in-the-East (a parish which alone contain 215 square miles), and endeavoring to extend itself in the adjoining parishes of Portland, St. David's, and Port Royal, in all of which there were plenty of sympathizers ready to join at a moment's notice, but I had good reason to believe that disloyalty, disaffection, sedition, and rebellious intentions existed in almost every other parish in the island.

Sixthly. The number of troops in the whole island was only 1000; of these about 500 were engaged in suppressing the rebellion, and occupying the parishes of St. Thomas-in-the-East, Portland, St David's and part of Port Royal, upwards of 500 square miles in extent, with a population of fully 40,000. The other 500 troops were employed in garrisoning and protecting New Castle, Up Park Camp, and Kingston. Even when the additional troops arrived from Barbados and Nassau there were altogether only some 1700 to garrison and protect a country 140 miles long, and 50 broad, containing an area of between 6000 and 7000 square miles, much of which consists of mountain fastnesses or dense jungles with few facilities for intercommunication.

Bearing all these circumstances in view, and considering the frightful and irretrievable ruin which must inevitably have overtaken the Colony if the rebellion had been allowed to gain head or to extend itself, I consider that I was fully justified in continuing martial law and trials by military tribunals, until all the principal instigators of or actors in the rebellion were dealt with, and the rebellion itself so crushed out as to deter any attempt at a similar outbreak elsewhere. The success which has attended my measures is in itself a justification of them, and to those who are inclined to cavil at their severity, I would say, that in such a case instant and just punishment became eventual mercy, that deserved death of the few saved the lives of the many. I would ask also what would have been thought or said of me had I lost the colony, or occasioned the massacre of thousands through any delay or hesitancy on my part to accept the responsibility which the emergency necessarily imposed upon me."¹⁰³

Finally, on April 9, 1866, the Royal Commission declared its opinion that, owing to the "*skill, promptitude and vigor manifested*" by Edward John Eyre, the island of Jamaica had been saved.¹⁰⁴ Concurrently, the Commission conceded that martial law had been unnecessarily prolonged and punishment of death, floggings and burning of houses "*positively barbarous, wanton and cruel*".¹⁰⁵ What more, the members of

¹⁰³ FINLASON, pp. 124–127.

¹⁰⁴ HUME, p. v.

¹⁰⁵ HUME, pp. 246–247; ERICKSON, p. 117.

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Commission denounced “*lamentable haste with which the case of Gordon was tried*” and concluded that there was no “*legal evidence of which, before a civil court, he (Gordon) could have been even kept in prison*”.¹⁰⁶

Cardwell accepted the report, agreed with the allegation on “*planned resistance*”, did not dispute legitimacy of the martial law, but he added the critical comment that “*Her Majesty’s Government cannot but deplore and condemn*” ... “*excessive punishments*” and “*reckless*” floggings.¹⁰⁷

Several influential men had formed themselves into a special Jamaica Committee with the object of collecting a sum of 10,000 pounds for the purpose of prosecuting Edward John Eyre for murder and complicity.¹⁰⁸ The Jamaica Committee involved for instance Charles Buxton (as its first chairman), John Stuart Mill (who was just elected into the House of Commons for Westminster), Goldwin Smith, historian, journalist, Liberal politician and Regius Professor of Modern History at University of Oxford, John Bright, Jacob Bright, Charles Darwin, Thomas Henry Huxley,¹⁰⁹ Herbert Spencer, Charles Lyell, Edmond Beales, the President of the Reform League, Albert Venn Dicey, jurist and Professor of English Law at the University of Oxford, Henry Fawcett, Professor of Political Economy at the University of Cambridge, philosopher Thomas Henry Green, and Christian Socialist Thomas Hughes. The Honorary Secretary of the Jamaica Committee was Frederick William Chesson, Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society.¹¹⁰

In December, 1865, group of Eyre’s supporters including John Spencer Churchill (paternal grandfather of Winston Churchill), Charles Dickens, Alfred Tennyson, Charles Kingsley, Thomas Carlyle,¹¹¹ physicist John Tyndall, Scottish geologist Roderick Murchison and John Ruskin (their opponent Goldwin Smith wrote that they “*took violence for*

¹⁰⁶ ERICKSON, p. 118.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem, p. 119.

¹⁰⁸ HUME, p. v. Chief Justice Sir Alexander Cockburn told openly on Gordon’s case: “*Three-fourths, I had almost said nine-tenths of the evidence upon which that man was convicted and sentenced to death was evidence which, according to no known rules – not only of ordinary law, but of military law – according to no rules of right or justice, could possibly have been admitted.*” ERICKSON, p. 119.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Henry Huxley said that he had protested against martial law and but for “*love or admiration of the negro*”. BOLT, p. 85.

¹¹⁰ G. SMITH, *Reminiscences*, New York 1910, p. 362; BOLT, p. 82.

¹¹¹ Thomas Carlyle expressed his view on racial issues in his *Occasional Discourse Upon the Nigger Question* (1849) and *Shooting Niagara: and After* (1867). Carlyle was convinced that the emancipation of black slaves had been economic, social and political disastrous; it ruined both the colonies and former slaves. He was extremely critical to the philanthropists and Utilitarians. HALL, pp. 177–180.

strength”)¹¹² established the Eyre Defense Committee and collected funds for Eyre’s defense.¹¹³ It was argued that “*securing civil rights to a people is one thing, and conferring on them political privileges is another, that all races and all classes are entitled to justice, but that all are not fit or ready for self-government; that to many, and notably to the West Indian negroes, giving them to themselves, as we have done, is simply the cruelest and laziest neglect*”.¹¹⁴ John Tyndall emphasized that in ruling Jamaica the only fatal mistake would be the error of weakness.¹¹⁵ Herman Merivale propagated the doctrine of “*separate but equal*”; anthropologist James Hunt declared in his Third Annual Address to the London Anthropological Society in 1866 that “*we anthropologists have looked on, with intense admiration, at the conduct of Governor Eyre ... The merest novice in the study of race-characteristics ought to know that we English can only successfully rule either Jamaica, New Zealand, the Cape, China, or India, by such men as Governor Eyre. Such revolutions (as that in Jamaica) will occur whenever the negro is placed in unnatural relations with Europeans*”.¹¹⁶

*

The cabinet met on June 16, 1866 and accepted conclusions of the Royal Commission of Inquiry. Edward John Eyre was dismissed (but not prosecuted) and replaced by John Peter Grant, a former Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.¹¹⁷ On July 24, 1866, Eyre left his residence and drove to the Royal Mail Steam Company’s wharf, the place of embarkation: “*Throughout the way the windows of the houses were filled and the roads crowded with spectators, who pressed forward to say, ‘God bless Governor Eyre!’ As he drew nearer the wharf, the streets were almost impassable, so densely were they thronged with people of all classes, but principally with negroes, who cheered him warmly, shouting, ‘God bless your Excellency’*.”¹¹⁸ Similarly, in England a large crowd assembled at Southampton to greet him.

The last legal attempt to indict Eyre for murder of Gordon failed before Grand Jury in 1870 – Eyre took refuge behind an Act of Indemnity approved by the Jamaica Assembly.¹¹⁹ In February 1874, Eyre asked for a pension of the first class (i.e. highest rate, 1,000 pounds a year) under the

¹¹² SMITH, p. 358.

¹¹³ BOLT, p. 82.

¹¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 89.

¹¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 92.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 93.

¹¹⁷ KNOX, p. 887.

¹¹⁸ HUME, p. 254.

¹¹⁹ KNOX, p. 878; HERNON, p. 100.

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Colonial Governors Pensions Act of 1865, but his application was rejected by Lord Carnarvon from the Colonial Office.¹²⁰ Eyre had to accept a “second class” pension of 750 pounds a year.¹²¹ He spent the rest of his life in seclusion and passed away at Walreddon Manor, Tavistock, on November 30, 1901.

On June 11, 1866, Jamaica was made a Crown colony ruled directly by a royal Governor and an appointive Council (including six officials); the elections and self-government were abolished. During the next fifty years, other British West Indian colonies followed suit (only prosperous Barbados retained self-government).¹²² Liberals lost the election in June 1866, but the Conservative government led by Lord Derby continued the Liberals policy over Jamaica.¹²³ The direct rule from London proved to be more efficient than self-government. Governor John Peter Grant established a proper police force, public medical departments, schools financially supported by state, irrigation and public works, and reformed land tenure laws.¹²⁴ On January 7, 1869, Jamaica was placed in telegraphic communication with Cuba, the United States, and Europe.¹²⁵ The new economy of the island was based especially on export of bananas.¹²⁶

The idea that “the war of races” could have been avoided by the despotic means and European superiority only seemed to be justified. Charles Dilke acknowledged that *“if it is still impossible openly to advocate slavery in England, it has, at least, become a habit persistently to write down freedom. We are no longer told that God made the blacks to be slaves, but we are bade remember that they cannot prosper under emancipation. All mention of Barbados is suppressed, but we have daily homilies on the condition of Jamaica”*.¹²⁷

*

The Jamaica crisis and imagination of the “war of races” (incited by the Indian Mutiny and New Zealand wars as well) entailed the crisis of British liberalism. The measures taken by the British government (personified mostly by Sir Edward Cardwell) after the dismissal of Governor Eyre avoided substitution terror for a strict enforcement of the law, but the nature of public debate and discourse revealed a rise of the importance of racial concept in the British colonial administration. Many influential late

¹²⁰ KNOX, pp. 896–897.

¹²¹ Ibidem, p. 898.

¹²² BOLT, p. 90.

¹²³ KNOX, p. 877.

¹²⁴ HERNON, p. 100.

¹²⁵ WOOD, p. 55.

¹²⁶ HERNON, p. 100.

¹²⁷ BOLT, p. 103.

Victorian authors argued that peaceful multiracial coexistence could have been secured by “strong central government” and “beneficent despotism” only. They were convinced that John Edward Eyre had saved Jamaica from anarchy and terror of the “war of races”. English should have been grateful to Eyre for his action worth of Cromwell.¹²⁸

Abstract

The process of the racialisation of the Western political thinking and its expansion into the Western political thinking is analyzed in the context in the British colonial experience and the phenomenon of Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica in 1865. Jamaica – whose economy been based traditionally on sugar plantation – suffered by the decline of world prizes, abolition of slavery, and end of trade monopoly in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The British colony witnessed widespread poverty and deterioration of racial relationships. The methods used by Governor Edward John Eyre to suppress the revolt of local black populations in October 1865 compromised the image of Great Britain as “moral empire”, split the British public opinion and demonstrated visibly the crisis of the Western liberalism challenged by the political and social problems in the overseas.

Keywords

Edward John Eyre; Morant Bay Rebellion, 1865; History of Jamaica; Race; Slavery; Colonialism; British Empire

¹²⁸ HALL, p. 190.

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