

ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SYSTEM
FOR SLAVES IN THE DANISH VIRGIN ISLANDS
1732-1846

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Introduction

On 16 May 1841, some seven years before emancipation in the Danish Virgin Islands of St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John, the first school for slave children was officially opened on the St. Croix plantation of La Grande Princess. It was one of 17 such projected schools – 8 in St. Croix, 5 in St. Thomas and 4 in St. John – built from capital funds provided by the crown, with recurrent costs for staffing and maintenance borne by local taxation. The occasion was marked with flourishes of congratulatory oratory from Bishop Coleridge, the Anglican Bishop of Barbados, and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Trinidad, Rt. Rev. McDonnell. They both expressed high praise for what they saw as a remarkably humane achievement.¹

The director of the school system, the Moravian missionary Roemer, who gave the main address, dwelt on the occasion's symbolic and historical significance: on that very estate, in almost the exact spot, the first Moravian missionary had been buried almost a hundred years before. It was a time when St. Croix was still largely covered with virgin forest, and the slaves whose labour would tame that forest were "without morals or religion." From primal chaos had been brought agricultural order, a material development which had a spiritual correspondence, Roemer argued, in the spread of "religion and enlightenment" among the slaves, and to which the schools' erection bore witness.² Roemer was characteristically too self-effacing a Moravian to elaborate on the reference to his denomination's contribution. But he felt no such sense of restraint in singling out the governor general, Peter von Scholten, as the person for whom the schools would be an eternal monument.³ The remark was not without justice; for von Scholten, in the face of indifference, hostility and obstruction, had single-mindedly and virtually single-handedly, pursued a publicly supported school system for slaves as a primary objective of his administration.

As in most plantation societies in the West Indies in the era of slavery, public schooling, indeed one might almost say any schooling, for whites, and more so for slaves, was of low or no priority. The compelling imperatives of

production and profit left little time for the contemplation of such a non-material objective. Planters with means who desired an education for their children would send them to the ancient foundations in Denmark – *Sørø* Akademi or Herlufsholm – if they were Danish; or, if they were Anglophone, to establishments in Boston, Philadelphia or New York, or to English boarding schools. Those without means or motivation contented themselves with the local offering from itinerant pedagogues: for example, W. Adams, formerly of South Carolina, taught in St. Croix in 1773 the rudiments of English grammar and arithmetic, and, for genteel ladies who were interested, the Italic script.⁴ Claudius von Beverhoudt offered a complementary service to the island's Dutch language minority in the same year,⁵ and a Mme. Cozani, late of New York, which she had left on account of "the present troubles of the times", established a boarding school for girls in 1776 which was neither the first, nor indeed the last, of its type.⁶

It was not before 1788 that a public school for whites was established in Christiansted, St. Croix, with Hans West as Rector.⁷ Comparable facilities for slave children were difficult to rationalize. A pervasive Eurocentrism deemed the African ineducable and, worse, questioned his right of membership in the human family.⁸ It was therefore by no means certain that education for slaves, or its institutionalization, was worthy of serious consideration, let alone admissible. Custom and the law "even if not faithfully observed, had always been that education was forbidden to blacks."⁹ Indeed, the crown itself left the issue in no doubt when it informed the colonial administration in St. Croix in 1768 that a public school system for slaves would serve "no useful purpose."¹⁰ The extent to which received practice and theory in this regard began to be breached is attributable to a series of developments which began in the 1730's: the beginnings of proselytizing activities among slaves by Moravian and Lutheran missionaries; the effect of German Pietism on the conduct of Danish West India policy after the 1750's; and the humanitarianism of the closing decades of the eighteenth century.

Early Attempts at Slave Education

The Moravian endeavour which began in St. Thomas in 1732, was distinguished by its zeal, self-sacrifice and devotion. If the planters at an early date perceived them as revolutionaries, bent on the total overthrow of the prevailing social order, they were wrong only to the degree that they attributed a conscious revolutionary purpose to the Moravians. But it was clear from the outset, that the missionaries from Hernhut did not feel themselves bound by

the conventions of slave society; one of their number, Freundlich, took as his wife a free woman of colour in 1739 in a wedding ceremony conducted by the missionaries' leader, Friedrich Martin.¹¹

The Moravians were nothing if not resourceful. Johann Dober and David Nitschman, potter and carpenter respectively, the first two missionaries who arrived at the end of 1732, took the trouble to learn the slaves' lingua franca, the Dutch based "creolisk."¹² This simplified the task of instruction from the pulpit and at class meetings. It also re-inforced the use of creole and laid the essential preparatory foundations on which a creole grammar was eventually produced, along with a creole ABC book, translations of the New Testament and other religious works, a hymnal and a catechism.¹³ Although these publications, which appeared between 1770 and 1798, were the work of Lutheran missionaries and secular sympathizers like Jochum Melchior Magens, the administrator of St. John,¹⁴ the initial stimulus for their production must be attributed to the Moravians. From the very start their concern for the slaves' afterlife created the possibility for slaves to become literate in this life, in creole if nothing else.

Before 1800 that possibility had been achieved in some measure.¹⁵ It was due largely to a sustained and informed interest in the slaves which, as Lawaetz has correctly argued, the Moravians were the first, and for some time the only ones to show¹⁶ – certainly up to the middle of the eighteenth century. That interest consisted not only in an insistence on the necessity of the slaves learning to read, but also in raising earlier than anyone else, explicitly and implicitly, the question of a school system.¹⁷ The organization since 1749 of missionary work into "classes" of communicants, baptized members not yet communicants, and candidates for baptism¹⁸, was in practice nothing more or less than emphasizing for slaves that dimension of education which contemporary pedagogy had appointed for the poor. The work of Moravians as teachers among slaves was so successful before 1800, that Finance Minister, Count Ernest Schimmelmann, (one of the more enlightened Danes of his time and a concerned if absentee proprietor in St. Croix) approached them in 1799 to send teachers to his estate, La Grange, and to his sister's, La Grande Princess. In the previous year, Thomas de Maleville, a West Indian creole who was not only governor but also a convert of the Moravians, took up with them the question of establishing in St. Croix a school system for slaves.²⁰ But in that very year de Maleville died; the Moravians lost an influential adherent, and with him for the time being, the prospect of bringing his embryonic plan to maturity.

Denmark's state Lutheran church began missionary and educational work among the slaves in the West Indies a good twenty five years later than the Moravians. The creation of the Lutheran Mission to the West Indies, aimed at slaves and free people of colour, was in part the belated outcome of the Pietist movement in its Danish phase. The movement placed considerable emphasis on the welfare of, and religious education for the underprivileged. Pietism was institutionally expressed in the foundation of country schools and of the Missionary College. Overseas this led directly to the beginning of missionary work among the Lapps of Finmark and Indians at Trankebar.²¹ While the West Indian islands remained in the hands of the Danish West India Company, this evangelical aspect of Pietism was not in evidence there. When, however, the islands were acquired by the crown in 1754, the way was clear for a series of rapid initiatives in this direction. In 1755, Frederick V endorsed a proposal for starting a mission among West Indian slaves, and by 1756 ten missionaries, including four theological students, had arrived in the islands, among them Johannes Kingo, who produced the first creole ABC book in 1770.²²

The purpose of the mission was set out in the new Reglement for slaves which the king issued in February 1755: the preaching of God's word among slaves and a Christian education for them.²³ The mission, however, was ill-fated from the outset. Its goals were over-ambitious, given the personnel, and the instructions betrayed a singular ignorance of the logistic context of the work missionaries were being called on to perform. They were expected to preach and teach adult slaves between 6 p.m. and 5 a.m.; devote an hour per week to children of working age, teaching them Danish, reading and religion, and preparing them for confirmation; and spend a minimum of six hours per week on each plantation. This latter provision as it applied to St. Thomas could involve a missionary in a twenty two hour work day that required sixteen hours of travel on foot. But there were also instructions from scientific societies to collect botanic specimens and the like. The instructions were patently impracticable and, as Lose, the church historian, drily remarked, the missionary had a longer working day than the slave.²⁴

The consequence of overwork and exposure to a new epidemic environment was a high incidence of mortality among the Lutheran missionaries. By 1773, their activity was effectively confined to Charlotte Amalie, Fredericksted and Christiansted; tensions and conflicts with the ordained Lutheran clergy did not help matters.²⁵ It is hardly surprising that governor Walterstorff, reporting on the mission in 1796, characterised it as a failure, and suggested that the

missionary endeavour be brought under the control of the West India Office, with a phased withdrawal of the personnel then in the islands.²⁶

It was this failure of the Danish mission that strengthened the claims of the Moravians, whom the Danish government itself identified in 1793 as best suited for the task of educating slaves. Its only reservation was that it would not support an itinerant system, since plantation owners might construe this as violation of their rights of property, and slaves might see in their instructors an alternative source of authority, partisan to their interests. The logical extension of this position was that the secular and religious instruction of slaves should take place in established locations. Indeed Miecke, the leader of the Moravians, said as much in a submission to the colonial administration in St. Croix.²⁷ The administration itself led by the sympathetic de Maleville reported to the government in Copenhagen that a large number of school houses should be erected all over the islands to facilitate primarily the education of the young. Adult slaves, they reckoned, could only with difficulty benefit from instruction. At the very least the West Indian government envisaged one school in each of the nine quarters or districts into which St. Croix was divided, at least two each for the less populous St. Thomas and St. John, and the immediate erection of two buildings in Christiansted and Fredericksted.²⁸

de Maleville's administration wanted the Moravians to work out their own methods but saw the necessity of obliging masters to allow slave children to go to school on certain specified days. Adult slaves would continue as in the past to receive instructions in the evenings and on Sundays, and if any of their number could be identified as of sufficiently good character, they could with their masters' permission assist with discipline in the children's schools.

So far as the costs of erecting the schools were concerned, the government proposed that in the long term, the charges could be borne by public funds or by the Moravians. For the time being, however, the Lutheran Mission Fund could sustain the costs. There remained the question of the schools' location and the acquisition of the land on which to erect an initial two in St. Croix. In an obvious attempt to avoid planter hostility, it was suggested that a member of the colonial bureaucracy, Chamberlain Heyliger, could be persuaded to grant some lands on his Mt. Bijou estate for one location. For the other, the East End, "where there was some uncultivated land"²⁹, was proposed. In this regard, the name of another colonial official, customs officer Miller, whose estate in the

East End was mortgaged to the crown, was also canvassed.³⁰ It should be noted that the East End was agriculturally the least significant area in St. Croix. If the slave census returns for 1792 are any guide, the East End's two districts, A and B, accounted between them for less than 1800 slaves, even less than the 2500 recorded for the rough terrain of Northside A and B. Even more importantly, the number of East End children under age six stood at only 239 in 1792. For the Northside districts the comparable figure was 315. Both the East End and the Northside compare instructively with a heavily populated district like Queen's, where the number of children under six stood at 520.³¹ The Danish West India government, therefore, while endorsing the principle of established locations, specific times and public funding for an educational system for slaves, was treading exceedingly warily. The suggested approach to government functionaries for one site and the location of the other in the marginal East End, was expressive of a fear of giving offence to the planter community by approaching it. The colonial administration appreciated that any scheme in contemplation required, if not the active cooperation, at least no overt resistance from the planter community.³²

The Moravians, however, were beginning to have reservations by 1798/1799. This was an effect of governor de Maleville's passing, mentioned earlier; but it was also a realistic appraisal of the task at hand. Regardless of the projected increase in the physical facilities for slave education, the Moravians were not at all sure that they could take on a general educational system such as was contemplated. In the first place, there was an element of coercion on both planter and slave which could conceivably produce a negative reaction from both. The Moravians claimed that they could only consider the religious instruction of slave children, but would not be undertaking secular instruction in reading and writing. The most they were prepared to do, was to take some slave children of outstanding ability and teach them to read creole. The missionaries' objectives, in short, were somewhat more modest than the colonial government's. They found it desirable, for example, to give secular education momentum by encouraging slaves to re-read at home what they had heard in church, and in this way themselves develop literacy in creole.³³

The proposed location of one of the St. Croix schools on Heyliger's estate was a further source of misgiving for the Moravians, for they found its situation not sufficiently central. They suggested an alternative on the estate of an I.J. de Windt, but the St. Croix administration was unable to get a reply from the estate's managers.³⁴ Heyliger, in the meantime, said he was prepared to make

land available only on the uncultivated northside of his estate, but could neither sell nor otherwise make available land on the cultivated south side.³⁵

The truth was that location was not unrelated to projected costs. As the Moravians observed, the transportation of building materials to locations far distant from the towns would be a significant cost factor³⁶, even though this would have been offset by the likelihood of land being cheaper in such locations. Certainly, centrally situated sites had much to recommend them in terms of accessibility and lower initial capital outlay. But these advantages had to compete with another consideration. St. Croix' central areas were agriculturally its most desirable and land in them therefore fetched the highest prices. There was also the expressed fear that if one or more of the schools were constructed in this densely cultivated area, the possibility of accidental fire would be greatly increased.³⁷ Slaves were notoriously attached to their pipes.³⁸

It was such questions of practicality that appear to have dampened enthusiasm by 1800. The Moravians were not less supportive of the idea, as one of their number informed Count Schimmelmann in Copenhagen in 1803. But as an entry in the West Indian Journal for that year cryptically remarked: "Af mangel altsaa paa et beqvemt Sted til en Laere-Anstalt blev den heele Sag da udsat."³⁹ Even though in 1805 the Moravians were reportedly breaking stones and assembling material,⁴⁰ presumably waiting on the government to provide a site, the public school system for slaves had effectively been laid to rest for the time being.

Secular combined with religious education did continue on the part of the Danish Lutheran church, supervised by its ordained clergy, and with the assistance of four teachers in St. Croix, with one each in St. Thomas and St. John. The effort was hardly more than token, however, and was seriously starved of funds. Indeed, if one can conjecture that the two English occupations of 1802-03 and 1807-15 had the cumulative effect of braking the exertions of the Lutheran church, one can be more explicit regarding the effect of the slave trade's abolition in 1802. von Scholten himself wrote to the West India office in 1832 suggesting that the Lutheran mission service be abandoned altogether, "since its primary object was to Christianize newly arrived Africans and that object was past."⁴¹

The Moravians for their part continued unobtrusively with their work, operating from their mission stations: New Hernhut and Niesky in St. Thomas;

Bethany and Emaus in St. John; Fridensthal and Friedensfled in St. Croix. Their methods were simple and direct: classes of enquirers and communicants kept in the meeting houses were the basic organisational structure; prayers were kept every evening for any slaves wishing to attend. Unlike the Lutherans, they were not culture bound and felt no sense of compulsion to teach slaves Danish.⁴² Yet literacy was high on their agenda and the success of their efforts in this connection was evidenced by the increasing number of slaves who could read in the first three decades of the nineteenth century.⁴³ It would be difficult to quantify this number since the Brothers were dealing not merely with those slaves who were under their immediate charge in their six establishments; there were as well those who attended the meeting houses on week-day evenings as well as on Sunday.⁴⁴ Some qualitative impression might be gained, however, from the recurring references in newspaper 'for sale' advertisements, to runaway slaves who could read.⁴⁵

Effects of Metropolitan Humanitarianism

Yet if sustained interest in the colonies in providing some education for society's oppressed persisted only among the Moravians, in Denmark itself developments were taking place which would be of long term consequence for the colonies. Within Denmark there had been an ongoing concern since the late 1780's for an educational system appropriate to the country.⁴⁶ The law provided for compulsory elementary education, the erection of school buildings, remuneration of teachers and fines for withholding children from school. But the performance hardly matched the profession. Teachers were mostly recruited from among failed artisans, superannuated soldiers and drop-outs from the gymnasia. At a higher level in the system, in the so-called "Latin Schools", education was characterised by poor physical facilities, mindless repetition, and learning by rote in Latin, Greek, history, geography and astronomy — subjects the teachers quite often hardly understood.

The situation was ripe for the attention of Denmark's enlightened social reformers, whose agenda by the 1780's included reforms in land tenure and agriculture, the abolition of serfdom (1792) and the curtailment of the slave trade (1802). These reformers gave low priority to classical learning and memorising; they emphasized in their stead useful knowledge, education for citizenship and *mens sana in corpore sano*. For reformers like Bernstorff, Ludvig and Christian Reventlow and Ernst Schimmelmann, reforms as they related to serfdom and the rural poor, made little sense unless they were wedded to a thorough-going educational reform embracing serfs and the peasantry. Largely due to

their efforts, the Great School Commission was brought into being in 1789, and for the next twenty five years profoundly affected the course of educational developments, not only in Denmark but in her West India colonies as well. By the time the Commission had sat for the last time in 1814, the law enforcing compulsory education and creating state supported schools for the poor, had been passed.

Frederick VI, first as crown prince and subsequently as king, helped to initiate these reforms and was active in their promotion. von Scholten's close relationship with him, particularly in the period 1808-1814, placed him in intimate contact with the reformist ideas with which the king was closely associated. It is difficult to imagine entry into that circle without sharing its ideals; it is equally difficult to imagine anyone not being profoundly affected by its central concerns once within it. It is also of some importance to notice the fact that von Scholten's career as a colonial official, properly speaking, began immediately after his long association at close quarters with a reform-minded king, and close on the heels of the law establishing a publicly funded educational system for Denmark's poor in 1814. His appointment in that very year to his first post, that of Superintendent of Weights in St. Thomas, was the start of a period of colonial service for the next thirty four years, the last twenty of which he spent as governor general of the Danish West Indies.

von Scholten personified the important bridge that linked humanitarian activity in Denmark to its colonial manifestation. The slave in the colonial context was a factor in a mode of agricultural production different in degree but not significantly in kind from the Danish manorial system of the eighteenth century. The oppression and subordination which characterised slavery and serfdom were essential to both as closed systems of unequal social relationships. The social reformers of late eighteenth century Denmark sought to rectify the imbalances, if not equalise the relationships, by the moral upliftment of and increased social opportunities for that class which serfs comprised. The slaves in the colonies, from the reforming humanitarians' point of view, comprised an equally imperative category for amelioration. The movement for the abolition of the slave trade was the first major point of contact between metropolitan reform and the colonial situation, where the ameliorative intent towards slaves was consistently articulated.⁴⁷ von Scholten represented this tradition; his appointment as governor general in 1828 provided the opportunity to promote amelioration with vigour.

von Scholten's Initiatives

As early as 1829 he expressed satisfaction at and encouragement for the work of the Moravians among blacks, and promised one of the Brothers, John Klingenberg, whatever material support he could.⁴⁸ von Scholten came early to hold the Moravians in high regard because he perceived that their methods and their successes in evangelizing and teaching among the slaves, made them crucial to his future plans. As an earnest of this regard, 3 August 1832 was declared a public holiday to permit the celebration of the Moravian centenary jubilee. Ten thousand slaves attended the Friedensfeld mission house; von Scholten himself was present with an official party and military escort, and authorised a 19 gun salute before and after the service.⁴⁹

On von Scholten's own admission he had committed his energies from the very outset of his administration to promote the slaves' welfare and the amelioration of their situation. Both, he emphasised in 1834, were inextricably yoked with the immediate and future fortunes of the colonies. The Emancipation Act in the British West Indies gave a compelling urgency to von Scholten's plans, for he recognised that with the termination of apprenticeship, all other colonial possessions in which slavery persisted could not escape the seismic shock-waves of emancipation.⁵⁰ What von Scholten therefore began with in 1828 as a programme of ameliorative reforms, came to be conceptualised as an Emancipation Plan. In it, education for slaves on a publicly funded basis formed an important part.

Initial response to the plan was at best unenthusiastic and at worst hostile. In many respects the planters' reaction was characterised by the same kind of panic stricken hysteria evident at the time of the abolition of serfdom in Denmark. Even among the Moravians there were important reservations on the question of emancipation. A Brother Bonhoff thought slaves far too unenlightened to make proper use of their freedom, and shared in no way the governor general's view that there was a compelling necessity for change in the threatening circumstances of the time. Bonhoff did concede, however, that there was a need for a properly organised school system, and supported von Scholten in a proposal for allowing slaves Saturday free for market, so that Sunday could be devoted to schooling and religious instruction.⁵² Moravian support for that part of von Scholten's plans relating to slave education was crucial in the face of generalised hostility among the island's white communities.

The metropolitan government, or more particularly Frederick VI, whose

confidence von Scholten enjoyed, responded by establishing a commission of senior officials to "enquire into the circumstances of the several Danish West Indian Islands." The six man commission headed by Frederick von Lowzow, director of the Generaltold Kammer or West India Office, was appointed on 15 October 1834⁵³ and submitted its report in less than a month on 13 November. It endorsed the establishment of a school system and suggested that its details should be worked out by a local commission in the islands, set up for the purpose.⁵⁴

The local committee was set up by von Scholten on 23 May 1838, and consisted of 19 representatives, among whom were 11 planters; the rest were clergymen and members of the Burgher Council of St. Croix. The committee decided that eight schools should be erected on appropriate sites, and that materials and labour which the plantations could not provide would be paid for from public funds. Failure to provide either of the latter was to be considered an offence on the same terms as failure to contribute to road maintenance.⁵⁶ The committee's composition was a gesture of good will and trust in the planters' direction, an attempt to consolidate whatever support von Scholten enjoyed in that quarter. The punitive clause would force into line those planters who continued to withhold material support. It does appear, however, that important gains had been made among the planter community between 1834 and 1838. von Scholten was able to report early in 1839 that the "school project had little by little won public attention and support."⁵⁷ This view is borne out by Dahlerup in an article published in the newspaper *Berlingske Tidende* on 15 September 1841. The more aware planters, it would appear, appreciated the full significance of British West Indian emancipation for the Danish islands. In particular they came to understand that the most efficacious means of preventing a violent upheaval when the inevitable emancipation came, was to prepare the slave to make good use of his freedom by education and "moral upliftment." This conviction had led some planters to build small schools on their plantations, imitating the example of those who at an earlier time had done so out of motivations of "philanthropy and religious sentiment."⁵⁸

If this latter motivation had masked a consideration of self-interest insofar as such schooling facilitated greater social control in conditions of slavery, it now apparently gave way to another form of self-interest, although of a more enlightened kind, relating to the future. von Scholten for his part was evidently committed after 1834 to the inevitability of emancipation. But he envisaged a measured progress and an orderly *dénouement* in which his school plans were an

important input. "Concern for the lower classes including the unfree," he remarked to the Burgher Council of St. Croix in 1839, "was a matter of simple wisdom."⁵⁹ The Burgher Council was entirely in agreement; education for the lower classes (free coloureds included), their moral upliftment and character-betterment would be amply repaid by greater public peace and security.⁶⁰

Considerations of public order had been a major stumbling block to the introduction of any system of instruction, as indeed they had been during the heyday of the St. Dominigue and later the Cuban slave regimes.⁶¹ The Danish Virgin Island plantocracy looked with as much displeasure at non-conformist, especially Methodist, missionary activity⁶² as that with which they regarded an independent black Haiti, a land they deemed "without resources, industry, religion and morality" after forty years of independence.⁶³ It is significant in this context that von Scholten, if nothing a tolerant man, reacted very negatively to the presence of "the host of American Methodists who came to winter in St. Croix for their health", and were steadily gaining in influence among slaves and the women of St. Croix. von Scholten had been in the West Indies long enough to be aware of the disruptive effect which Methodists were deemed to have on the even tenor of slave plantation societies, and had no difficulty declaring them prohibited immigrants.⁶⁴ Similar proscriptions existed under von Scholten against Quakers and Baptists.⁶⁵

Once enough planters were convinced that the proposed school system was unlikely to be prejudicial to public order, the major obstacle to its acceptance by any but the most determined defender of the status quo, was assured of removal. The Country School Ordinance of 1839 formally established the system although construction of the first school actually began in 1838.⁶⁶ The Ordinance authorised the erection of 8 schools in St. Croix, 5 in St. Thomas and 4 in St. John, the capital costs of which would be met from the colonial treasury in those instances where they were not met by gifts and voluntary contributions. The recurrent annual expenditure, estimated at 10,000 Rds., would be met from a capitation tax on slaves.⁶⁷ To placate planter opposition, the arrangements called for children over nine to be taught on Saturday mornings; children below that age would have three hours of instruction daily in the mornings, Saturdays apart. Instruction was to be in English, for, as the Danish West India government argued in 1838, Danish was a minority language and creole, the slaves' lingua franca, was inappropriate as a medium of instruction. Moreover, the slaves' English was sufficiently passable to permit the use of that

TABLE I

Church Affiliation of the Free and Unfree Population in the Danish Virgin Islands, 1835

	LUTHERAN		MORAVIAN		C. of E. & PRESBYTERIAN		METHODISTS		QUAKER		R. CATHOLIC		JEWS		UNBAPTISED	
	Free	Slave	Free	Slave	Free	Slave	Free	Slave	Free	Slave	Free	Slave	Free	Slave	Free	Slave
St. Croix	2120	1904	276	6244	3363	5111	-	-	1	-	916	6433	42	-	87	184
St. Thomas	1748	461	447	1895	1534	398	51	28	7	-	4056	2265	425	-	66	251
St. John	80	86	237	1369	146	118	1	3	-	-	19	46	-	-	6	307
	3948	2451	960	9508	5043	5627	52	31	8	-	4991	8744	467	-	159	742
TOTAL	6399		10,468		10,670		83		8		13,735		467		901	

Source: R/A, *Originale Forestilliner fra Kommission Angaaende Negernes Stilling i Vestindien; 1834-1843*, 5 von Scholten's Report 2 January 1839 Encl. 16 B.

language in schools and churches.⁶⁸ There was the additional advantage in using English: it would help to win the support of the adult slaves for the system. Official instruction in English, the language of the majority of the planter community, was an earnest of the recognition of the slaves' humanity. The adult slave population was sufficiently perceptive to grasp this implication, and to distinguish between a state supported generalised system and the earlier private individual efforts, which some slaves had tended to view with suspicious caution. By contrast they greeted the new dispensation with considerable enthusiasm.⁶⁹

von Scholten had in the meantime insisted that the Moravians were crucial to his purpose, and having obtained the crown's permission to seek eight missionaries to get the project underway, personally undertook a voyage to the Moravian headquarters at Herrnhut.⁷⁰ The allowing of exclusive rights to the Moravians in education was by no means an unreasonable concession, given both the size of their following⁷¹, and their past record; in any event it would not have been possible to denominationalize the system, given the existing financial constraints.⁷² The Moravians for their part regarded this as an opportunity for additional missionary endeavour. Bishop Breutel reported to his principals from St. Croix in 1841 that their mission was fulfilling a long and deeply felt need and that the schools would facilitate greater reading of the Bible and a sharpened moral sense among the coming generation.⁷³ Indicative of the Moravian response to the new challenge was the fact that one of their number was sent to England to learn English.⁷⁴

The decision not to denominationalize the educational system for slaves brought some difficulties in its train, although not immediately. Confessional conceits and liturgical subtleties could only with difficulty or not at all be reconciled in this omnibus arrangement, where secular instruction, for the most part, was rooted not merely in the basics of common morality but also in the tenets of religion as well. The Danish Lutheran pastor in Christiansted, Pastor Bagger, was charged with the task of producing a generally acceptable manual, inoffensive to the parents and priests of those slave children with Christian backgrounds. Bagger took his commission seriously and produced a *Schoolbook For The Religious Instruction of the Unfree in the Danish West India Islands*. Over sixty one folio pages and seven chapters in question and answer form, Bagger's work was neither quite conventional catechism nor secular manual.⁷⁵ It was nevertheless sufficiently neutral to serve as a text with which to begin, and it was early yet in 1839/1840 for the enthusiasm to curdle.

In metropolitan Denmark an important manifestation of that enthusiasm

was represented by the crown princess Caroline Amalie. The princess was a woman of deep religious feeling and remarkable piety⁷⁶, profoundly affected, it would appear, by the movement for educational reform and spiritual regeneration set in train by Denmark's great reformer of the nineteenth century, N.F.S. Grundvig.⁷⁷ She congratulated von Scholten warmly on the introduction of the school system, particularly on the religious component of the instruction, and asked to be kept informed from time to time on the progress of the experiment.⁷⁸

Metropolitan and Local Opposition

The princess' enthusiasm was hardly a national phenomenon, however. Denmark's liberals, distrustful of the court, of absolute monarchy and von Scholten as its colonial expression, damned the experiment with faint praise. Their objections were not to the schools in principle, but to von Scholten's leadership. His very presence, they claimed, was an obstacle to progress in the colonies.⁷⁹ They went so far as to suggest that the schools were hardly more than a symbol of von Scholten's capacity for vaingloriousness. The schools were sited along the main road, the Centerline, from Christiansted to Fredericksted. It was impossible not to see them, the liberals contended; nor, further, had any consideration been given to the question of the distance of the schools from the plantations and to the children's walking two miles to get to them. So far as they could discern, the determining criterion in their location had been optimal visual effect.⁸⁰ Although von Scholten had a justifiable reputation for love of magnificence and show, the liberals' *ad hominem* criticism was, in the circumstances, quite unworthy.

They were on firmer ground in calling into question the use of the Moravian missionary instructors. They made the crudely chauvinist but eminently understandable point that the Moravians were being favoured at the expense of Danish Lutheran missionaries.⁸¹ It was of little significance that the Lutheran mission had been a declared failure since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The liberals were embittered at the declining importance of the Danish language and Danish culture in the West Indian islands, and in large measure blamed it on von Scholten. Even if English were conceded as the medium of instruction, liberal spokesmen and their mouthpiece, *Faedrelandet*, were quick to point out that those Moravian missionaries who came to the West Indies were unlettered. Their appointment, it was said, would conduce to the continued use of creole among the slaves and defeat one of the stated objectives of the school

system. Learning creole from the slaves, the liberals argued, missionaries seldom learnt English themselves, and rarely came into contact with the "educated classes."⁸³

Moravian missionary pedagogy in the West Indies, *Faedrelandet* stridently declared, could be called neither guidance, upbringing nor educational system; it consisted in the main of prayer meetings, the singing of lugubrious hymns and the external appearance of devoutness on the part of children and adults alike. None of this sustained the spirit of freedom in human nature, but rather suppressed it. "We vote," concluded *Faedrelandet*, "for enlightened clerical education."⁸⁴

There is some doubt that these extreme strictures on the Moravians were justifiable in themselves, and not merely strokes of a tar brush wielded principally for von Scholten, their patron. The testimony of other contemporary observers certainly does not bear out this view. Victor Schoelcher, for example, visiting the Danish islands in 1840, gives a more balanced picture. He too is critical of the Moravians: of their use of slaves rather than *affranchis* in their establishments; the considerable differential between the housing of missionary master and Moravian slave; the use of slave artisans in their workshops for profit. But he nevertheless conceded that among an otherwise useless clergy of the denominations represented, the Moravians were the ones who gave moral instruction by example and deserved credit for providing the manpower for the school system.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, there was considerable merit in the concrete counter proposals which the liberal opponents of von Scholten advocated. Basically the proposition was to indigenise the teacher corps by the use of free people of colour. von Scholten had spent a great deal of energy fighting for and obtaining civil equality for free coloureds between 1830 and 1834. Thereafter he had been equally energetic in promoting their social acceptance. Both he and many contemporary observers had emphasised the extent of the parities in education, economic status and social accomplishments between free coloureds and the contemporary European middle class.⁸⁶ That being the case, it does seem somewhat unusual that von Scholten did not embrace the opportunity provided by the slave school experiment, to reinforce the importance of a class whose legal and social emancipation he had presided over. *Faedrelandet* commented in 1841 that von Scholten's zeal for slave education was all too sudden⁸⁷, and there would appear to be some justice in this criticism in the sense that one aspect of

his plans had not been thought through in all its fulness.

Certainly, encouragement for the use of free coloureds as teachers was not lacking. As early as 1829, on the occasion of a public celebration in St. Croix, marking the wedding of Prince Frederick Carl Christian to Princess Wilhelmina, there had been a proposal that a fund be started to educate "two young natives, one white and one of colour, to become teachers of the schools of these islands." von Scholten is reported to have warmly approved,⁸⁸ and that is as far as the proposal appears to have got. *Faedrelandet* would not allow von Scholten conveniently to forget. It pointed out that while von Scholten merely talked about schools, the British West Indies provided many examples of the identification and training of local free coloured teachers, with excellent results. Further it made the eminently reasonable point that if one wanted to improve the situation of blacks and coloureds vis-a-vis whites and bring them into contact with the latter, then logic required that one look among them for teachers to train. If, moreover, English was to be the medium of instruction, the choice of free black and free coloured teachers would reinforce its more widespread use among the slaves, thereby replacing creole as the lingua franca.⁸⁹ Whatever the reason, their German provenance or their lowliness in the contemporary class scale, the Moravians' lack of competence in English was a decided disadvantage given the promotion of competence in English as one of the stated objectives of the school system.

The liberal metropolitan misgivings about the school system have to be understood not only as suspicion of von Scholten, but also as distrust of his mentor Frederick VI. Much of this attitude was conditioned by the newspaper's support of the planter interest. van Dockum, who was von Scholten's adjutant at the beginning of the 1840's, observed in his memoirs:

... when, following Frederick VI's death, liberal voices in Denmark rose in concert against everything his regime had stood for, planters found a ready support in the Danish press which saw von Scholten only as a servant of absolutism.

The liberal press, according to van Dockum, not only articulated the planters' point of view, but also identified von Scholten as the major obstacle to progress in the colonies. In van Dockum's view, it was the planter community which obstructed every attempt at progressive change. Indeed the liberal press had gone to such lengths to incite opinion against von Scholten that street riots took place in front of his house in Copenhagen.⁹⁰

van Dockum was likely to be partisan, being not merely von Scholten's adjutant and secretary, but his personal emissary to Copenhagen in 1841 to canvass support for his slave reforms.⁹¹ Nevertheless, there is ample evidence to support his charge of the hostility of the press and *Faedrelandet* in particular, in which a series of eight lengthy articles appeared in 1841 under the title "The West Indies from a Planter Perspective." There is also considerable justice in his stricture on the planters, a significant number of whom put up a determined resistance to the school experiment between 1840 and 1846.

The planters found little difficulty in living with the education of slave children below the age of eight or nine. The education of older slaves, however, raised some knotty issues. In the age group nine to twelve, in St. Croix alone, there were some 930 children whose labour planters calculated they would lose, for whatever period of schooling was prescribed. In St. Thomas there were some 122 and in St. John 94.⁹² Although these figures for 1841 represented no more than 4.6% of the 24,738 slaves numbered in the October 1841 census⁹³, they had a qualitative significance far outweighing their quantitative import. For von Scholten, the anticipated difficulties would be happily resolved if slaves were allowed a free day other than Sunday. The crown, broadly supportive of von Scholten's ameliorative intent, was guarded in its support of the free day proposal. It took a compromise position in an Ordinance of 1 May 1841, calling on planters to grant their slaves one free week day during the "dead season" from 1 July to 1 December and a weekly payment of 2 Danish crowns to all slaves over eight years old during crop time.⁹⁴ von Scholten, however, exercised his discretion to propose to the planters a free day weekly for the entire year. In a circular letter to the planter community on 29 July 1841, he argued that in this way the planters would be saved the additional cash outgoings, and slaves would achieve an opportunity to use the arrangements being made for their children. No slave child of eight years and over, in the counterdispensation proposed by von Scholten, would be allowed to go to school during the working week, now deemed by him to mean Monday to Friday.⁹⁵

The proposal had a mixed reception. In St. Croix, of the 170 sugar plantations and cattle pens listed in 1840⁹⁶, the owners or agents of some 83, describing themselves as a "considerable majority"⁹⁷, accepted the greater part of the circular's contents, adding, however, that although children aged four to eight would be permitted to attend school on days other than the free day, this would be "without prejudice to their early training in field work."⁹⁸ Further, regarding the education of older children and adult slaves, they stated their position with unambiguous clarity: they would not consent to the appropriation

of any part of the working week to the instruction of adults or those above age eight. Although they were giving conditional support, they were as apprehensive as those planters who withheld their support:

But as it has been apprehended by many who have dissented from the proposal. . . that the present is only the first of a series of suggestions for the gradual extinction of slavery in these islands without cost to the Government, but to the inevitable ruin of the Planter, we do hereon, most respectfully but decidedly state our fixed determination to make no further concession either of time or by pecuniary donations. . . as we are confident that we have gone to the full extent to which we can possibly go and continue properly to conduct our properties.⁹⁹

Opponents of von Scholten among the plantocracy also saw in the school system, and the free day which would help to make it viable, simply a means of hastening emancipation, their ultimate ruin. Nor did some of the dissenting planters see any virtue in attempting to educate slaves in a secular or religious mode: the slave was ineducable; "work [was] exacted of the Black, in strict conformity with the doom of the Almighty," and there was "no proof that his race is peculiarly fitted for any much more noble or useful career."¹⁰⁰ From St. Thomas, the public prosecutor Sarauw, an implacable enemy of von Scholten's, made a detailed submission to the king on 31 December 1840, casting doubt on the authenticity of von Scholten's "considerable majority", hinting at coercive methods used to obtain planters' signatures and instancing in particular the use of threats by the Church of England curate on members of his congregation opposed to von Scholten. Indeed, Sarauw argued, what was remarkable was that many persons had signed, not because they thought the weekly free day right or good, but to avoid a greater evil, viz: free time during the normal work week for adults and adolescents to go to school. Sarauw submitted that the entire planter community was particularly fearful of adult slaves being sent to school, and suggested that this was the reason why even those who had consented to a free Saturday weekly laid down the express condition that no slave over eight years should be sent to school during the work week.¹⁰²

Sarauw and like minded persons, however, did not monopolise the field. Some planters felt that there was no reason to despair of change for the better in the slaves' morality if they were allowed the benefit of instructions. They took especial objection to the racial pessimism of von Scholten's opponents and

TABLE 2

Estimated School Age Population Among Slaves in the Danish Virgin Islands 1841

	ST. CROIX		Total	ST. THOMAS		Total	ST. JOHN		Total
	Catholic	Non Catholic		Catholic	Non Catholic		Catholic	Non Catholic	
1. Weekday School for Children Ages 5-9	501	960	1,461	15	215	230	5	187	192
2. Saturday School for Children 9-12	320	610	930	8	114	122	3	91	94
	821	1570	2391	23	329	252	8	278	286

SOURCE: R/A Indiske Forestillinger og Resolutioner 53b, 1845-1846
 Approximativt Oversigt over de ufrige Born paa plantagerne paa St. Croix,
 St. Thomas og St. Jan, som efter Folketaellingen af 1ste October 1841 Kunne
 ansees Skolepligtige.

the notion of the slaves' ineducability. Such a position they claimed was "infected with. . . Colorphobia", since its proponents had no proof that the slave was not peculiarly fitted for a nobler career than unremitting labour. A reasoned counter-argument by one of von Scholten's partisans advocated with remarkable vigour that slaves' entitlement to membership of the human family was no less than the white man's:

we in fact *have* proof abundant that he is fitted with every sense and facility, which have raised the white man to the elevated stand, which he now holds in the scale of creation; that the same thirst after knowledge, the same inventive genius is his, and that in no Case, we assert, has it been observed, that placed in parallel circumstances of advantage for Education the Black Man has ever failed to keep pace with the white Man; but on the contrary we can say, that well known instances have occurred, in which he has surpassed *him*, who had been early taught to look on himself as superior to the *Negro Race*.¹⁰³

It is difficult to assess, in any meaningful quantitative way, the weight of opinion on both sides of the question in 1840; nor is there any evidence of weight to refute Sarauw's allegations of irregular methods to gain support for the weekly free day proposal. Nevertheless, it is clear that von Scholten had determined that the school system, (and the weekly free day which would facilitate its expansion to older slaves) was an object of the first importance: partly in its acculturative aspect as a method of promoting social control and public order; partly also in its ameliorative aspect, as a mechanism of social engineering, an expression of optimism for the future of the islands' blacks. While few planters would have quarelled with the first, the second objective was a source of hysterical misgiving. It smacked suspiciously of "democracy", which Sarauw pointedly reminded the king, was a phenomenon unknown in Denmark; worse, it conjured up visions of Haiti.¹⁰⁴ The grudging response and outright opposition were to be explained only in terms of a mortal fear of social levelling. The point was not lost on the king's advisers in the Generaltold Kammer who subsequently remarked:

der er Anledning til at antage, at flere Plantere betragte enhver til Ungdommens Opdragelse sigtende Foranstaltning med Mistaenklighed, fordi de fuldtvel indsaar, at naar et velordnet Underviisningsvaesen er etableret og har baaret Frugter, er en af de vigtigste Hindringer for de sociale Forholds friere Udvkling i Colonierne bortryddet.¹⁰⁵

Christian VIII for his part, once he became king in 1839, was anxious to proceed with caution, working towards a gradual emancipation by free birth, with compensation paid to the owners of the mothers in question. Education, he felt, would help to prepare the slaves for their freedom. But at the same time he was at pains to point out that, with this and other ameliorative measures, it was just as much a point of concern "to make emancipation unnecessary for as long as possible, for when the unfree are treated in a lawful and considerate manner, the necessity for such a costly step would cease to be so compelling."¹⁰⁶

Problems of Time-tabling

This was a very conservative approach to the question of emancipation. Yet Christian VIII, like his wife, supported the experiment in slave education; in his case, if for no other reason than to buy time and postpone the day of reckoning. Accordingly, therefore, the king issued a Royal Rescript on 18 February 1843 which, by transferring market day from Sunday to Saturday, in effect made the latter the slaves' free day. The Rescript also instructed the governor general to draw up a regulatory ordinance for the school system in collaboration with the colonies' law officers, the Lutheran priest and some planters.¹⁰⁷

The Rescript now made it possible with royal approval for all slave children over the age of nine to receive instruction on the free day. To regularize this von Scholten announced on 16 August 1843 that whilst school for the four to eight year olds would continue as before, from Monday to Friday, the nine to eleven year olds would attend on Saturdays from 8-11 a.m., and the eleven to fourteen year olds on Sundays from 3-6 p.m. The announcement, it appears, took place without consultation or calculation of its likely consequences. Six months later, on 9 February 1844, the Moravian school inspectors, Gardin and Hauser, reported to von Scholten that the attendance on Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons was less than satisfactory, never reaching as much as one half and as a rule much less than one third. Estate overseers were claiming that they could not force children to go to school on Saturday and Sunday, particularly when their parents kept them at home doing chores.

In response von Scholten summoned a meeting on 17 August to which were invited the clergy of all the denominations and a few planters. At the meeting the Moravians proposed, inter alia, that the older children aged nine to thirteen should be instructed on Sundays and divided into two groups, 8-10 a.m. and 3-5 p.m. because of their numbers. Saturday school in their view should be

abandoned in favour of a scheduling which would sanctify school by associating it with Sunday. Further, to facilitate better management of the numbers, the Moravians proposed that some children in the age group nine to eleven years be used as monitorial assistants. They also felt that overseers should be held responsible for attendance and fined for every absent child, and uncooperative parents made to lose a part of their free day. The majority accepted these proposals, but left the last point for the authorities to decide. Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic and Church of England priests, supported by some planters, were opposed to children of their particular faiths going to school on Sunday at times when they ought to be in church. In their view, school for older children on Saturday would avoid this conflict.

The meeting was too divided on this point to be conclusive and called for further discussion which von Scholten scheduled for 7 December 1844. In the circular of 15 November inviting participants, however, von Scholten had his own proposals to offer which virtually pre-empted any further discussion: he saw no merit in extending education beyond age twelve, nor did he see any point to the Moravian suggestion for a double shift on Sunday; a single 9 a.m.-12 noon shift was more than adequate. The circular's tone was unmistakably authoritarian. The governor general was willing to entertain *considered* proposals but only to the degree that he deemed them thus, would he change what he had proposed. It would appear that having successfully canvassed Saturday as the free day, von Scholten was not now prepared to lose any of it, even for the school system, and was not above the use of threatening language to enforce his will. Those invited to the meeting were told very bluntly that if the clergy and planters persisted in opposing school on Sunday, as the governor general proposed, he would have no scruples in submitting to higher authority that children of the various denominations should go to school on a weekday other than Saturday.

The imperious language and the threat went down very badly with the planters. At the December meeting von Scholten's opening remarks were that he was surprised to hear of the exception taken to his remarks in the circular and that he wished to be apprised of the views of those present. But the meeting had hardly begun when it broke up with the tabling of a written protest by several planters against the content of the circular, except in so far as it confirmed what had been decided in August. The protesting planters declined to give their reasons for this step, since they intended to make direct representations to the crown.¹⁰⁸

The protest for all practical purposes was the voice of the Irish plantocracy, suspicious at the best of times of von Scholten, and supported now in an issue of confessional significance by the Roman Catholic priesthood. Their spokesmen, Frs. Butler and O’Ryan, submitted that it was not so much a question of what the children learnt in schools run by Moravians, but of whether Sunday should be used for such instruction. Roman Catholic children, they urged, were generally confirmed earlier and took their first communion younger than others. This assumed an opportunity to be acquainted with the rites of the church and the meaning of its ceremonies. O’Ryan and Butler, therefore, while supporting a secularly oriented education up to age eight, wanted the clergy of the different denominations to be responsible for the slave children’s education after that age.¹⁰⁹

Government counsellor Kuntzen, who with Pastor Bagger and four planters had been given responsibility for drawing up a regulatory ordinance for the schools in 1843, reported to the Danish Chancellery that under the proclamation of 1773 tolerating Catholicism, all Catholic children, slaves included, were entitled to be brought up in that faith. It was a matter of particular concern to Kuntzen’s committee to prevent violation of that right. At the same time, however, he was emphatic that no publicly created and supported system could be confined to the age group four to eight. That represented no advance on what existed prior to 1839, the inadequacy of which had been commonly acknowledged and was now the subject of attempts at correction. Kuntzen was also convinced that acquiescence in Butler and O’Ryan’s request would evoke a similar petition from the Church of England. If granted it would make nonsense of the notion of a public system, and in any event was undesirable as the children of different denominations lived with one another on the different plantations. Kuntzen questioned too whether the Catholics had either the physical facilities or finances enough to operate their own school system.¹¹⁰ The task would have been formidable, for the Catholics accounted for some 29% of all slave children between age five and twelve in all three islands and more, certainly, than 50% of that age cohort in St. Croix.¹¹¹

The question of school on Saturday or Sunday for older children raised some issues which admitted of no easy solutions. It seemed unreasonable to ask children who did plantation work from Monday to Friday, to forego the opportunities for rest and recreation on the free day, if they were obliged to go to school. The free day moreover was likely to be a day on which parents required their children to run errands and do household chores. Any plan, to be

successful, required the cooperation of the children’s parents. On the other hand, a Sunday schedule was open to the objection that Sunday would get treated like any other day and lose its sanctity. Further, the Moravians raised a practical difficulty. Although they were only the third largest denomination in aggregate membership, they had a numerous congregation of their own to administer. (The census of 1835 indicates that that congregation was almost exclusively slave based, and appreciably larger than the Catholic following among the slaves.¹¹²) In no circumstances then, were they prepared to hold school on any day except Sunday; if Saturday was decided on as the day for older children’s schooling, they pointed out that they would end up without a free day themselves; having spent Monday to Friday instructing young children.¹¹³

Having weighed all the issues, Kuntzen came down in favour of a compromise solution which, while not obviating all the difficulties envisaged by the Catholics and others, was the least likely to offend. The compromise consisted of scheduling school for older children on Sundays from 2-5 p.m., a time which did not conflict with any of the times of church services by the different denominations. There was one practical difficulty with this compromise: the distance between the schools and places of worship would in many cases be so great, that attendance at both church and school on the same day was out of the question. Since his committee was willing to compromise, Kuntzen could only hope that the Catholics would show a similar inclination and give their children religious instruction at times which did not coincide with school hours.¹¹⁴

von Scholten was prepared to support this compromise, as it still left the free day inviolate; but the other government counsellor and senior member of the administration, Frederick Oxholm, had serious reservations even though he was not a member of the committee. If Oxholm was not part of the Irish “party”, he was certainly no enthusiastic supporter of von Scholten’s. Since 1841 his feelings towards the governor general had been characterised by asperity, even rage, and ridicule for everything having to do with amelioration and emancipation.¹¹⁵ Indeed in 1844-45 he was a leading member of the anti-von Scholten faction in the islands’ official circles, as was Sarauw.¹¹⁶ Oxholm could therefore have been expected to play devil’s advocate and the Catholic reservations gave him his opportunity. No Catholic himself, Oxholm claimed it was readily understandable that the Catholic clergy and congregations were anxious for the future of their religion in the islands, what with the Moravians’ continuing influence over Catholic children.

Heartened by the support of their friend at court, the dissenting planters finally produced their threatened protest in August 1845. Although all the names are not identifiably Irish, there was a preponderance of O'Ferralls, O'Reillys, McEvoy's and Kellys among the signatories. In any case, the petitioners, representing 18 estates or just over 10% of the total in St. Croix, claimed to speak for some 2000 Catholic slaves or 10% of the slave population. According to the petitioners, Catholics were "strongly against" their slave children being taught on Sunday outside their own churches, since this would militate against the work of the clergy. Further, they anticipated difficulties with overseers and other white estate help who were Catholics, and too from their slaves: ". . . if our negroes are forced to obedience, this would arouse feelings of ill-will towards us, a desire for resistance which could be dangerous for our welfare and property."¹¹⁸ The real grouse of the petitioners, however, was their exclusion from the committee to draw up a regulatory ordinance. They apparently expected representation as the largest single denomination, with a slave congregation almost as large as the Moravians, but not the largest as they claimed, except in St. Croix and St. Thomas taken separately.¹¹⁹ It is not inconceivable that von Scholten had insisted on their exclusion, regarding them as potential obstructionists. In the petitioners' estimation the plans for educating older slave children could bear no fruit so long as Catholics in the colonies felt unjustly treated and discriminated against. The Danish Chancellery was therefore requested to withhold their approval from any school ordinance which would affect colonists' religious beliefs, without first ordering the establishment of a fresh committee.¹²⁰

For the remainder of 1845 and the entirety of 1846, the question of secularly oriented education for older children on Saturday or Sunday was hotly agitated. A member of the Danish Chancellery, A.S. Ørsted, one of Denmark's leading jurists and brother of the famous physicist H.C. Ørsted, submitted a written opinion in which he criticised von Scholten for altering his original position of August 1843. Ørsted placed no weight on the circumstance that slave children's parents needed their services to such an extent on Saturday that this ruled out the possibility of school on that day. Accordingly he saw no justification for von Scholten's insistence on Sunday, and no excuse for his intemperate language in advocating that day. The real difficulty which Ørsted perceived was that school for older children on any other day but Sunday created difficulties for the reason that there was an insufficiency of teachers. With an adequate number of the latter, a double shift on Saturday would have met the confessional objections and yet remained within the guidelines of the Rescript, although

doing nothing to meet von Scholten's wish to keep the free day intact. For the time being and as a temporary expedient, Ørsted favoured Sundays.¹²¹

By November 1845, the Chancellery had in their possession a draft of the school ordinance worked out for St. Croix by Kuntzen's committee. The draft obviously influenced by Kuntzen and von Scholten, and responsive to the arguments of the Moravians, favoured Sunday. The Chancellery was more than a little uneasy, however, that the draft omitted a provision which the earlier discussions prior to the 1843 Rescript, had seemed to make conclusively necessary: namely, that the free day was to be used particularly for older children's schooling. The Chancellery was not impressed by any of the reasons advanced for deviating from the Rescript on this point, and saw justice in local opposition to the change. Further, acting on direct instructions from the king, the Chancellery had looked at the question Kuntzen had raised of the distance between village schools and churches. It was of the opinion that even with school scheduled at 2-5 p.m., children could not go to both on the same day, and the Catholics' attendance would in all probability be poor, since in the event of a conflict, they were virtually certain to give religious instruction priority over lay.¹²²

Mynster, Bishop of Sjælland and Denmark's *de facto* metropolitan, whose opinion the Chancellery canvassed, held views broadly similar to theirs on the suitability of Saturday as opposed to Sunday. He did not think that the objection of the Moravians ought to be decisive, for their difficulty would in part be obviated by confining instruction on Sunday to twelve and thirteen year olds. The objecting denominations would then have their opportunity to offer their children religious instruction on Sunday. Mynster leaned sympathetically towards the Catholics on this point, since he had an interest in protecting the interests of his own church. Not to allow Catholics a proper opportunity to offer instruction to adherents of their own faith, was in the Bishop's view a violation of the freedom of religion granted in the Danish Virgin Islands in 1754. Once that point had been conceded, Mynster could then proceed to argue, as indeed he did, that Lutheran children would be at a disadvantage if, after their twelfth year, they were taught together with Catholic or Anglican children. Even though the instruction was largely lay, the very title of Bagger's manual suggested that a significant portion of what children were being taught included some basic tenets of religion. That was unexceptionable and acceptable so long as children had not reached the age at which their particular denominations prepared them for confirmation. Once the twelfth year had been reached, teaching children of

different denominations simultaneously was a prescription for leaving out everything which was doctrinally contentious. This would limit instruction to what the denominations held in common. Mynster found this inadequate and unsatisfactory.¹²³

Having heard these and a variety of other views, the Chancellery was able to come to a considered decision which it reported to the West India Office. It was only politic and just, they concluded, to abide by von Scholten's original position of August 1843, which had called for Saturday schooling for nine to eleven year olds. The only modifications which they now suggested were that week-day schooling should cover the age range five to nine, instead of age four to eight, and that lay instruction for those over eleven should take place on Sunday from 2-5 p.m. instead of from 3-6 p.m. What this proposal had to recommend it was that secular instruction for children above age nine would not be subject to overcrowding, and children in the age group eleven to thirteen would be available to their parents for Saturday chores. The solution the Chancellery proposed was one way of consulting the interests of all parties, and basically observed what was already in practice. This last point was of especial importance to planters in general and the Irish planters in particular. The Chancellery also reiterated its fear that lay school on Sunday afternoon would be neglected by the Catholics. But this merely reinforced the contention that school exclusively on Sunday was undesirable. The particular interests of slave parents would also be met, in that what was now proposed permitted them the services of the nine to thirteen year olds on the free day. The Chancellery anticipated that the withdrawal of those services could occasion serious difficulties when the school system was extended to St. Thomas and St. John,¹²⁴ for in the latter island the slaves' preponderance was proportionately greater than it was in St. Croix.¹²⁵

In all the proposals since 1843 there had been no uniformity of view regarding the age at which the school system should end. von Scholten had begun by suggesting fourteen: the Moravian school inspectors had suggested thirteen; Bishop Mynster similarly; Kuntzen had proposed twelve; von Scholten had come around to supporting him and so too had the committee that drew up the ordinance for St. Croix. The West India Office thought that however powerful the voices supporting ages thirteen and fourteen, there was a compelling argument for age twelve based on the earlier maturation of children in the tropics. The physical development of the West Indian child at age twelve, they argued, was the equivalent of the European child's at age fourteen. The seven

years of elementary education in Denmark, therefore, from age seven to age fourteen, the age of confirmation, could be matched in the West Indies by a comparable period from age five to twelve.¹²⁶ The figures for the St. Croix school age population in 1841 had shown that in the nine to twelve age cohort there were some 930 children, or an average of 116 pupils in each of the eight schools.¹²⁷ In the five years since then, given the significant yearly decline in the overall numbers of the slave population,¹²⁸ the West India Office was convinced that the average number per school had declined to about 100 at the highest. Illness or other legitimate grounds for absence could reduce the daily attendance still further,¹²⁹ the calculation being that this would reduce the problem of overcrowding and render the numbers manageable.

The Generaltold Kammer or West India Office's main concern was to eliminate obstacles, and school on Sunday posed too many irresolvable problems. School on Saturday was the only way it could see to avoid the difficulties which would otherwise arise. It dismissed as vain any hope that conflicts between attendance at church and school could be avoided in scheduling school for Sunday. The priests, who comprised one of the principal parties affected, were correctly estimated to be potentially more cooperative if they had Sunday at their entire disposition. Further, if the schools were to be on Saturday, the planters' interests, representing an additional constituency of importance, would be consulted. Thus, although school on Saturday morning would obviously affect slaves' opportunities for hiring out or attendance at market, the Kammer decided to fix a morning session from 8.30-11.30. Afternoon school would meet with resistance from planters who wanted grass gathered for their livestock.¹³⁰

This was a concession to the planters more significant than it might appear. The subject of grass gathering as a major irritant in planter-slave relations and a source of discontent on the estates, had a long history. It was for this reason that von Scholten's Labour Ordinance of May 1838 paid particular attention to the regulation of hours during which livestock fodder was to be collected.¹³¹ When too the school ordinance committee submitted its report and draft, there was a proposal, backed by von Scholten, that children over age twelve should be exempted from grass gathering if they voluntarily opted to go to school on Sunday afternoon. In supporting the exemption, von Scholten argued reasonably enough that without it the children involved would pilfer the grass on other people's property on the way to school, or that overseers would schedule collection of fodder at too late an hour. The Kammer was not persuaded and denied the exemption, for it concluded that no problem would arise with a

school session scheduled for Saturday morning from 8.30 to 11.30.¹³²

Having considered the committee's draft and taken advice from the Chancellery, the Generaltold Kammer prepared a definitive regulatory ordinance which the crown found acceptable. The Royal Resolution which gave it force expressed disappointment at the behaviour of the Roman Catholic priests and the planters whom they had supported. If some of von Scholten's remarks had been unhappily chosen, those remarks in the crown's view bore neither the meaning the planters attributed to them, nor justified their behaviour. The Resolution also authorised a proclamation to be sent to von Scholten. It was to emphasise that in establishing lay school on Saturday morning and limiting the age to twelve, it was expected that all the clergy of all the denominations would cooperate by using the period immediately after their Sunday services for the religious instruction of slave children in their congregations. Further, the proclamation was to call on all the colonists to recognize the necessity of cooperating with the clergy in facilitating the religious education of children over age twelve.¹³³

The 1846 Ordinance

The ordinance known as the *Reglement for Landskolerne paa de danske vestindiske Oer* was the detailed instrument for institutionalizing a publicly supported school system for slaves in Denmark's three West Indian islands. Its forty six clauses were divided into eight sections, the first of which reiterated the Generaltold Kammer's final position on the age limit, prescribed the days and times at which school would be held, the times of admission, and the periods of vacation.¹³⁴ It established a school board consisting of the Lutheran priest as secretary and chairman with a casting vote; the chief of police; a member nominated by the Burgher Council but approved by the governor general, and a fourth member appointed at the governor general's discretion.¹³⁵

The regulations recognised the critical importance of slave parents and estate management, more particularly overseers, to the success of the experiment. Priests were to impress upon older slaves and slave parents the advantages of schooling, and if they proved refractory, they were to be punished suitably. Overseers were charged with the responsibility of ensuring children's regular attendance; keeping an up to date list of school-age children; providing a trustworthy adult to accompany children to school; and explaining absence, illness and late-coming. Derelection in the execution of these duties on the part of the

overseers could lead to investigation by the police and heavy fines, especially if it was established that children were being made to work during school hours.¹³⁶

The Generaltold Kammer dwelt heavily upon this point of attendance in the Ordinance, for it had earlier observed that the record of attendance had been less than satisfactory. It attributed this to a lack of interest on the part of many planters, of whom the signatories to the memorial of August 1845 were particularly representative. None of them, the Kammer submitted, had the least interest in ensuring that slave children on their estates derived any advantage from the schools. Only total lack of interest on the planters' part, it concluded, could explain absences to such a degree that from many plantations not a single child attended school in 1844.¹³⁷

As could be expected, the missionaries from Herrnhut were retained in their teaching posts and were charged with keeping up-to-date lists of attendance and a school journal, for noting absences, inter alia. They were immediately responsible to the Moravian authorities locally, by whom they were hired and could be fired for neglect of duty and bad conduct. The school inspector was similarly Moravian, immediately responsible to the School Board and ultimately to the governor general. His primary function was the monitoring of the school system,¹³⁸ and in Hauser, the first inspector, the system appears to have been well served by a conscientious and committed person.¹³⁹ The Ordinance required the Inspector to pay unscheduled visits, inspect the Journal for the incidence of absence, keep an inventory of the physical facilities and make an annual report to the Board. Above all he was charged with the preparation of written instructions for teachers, to which they were scrupulously to adhere so as not to offend religious sensibilities. Such methods of instruction as the teachers used were also to be prepared by the Inspector.¹⁴⁰

The syllabus as laid down in the Ordinance was not overly ambitious: reading, the basics of arithmetic, memorizing and singing hymns, and studying Bagger's catechism. A public examination once per year in June was to test the accomplishments of school leavers or those about to enter Saturday school, and the results along with a character testimonial, recorded on a certificate. Outstanding pupils were eligible for a cash prize on the Inspector's recommendation.¹⁴¹

In scope, the school system which this Ordinance regularised, was not dissimilar to schools for the rural poor established in Denmark in 1814. The

latter had been called into being hard on the heels of the abolition of serfdom, their creation motivated by the same kind of humanitarian idealism, the same desire to create a useful citizenry from a formerly oppressed class. As we have argued earlier, von Scholten was not only deeply influenced by this metropolitan tradition but was also one of the major conduits through which it reached the colonies. His stated purpose was the achievement of the slaves' eventual emancipation in which their education, publicly supported, would play an important preparatory part. But whilst one recognises humanitarian purpose, there was also utilitarian intent: a concern born of what von Scholten had described as "simple wisdom"; an insurance policy purchased by more enlightened planters against the possibility of violent upheaval. A concern for social control was therefore an important component in the experiment with the slave school system. Good citizenry, or an "orderly *dénouement*" to slavery, involved an acceptance by the unfree community of the implicit premises of the superordinate free community. Indeed the particular importance of religious education in this regard was expressly articulated as early as 1796.¹⁴²

The paradox was that among the more conservative elements of the plantocracy, from whom one would have expected greatest support for heightened social control, there was the greatest resistance. The paradox is explainable by reference to the fact that they were more interested in the long term than in the short term considerations: in protecting their ascribed status against potential social levelling which education could eventually bring, than in forestalling the more immediate potential threat of violent upheaval. The ultimate paradox was that those who opted for social control were rudely awakened, and in only two short years after 1846.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, this writer would argue, the school system contributed significantly to the achievement of what it was supposed to help prevent: the slaves' seizure of their freedom by their own revolutionary initiative. To the same degree and for the same reason that some planters were suspicious of education, slaves responded positively to it. Above all, the availability of education heightened their perceptions of their own worth as a race and raised their expectations for freedom. Those expectations were legitimised in the royal proclamation of 28 July 1847 which conferred freedom on all slaves born after that date, and set a date for emancipation in twelve years.¹⁴³ von Scholten had been uncompromisingly opposed to a law of free birth, anticipating that "it would create discontent and have the most regrettable consequences while adult

slaves remained in servitude."¹⁴⁴ His calculations could not have been more correct.

The Free Birth Proclamation of 1847 gave an urgency, born of impatience, to the expectations for freedom raised by the school system. The adult slave population would not postpone their inheritance of a freedom to which they felt their children were no more legitimate heirs than themselves. The uprising of 3 July 1848 by which the slaves forced the issue of their emancipation has been associated in conventional historiography with the law of Free Birth as its important proximate cause.¹⁴⁵ While this is the case, the chain of causation has some other significant backward linkages. The introduction of the school system has serious claims to be considered in the re-appraisal of explanations for 3 July 1848.

NOTES

- 1 H.B. Dahlerup, *Mit Livs Begivenheder*, (Copenhagen, 1909), vol. 2, p. 297. See also *Dansk Vestindisk Regerings Avis* (cited hereafter as DVRA), 1 & 3 June 1841.
- 2 Dahlerup, *Mit Livs*, vol. 2, p. 299.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 300.
- 4 *Royal Danish American Gazette* (cited hereafter as RDAG), 6 Jan., 1773.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 27 Jan., 1773.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 2 March, 1776.
- 7 Preben Ramløv, *Brødrene og Slaverne*, (Copenhagen, Kristligt Dagblads Forlag, 1968), p. 203. See also Hans West, *Tiltraedelsen holden da Skolen i Christianstaed paa St. Croix blev aabnet den 8 de October 1789*, (St. Croix, 1789).
- 8 In an unpublished paper I have attempted an analysis of views on slavery in the Caribbean colonies of Denmark. N.A.T. Hall, *Public Opinion and Slavery in the Danish Virgin Islands*, (UWI, Mona, unpublished Seminar Paper, 1976) pp. 1-40.
- 9 H. Lawaetz, *Brødreminighedens Mission i Dansk Vestindien*, (Copenhagen, 1902), p. 165.
- 10 E.V. Lose, *Kort Udsigt over den danske-lutherske Missions Historie paa St. Croix, St. Thomas og St. Jan*, (Copenhagen, Nordisk Missions-tidsskrift, 1890), p. 16.
- 11 Lawaetz, *Brødreminighedens Mission*, p. 22.
- 12 Thorkild Hansen, *Slavernes Øer*, (Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 1970), p.143.

- 13 A comprehensive list of titles published in creole is to be found in Jens Vibaek, *Vore Gamle Tropekolonier*, (Copenhagen, Fremad, 1966), vol. 2, pp. 349-351.
- 14 Lose, *Kort Udsigt*, pp. 20-21; 36.
- 15 Lawaetz, *Brødreminighedens Mission*, p. 166.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid.*, pp. 23 *et. seq.*
- 19 Lose, *Kort Udsigt*, p. 30.
- 20 Lawaetz, *Brødreminighedens Mission*, p. 166.
- 21 S.C. Bech, *Danmarks Historie. Oplysning og Tolerance 1721-1784*, (Copenhagen, Politikens Forlag, 1970), vol. 9, pp. 58, 96-102, 235-44.
- 22 Jens Vibaek, *Vore Gamle Tropekolonier*, p. 214.
- 23 Rigsarkiv, Copenhagen (cited hereafter as R/A), Vestindisk Guineisk Rent samt Generaltold Kammer (cited hereafter as VGRG), *Udkast og Betaenkning angaaende negerloven, 1783-89*, no. 2, Reglement for Slaverne, 3 Feb., 1755, para. 1.
- 24 Lose, *Kort Udsigt*, pp. 13-16.
- 25 *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 18-19, 21, 23.
- 26 R/A *Vestindiske Journaler*, 1796, no. 184.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 1793, no. 139. Jens Larsen has argued, mistakenly in this writer's view,

that the royal ordinance of 21 December 1787 authorising the selection of four acceptable freedmen as school managers was "the first attempt. . . at introducing public schools for slaves"; Jens Larsen, *Virgin Islands Story*, (Philadelphia, Pa., Fortress Press, 1950), pp. 97-98. While the principle of slave education had been long conceded, it had not yet been acknowledged, even as late as the end of the 1780's, that slave education should be a charge on public funds.

²⁸ R/A *Vestindiske Journaler*, 1798, nos. 195, 431.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 431.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 743.

³¹ R/A, VGRG, *Dokumenter vedkommende kommissionen vedrørende Negerhandelen samt efterretninger om negerhandelen og slaveriet i Vestindien*, 14 A, P.L. Oxholm's "General Tabell, St. Croix, 31 Dec., 1792". Oxholm's figures, however, are of questionable reliability for the reason that after the Slave Trade Abolition Ordinance of 1792, he consistently maintained that the slave labour force was inadequate for the colonies' needs.

³² R/A, *Vestindisk Journaler*, 1798, no. 431.

³³ *Ibid.*, no. 743.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1799, no. 965.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 147, 1328.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 965.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 1180.

³⁸ A comment from 1755 is fairly representative of several observations made in this regard: ". . . naesten alle Maend og Kvinder ere ligesaa foed med Piiben i Munden, og ingen veed hvor farligt det ere, uden dem og de Familier som ved

Ildebrand har tagen stoer Skade". ("Men and women slaves are practically born with pipes in their mouths, and only those who have suffered greatly as a result of fire, are alive to its grave dangers"). See Konglige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, *Thottske Samlingen* 816 K B, 20 March, 1755, f.9. I am grateful to Bibliotekar Stuhlmann of the Konglige Bibliotek who drew this collection to my attention.

³⁹ R/A, *Vestindiske Journaler*, 1803, no. 731. "In the absence of a convenient location for a teaching establishment, the whole question was dropped."

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1805, no. 1865.

⁴¹ R/A, VGRG, *Vestindisk Kopibog*, 1838, no. 91. Letter to the Danish Chancery, 24 Feb., 1838, f. 53.

⁴² Lose, *Kort Udsigt*, pp. 16, 17. See also *Thottske Samlingen*, 816 L B, 20 March, 1755, f.7.

⁴³ Lawaetz, *Brødrmenighedens Mission*, p. 166.

⁴⁴ These latter numbers might be quantifiable by the use of Moravian records in the Virgin Islands to which I did not have access at the time of writing.

⁴⁵ RDAG, *passim*.

⁴⁶ In what follows for most of the next two paragraphs, I have relied on Jens Vibaek, *Danmarks Historie, Reform og Fallit 1784-1830*, (Copenhagen, Politikens Forlag, 1971), vol. 10, pp. 425-34.

⁴⁷ This aspect of the abolition movement has been curiously neglected in recent writing on the Danish Slave Trade and its abolition, and even Sven Green-Pedersen, who has written most on this subject within recent times, does not in my view, emphasise sufficiently this dimension of the abolition movement. See for example his "The Danish Abolition of the Negro Slave Trade", Paper for Presentation at the Slave Trade Symposium of the Mathematical Social Science Board at Colby College, Waterville, Maine, USA, August 1975.

- 48 Ramløv, *Brødrene*, p. 191.
- 49 Lawaetz, *Brødremeninghedens Mission*, pp. 162-3.
- 50 R/A, *Originale Forestillinger fra Kommissionen angaaende Negrenes Stilling i Vestindien med Resolutioner 1834-1843*, 1, Afskrift af de af Generalgouverneuren forfattede Udkast til en Emancipations Plan for Slaverne paa de danske vestindiske Øer, 13 Oct. 1834. Cf. R/A *Møstingske Papirer (b)*, Forestillinger om Forandringer i Slavernes Kaar med bilag, 18 November 1834.
- 51 R/A, *Møstingske Papirer (b)*, Forestillinger om Forandringer i Slavernes Kaar med bilag, 18 November 1834.
- 52 R/A, *Originale Forestillinger fra Kommissionen. . . 1834-1843*, 1, Afskrift af. . . 13 Oct., 1834, enclosing Bønhoff to von Scholten, 2 May, 1834. Cf. *Originale Forestillinger. . . 1834-1843*, 4, Kommissionens Betaenkning, 13 Nov., 1834 f. 103.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 2, Kongelig Rescript, 15 Oct., 1834.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 4, Kommissionens Betaenkning, 13 Nov., 1834, ff. 111, 138.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 5, von Scholtens Indberetning, 2 Jan., 1839, Encl. 15, 23 May, 1838, ff. 206-210.
- 56 *Ibid.*, Encl. 14, Placat, 23 May, 1838, ff. 202-203.
- 57 *Ibid.*, f. 29.
- 58 *Berlingske Tidende*, 15 Sept., 1846. Article by H.B. Bahlerup.
- 59 R/A, *Originale Forestillinger fra Kommissionen. . . 1834-1843*, 5, von Scholtens Indberetning, 2 Jan., 1839, Encl. 12, 1 May, 1838, f. 186.
- 60 *Ibid.*, Encl. 13, 7 May, 1838, f. 199.

- 61 *Berlingske Tidende*, 15 Sept., 1841. Article by H.B. Dahlerup. Cf. G.M. Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies; A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba*, (Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 51.
- 62 *Berlingske Tidende*, 15 Sept., 1841. Article by H.B. Dahlerup.
- 63 Procurator Fugl, "Om Negerslaveriet i Vestindien, og sammes Ophør; med specielt Hensyn til de danske Besiddelser", *Juridisk Tidsskrift* 24B, 1 H, (1834), p. 26-27.
- 64 R/A, *Akter vedkommende Slaveemancipation 1834-1847*, II, von Scholten to Commissioners, Encl. Draft Proclamation n/d.
- 65 James Smith, *The Winter of 1840 in St. Croix*, (New York, 1840), p. 16.
- 66 *Berlingske Tidende*, 15 Sept., 1841. Article by H.B. Dahlerup.
- 67 R/A, *Originale Forestillinger fra Kommissionen. . . 1834-1843*, 5, von Scholtens Indberetning, 2 Jan., 1839, Encl. 12 to Burgher Council, 1 May, 1839, f. 193.
- 68 R/A, VGRG, *Vestindisk Kopibog* 1838, no. 91. Letter to the Danish Chancellery, 24 Feb., 1838, f. 57.
- 69 H.B. Dahlerup, "Skizzer fra et kort Besøg paa vore vestindiske Øer i Sommeren 1841", *Nyt Archiv for Sjøvaesnet* 1, (1842), 28.
- 70 R/A, *Originale Forestillinger fra Kommissionen. . . 1834-1843*, 10, Konglig Rescript, 8 June 1839.
- 71 See Table 1.
- 72 R/A, *Originale Forestillinger fra Kommissionen. . . 1834-1843*, 5, von Scholtens Indberetning, 2 Jan., 1839, Encl. 12 to Burgher Council, 1 May, 1838, ff. 190-191.

- 73 Lawaetz, *Brødremeninghedens Mission*, p. 167.
- 74 Smith, *The Winter of 1840*, p. 30.
- 75 R/A, *Originale Forestillinger fra Kommissionen. . . 1834-1843*, 5, von Scholten's Indeberetning, 2 Jan., 1839, Encl. 17, ff. 217-276.
- 76 Chr. Holten "Dagbog" in *Memoirer og Breve*, eds. J. Clausen and P.F. Rist, (Copenhagen, 1909), vol. 9, p. 171. See also Smith, *The Winter of 1840*, p. 30.
- 77 Roar Skovmand, *Danmarks Historie. Folkestyrets Fødsel 1830-1870*, (Copenhagen, Politikens Forlag, 1971), vol. 11, *passim*.
- 78 R/A, *Privat Arkiv 6795*, Princess Caroline Amalie to von Scholten, 27 Feb., 1839.
- 79 *Faedrelandet*, 22 & 29 December, 1840.
- 80 *Ibid.*, 15 December, 1840; 14 August, 1841.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 19 March, 1841.
- 82 For the views of a leading liberal of the time, Orla Lehmann, see Hans Jensen, *Staenderforsamlingers Historie 1838-1848*, (Copenhagen, 1931-34), vol. 2, p. 609. See also *Faedrelandet*, 2 April, 1840; 17 Oct., 1840.
- 83 *Faedrelandet*, 19 March, 1841.
- 84 *Ibid.*
- 85 Victor Schoelcher, *Colonies Etrangères et Haiti*, (Paris, 1843), vol. 2, pp. 22-25.
- 86 See the present writer's "Anna Heegard – Enigma", *Caribbean Quarterly*, 22, nos. 2 & 3 (1975).

- 87 *Faedrelandet*, 14 August, 1841.
- 88 *Dansk Vestindisk Regerings Avis*, 29 Jan., 1829.
- 89 *Faedrelandet*, 19 March, 1841.
- 90 C. Van Dockum, *Liuserindringer*, (Copenhagen, 1893), p. 66.
- 91 *Ibid.*
- 92 See Table 2.
- 93 R/A, *Akter Vedkommende Slaveemancipation 1834-1847, III*, Folkemaengden paa de danske-vestindiske Øer efter Folketaelling af 1 ste Oktober 1841.
- 94 *Faedrelandet*, 13 October, 1840, Neger-slaveriet i Vestindien, I.
- 95 R/A, *Originale Forestillinger fra Kommissionen. . . 1834-1843*, von Scholten to Christian VIII, 15 Jan., 1841, Encl. 1, 29 July, 1840. See also *Faedrelandet*, 13 October, 1840.
- 96 R/A, *Akter Vedkommende Slaveemancipation 1834-1847, III*, Fortegnelse over Plantagerne paa St. Croix, deres Eiere og Negerantal i Aaret 1840.
- 97 For 9 of the 83 no figures were available at the time of writing. For the remaining 76, their total slave population was 8207 of an island total of 16,804. The figures for the remaining 9, assuming an average of 98, would have helped to give a majority, although not a "considerable" majority.
- 98 R/A, *Originale Forestillinger fra Kommissionen. . . 1834-1843*, von Scholten to Christian VIII, 15 Jan., 1841, Encl. 4, 9 Sept., 1840.
- 99 *Ibid.*, Encl. 3, 29 Oct., 1840.
- 100 *Ibid.*, Encl. 6 n/d, ff. 9, 5-6.

- ¹⁰¹Sarauw was part of a St. Thomas faction highly critical of von Scholten. The faction also included another crown functionary, Heilbuth, who published a series of articles in the newspaper, *København Posten* critical of von Scholten's administration. Sarauw was his stout defender. Heilbuth was disciplined but understandably unassuaged.
- ¹⁰²R/A, *Originale Forestillinger fra Kommissionen. . . 1834-1843*, Sarauw's Meddelelse til Kongen, 31 Dec., 1840.
- ¹⁰³*Ibid.*, von Scholten to Christian VIII, 15 Jan., 1841, Encl. 6, n/d; Encl. 10, Sept. 1840.
- ¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, Encl. 11, n/d (signed B.L.); Sarauw's Meddelelse, 31 Dec., 1840.
- ¹⁰⁵R/A, *Indiske Forestillinger og Resolutioner 1845-1846*, 53c, 30 Dec., 1846, (cited hereafter as *IFR 53 c*).
"There are grounds for believing that several planters treat with suspicion any arrangements for the education of slave children, for they fully appreciate that the establishment of a properly organised educational system would entail the destruction of the most important obstacle to the freer development of social relationships in the colony."
- ¹⁰⁶R/A, *Privatarkiv 6795*, Christian VIII to von Scholten, no. 10, 11 May, 1843.
- ¹⁰⁷*Collegial Tidende for Danmark*, 23 Mar., 1844, pp. 259-60.
- ¹⁰⁸R/A, *IFR 53 c*.
- ¹⁰⁹R/A, *Dansk Cancelli H. 18 I Dept. 1845, Brev. 4988*, Dansk Vestindisk Regering to Cancelli, 25 June, 1845.
- ¹¹⁰*Ibid.*
- ¹¹¹See Table 2.
- ¹¹²See Table 1.

- ¹¹³R/A, *Dansk Cancelli H. 18 I Dept. 1845, Brev. 4988*, Dansk Vestindisk Regering to Cancelli, 25 June, 1845.
- ¹¹⁴*Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁵Dahlerup, *Mit Livs*, vol. 2, pp. 271,279-280.
- ¹¹⁶H. Lawaetz, *Peter von Scholten*, (Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 1940), pp. 119-120.
- ¹¹⁷R/A, *Dansk Cancelli H. 18 I Dept. 1845. Brev. 4988*, Dansk Vestindisk Regering to Cancelli 25 June, 1845.
- ¹¹⁸*Ibid.* Planter Petition to Cancelli, 16 August, 1845.
- ¹¹⁹See Table 1.
- ¹²⁰R/A, *Dansk Cancelli H. 18 I Dept. 1845, Bre. 4988*, Planter Petition to Cancelli, 16 August, 1845.
- ¹²¹*Ibid.*, Afskrift af Geheimstatsminister Ørsted, 30 October, 1845.
- ¹²²*Ibid.* Dansk Cancelli to Generaltold Kammer, 11 Nov. 1845.
- ¹²³*Ibid.*
- ¹²⁴*Ibid.*
- ¹²⁵R/A, *Akter Vedkommende Slaveemancipation. . . III*, Folkemaengden paa de danske-vestindiske Øer efter Matriclerne for Aaret 1844.
- ¹²⁶R/A, *IFR 53 c*.
- ¹²⁷
See Table 2.

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G.W. Alexander, *Om den moralske Forpligtelse til og det hensigt-mæssige af strax og fuldstændigt at ophæve Slaveriet i de danske-vestindiske Øer*, (Copenhagen, 1843), pp. 5-7. See also P.P. Sveistrup, "Bidrag til de Tidligere Danske-Vestindiske Øers Økon-omiske Historie med særligt Henblik paa Sukkerproduction og Sukker handel", *National Økonomiske Tidsskrift for Samfundsspørgsmaal Økonomi og Handel*, 80, (1942), pp. 78-79.

129 R/A, *IFR* 53 c.

130 *Ibid.*

131 Peter von Scholten, *Orders for the Regulation of Labour Conditions 7 May, 1838*, (St. Croix, 1838).

132 R/A, *IFR* 53 c.

133 *Ibid.*

134 R/A, *Indiske Forestillinger og Resolutioner 1845-1846*, 53 a, paras. 1-5. The Ordinance is undated.

135 *Ibid.*, paras. 37-42.

136 *Ibid.*, paras. 6-12.

137 R/A, *IFR* 52 c.

138 R/A, *Indiske Forestillinger og Resolutioner 1845-1846*, 53 a, paras. 33-36.

139 Lawaetz, *Peter von Scholten*, p. 153.

140 R/A, *Indiske Forestillinger og Resolutioner 1845-1846*, 53 a, paras. 25-32.

141 *Ibid.*, paras. 13-19; 24.

142 R/A, *Vestindiske Journaler*, 1796, no. 184.

143 *St. Croix Avis*, 20 Sept., 1847.

144 Van Dockum, *Livserindringer*, p. 67.

145 See for example, Lawaetz, *Peter von Scholten*, p. 165.