

The Gleaner

Jamaica WI
Established 1834

Garth Rattray | The Price For Independence

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Contrary to how things may appear, nothing is free; everything comes with a price attached. Even the oxygen that we breathe comes at a cost. Plants of all kinds on land use photosynthesis to produce oxygen and phytoplankton in the oceans do the same. Without the constant work of these plants, there would be no life as we know it on this planet. Something or someone has to sacrifice something for us to survive.

This general principle of sacrifice also holds true for communities and countries. I've observed that the countries with the most unified citizens went through bloody wars/major upheavals or serious threats of bloody wars/major upheavals in achieving self-determination. It seems to be the high price paid for their national independence. It's as if becoming unified to tackle a common enemy or the need for some sort of blood sacrifice created a bond between the citizens. It's not necessarily a permanent bond, but it's a bond nonetheless.

Jamaica's independence did not require a revolution of any kind. There were no battles and no social upheavals. There was no coup and no assassination. It was a peaceful, amiable transition that saw the transfer of power from the British to our government. Additionally, we have never relinquished our bond with Britain. Our system of governance is based on their model and we still look to them for guidance in certain affairs.

That is all well and good, but many within our society transferred dependence on the Crown to dependence on the politicians, and then dependence on area leaders /'dons'. The resultant dichotomous governance was never addressed because it was useful to the politicians. It facilitated their control over their constituents.

