

A painting of a tropical scene. In the foreground, there is a lush green lawn. Two tall palm trees stand prominently, one on the left and one on the right. In the background, a large, multi-story building with a tiled roof and several windows is visible. The sky is a clear, light blue with some soft clouds. The overall style is that of a classic oil painting.

Water you Wading  
For?: The West Indies  
Federation, 1958

# WINDIES

# MUNUC 37

Model United Nations of the University of Chicago

## CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

Welcome, everyone, to the extravagant Caribbean soon-to-be paradise of the West Indies Federation. The year is 1958, and we need your help to draft a constitution for our new nation. Yet, however flawless your newly drafted constitution may be, we will still face many challenges as a fledgling nation in the world. Will you be able to weather the storm of these arduous challenges? Or will we collapse and fall into nothingness in the realms of history?

My name is Steven Sotomayor, and I'll be your chair for Water You Wading For?: The West Indies Confederation, 1958. At UChicago, I'm a second-year Political Science and Global Studies double major. Last year in MUNUC 36, I was an assistant chair in the backroom of "Las Cortes Constituyentes: Spain, 1977," and it was a blast. Outside of MUNUC, last year I was also a front room chair for the Unification of Italy in ChoMUN 27, our college conference. On a side note, a fun hobby of mine is my obsession with F1 recently. To sum things up, my job is to ensure this committee goes swimmingly and encompasses a space where we can have fun but also still be serious enough to work diligently on saving our nation. I aim to provide you all with a thrilling experience in the few short days I'll be your chair within Water You Wading For?: The West Indies Confederation, 1958.

With that being said, my objective is to encourage everyone to actively participate within the committee as the "more the merrier" does apply to MUNUC. As we are a hybrid committee, we will be dealing with GA and Crisis elements in this committee which means we get to enjoy the mechanics of both types of committees in one. However, this can cause a bit of confusion especially as we transition between the two mechanics. This is a learning experience where I encourage you to learn the mechanics of a hybrid. I have full faith in all you wonderful delegates, and I'm sure you'll succeed in dealing with the tribulations of the committee.

As a final note, I expect everyone to engage in constructive dialogue and remain mature throughout debates. Please treat each other in the manner you would like to be treated. Thus, Wilson, Diego, and I are excited to meet you all! I'm sure MUNUC 37 will be a fantastic experience for you all. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any of us.

Sincerely,

Steven Sotomayor

Chair, Water You Wading For?: The West Indies Confederation, 1958

[sotomayorsteven@uchicago.edu](mailto:sotomayorsteven@uchicago.edu)

## CRISIS DIRECTOR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

My name is Wilson Mach, and I will be one of the Crisis Directors for Water You Wading For?: The West Indies Confederation, 1958! I am a second-year majoring in Computer Science and Computation and Applied Mathematics. I grew up in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, but have now lived in NYC for the past 12 years. Prior to serving as a Crisis Director, I was an Assistant Chair for the Shogun side of the “JCC Bakumatsu Japan, 1860: The Bakuhan Government” committee for MUNUC 36. Outside of MUN, I enjoy wandering Chicago to satisfy my craving for good food and debating with friends about the best power system in shonen anime.

I am very excited to see how everyone works together to protect the West Indies Federation from both internal and external threats. Whether this will be your first time wandering the hotel’s halls because someone said, “You should do this thing called MUN” or your hundredth time making speeches and writing directives, I hope this weekend will allow you all to grow your public speaking skills, unleash your creativity, and meet new friends!

MUN should be a fun activity. Steven, Diego, and I care deeply that everyone is welcomed and treated with respect. Ultimately, leadership is about bringing everyone together towards a common goal. I look forward to seeing how each of you accomplish this throughout the duration of the committee. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out!

Best,

Wilson Mach

Crisis Director, Water You Wading For?: The West Indies Confederation, 1958

[wmach@uchicago.edu](mailto:wmach@uchicago.edu)

Dear Delegates,

My name is Diego Estrada, and I will be your Crisis Director for these turbulent times. I am a current second-year majoring in Political Science and Economics. Although originally born in Arizona, my upbringing in the great state of Texas has firmly rooted me in the ways of the cowboy! The previous year I, along with Wilson, participated as an AC in the JCC Bakumatsu Japan, 1860: The Bakuhan Government for MUNUC 36. Outside of MUN, I am involved in the Society for International Relations and am an active mobile gamer.

Throughout our committee, we hope to foster a positive and supporting environment that allows you to grow in your public speaking, directive writing, and collaboration skills. Our aim is to cultivate an inclusive space where every voice is heard and valued, enabling you to develop and hone your skills. Through that, we hope to see fun and creative crisis arcs that will lead the West Indies to a new eventful future.

Having said that, we truly want everyone to be able to participate and share their creative ideas in our committee. We hope to see some great collaboration between delegates and the emergence of innovative solutions for the crises ahead. Our goal is to create an atmosphere where each delegate's unique ideas are not only welcomed but celebrated. If you have any questions regarding the flow of committee or delegate expectations do not hesitate to contact us!

All the best,

Diego Estrada Adame

Crisis Director, West Indies Federation, 1958

[destra@uchicago.edu](mailto:destra@uchicago.edu)

## SENSITIVITY STATEMENT

Dear Delegates,

As mentioned in our Chair and Crisis Director Letters, one of our utmost priorities is to ensure that all delegates are welcomed and treated with respect. In order to create and ensure an inclusive environment, we want you to be aware of some expectations.

As you may know, the formation of the West Indies Federation is deeply intertwined with the region's colonial history and independence movements. In addition, the Caribbean is home to diverse minority groups of various economic and political backgrounds. We will not allow the use of sexist, racist, homophobic, or other forms of discriminatory rhetoric. Language, policies, or violence designed to target a specific minority group will be prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, the formation of terrorist organizations, scapegoating for political gains, and use of targeted language to gain public support. Note that violence towards civilians in any form will also not be allowed.

We will not tolerate any of the above behaviors whether that be in your notes, directives, or discussions within the committee. There is plenty of room to explore ideological differences while respecting civilians' backgrounds. Even if your character is opposed to cooperation with a specific group, you should not use violent means against civilians to pursue any front room or backroom goals.

We want to ensure that this conference is a safe and fun learning experience for every delegate. If you have any questions or concerns regarding any of these policies, please feel free to reach out to any of us.

Best,

Steven, Diego, Wilson

# COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MECHANICS

Water You Wading For?: The West Indies Confederation, 1958 is a Hybrid committee, which means that it incorporates both General Assembly and Crisis elements. We are aware that you may not have experience with one or both of these formats. This section aims to lay out the general structure and flow of the committee.

## General Assembly (GA)

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The first and second session of the committee will be in the General Assembly format. These sessions will primarily center around front room debate, with less frequent note runs (there will only be one note allowed per GA session). The goal of the GA sessions will be to create a constitution for the newly-formed West Indies Federation. Delegates hail from a range of socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds and will represent a diverse array of constituencies. Though, it should be noted that no single constituency or interest has a majority, thus cooperation and negotiation is essential for the creation of this constitution.

You will have to address a wide variety of issues and questions as you draft your constitution. Some of these issues include how power is distributed within the government. You must also determine what powers are centralized and what powers are delegated to individual islands. This includes whether the federation should have unified monetary, education, trade, military institutions, and more. Moreover, it is important to outline the rights and freedoms of the citizenry. Lastly, note that the constitution can also establish different institutions or organizations designed to address issues that delegates believe require urgent attention.

These opening sessions of GA weigh heavily in determining the direction of future crisis sessions. The powers granted and decisions made in the constitution-writing process will be the basis of your committee's power during the crisis portion of the committee. Different decisions made during the drafting process will have lasting



effects on the future of the country and thus every decision should be with attention to future impacts. Given the wide range of views held by the West Indies delegates, this constitution will affect the manner in which different regions or groups react towards the government.

## Crisis

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The last three sessions (Sessions III, IV, V) of the committee will be in a Crisis committee format. In the front room, crisis committees are characterized by front room mechanics such as writing directives instead of resolutions as well as crisis breaks. In the backroom, the defining mechanic of crisis sessions is note writing.

During Sessions III, IV, and V, backroom staff will present a series of crises for delegates to solve through the form of crisis breaks. At first, these crises will involve issues that revolve around both the growing pains that come with the formation of a new state as well as any structural flaws in the new constitution. Delegates are expected to solve these crises through directives. Directives are similar to the resolutions used in GA committees, but directives are shorter in length and scope. They are written to serve as targeted solutions to different aspects of the crisis being presented to the front room. In order to pass directives, you will need to use many of the skills also applicable to GA committees, which includes, but is not limited to, giving speeches and debate during moderated caucuses and the formation of blocs in unmoderated caucuses. Backroom staff will have access to all directives as they are being presented and will design crisis breaks that respond to the directives that delegates pass.

Another source of crisis breaks are notes written by delegates. Delegates should come to the committee with your assigned character's goal for the committee. These goals should realistically be executable within three committee sessions but do not have to align with the goals of the committee. Notes are how you will enact plans to bring this goal into motion. We highly encourage you to put these goals in your first crisis note. Notes should be written in character and directed to a family member, friend, secretary, etc. They should contain instructions

to carry out specific tasks that will be beneficial to your goal. The clearer the connection to a delegate's end goal, the easier it will be for Assistant Chairs, the people that will read and answer your notes, to help you. In the beginning, you should aim to accumulate resources and lay the foundation for your assigned character's goals. A good rule of thumb is that you should have the finances, infrastructure, land, and manpower of your operation built up in your notes before you execute your actions. When asking for resources, you should consider the historical context of the committee as well as your character's background. For example, as the committee took place in 1958, we will not grant delegates time machines. Your goal in regards to notes should be to trigger a crisis break in the front room as many times as possible. A good way to do this is to ensure that your actions in your backroom notes are sufficiently disruptive to the committee such that it triggers a crisis.

## Flow of Committee

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As a reminder, the first two sessions (Sessions I and II) of *Water You Wading For?: The West Indies Confederation, 1958* will be in a General Assembly committee format, while the remaining sessions (Sessions III, IV, and V) will be in a Crisis committee format. While the front room for Session I and II will follow typical General Assembly committee rules, delegates will also be expected to write one, typical length (capped at one page) backroom note per session. However, there will not be any crisis breaks during the first two sessions. This format is intended to ease delegates into note writing during Sessions III, IV, V. We encourage you to use this as an opportunity to resource build for your arc in order to maximize your chances to break in later sessions. Sessions III, IV, and V will follow typical Crisis committee rules for both front room and backroom elements.

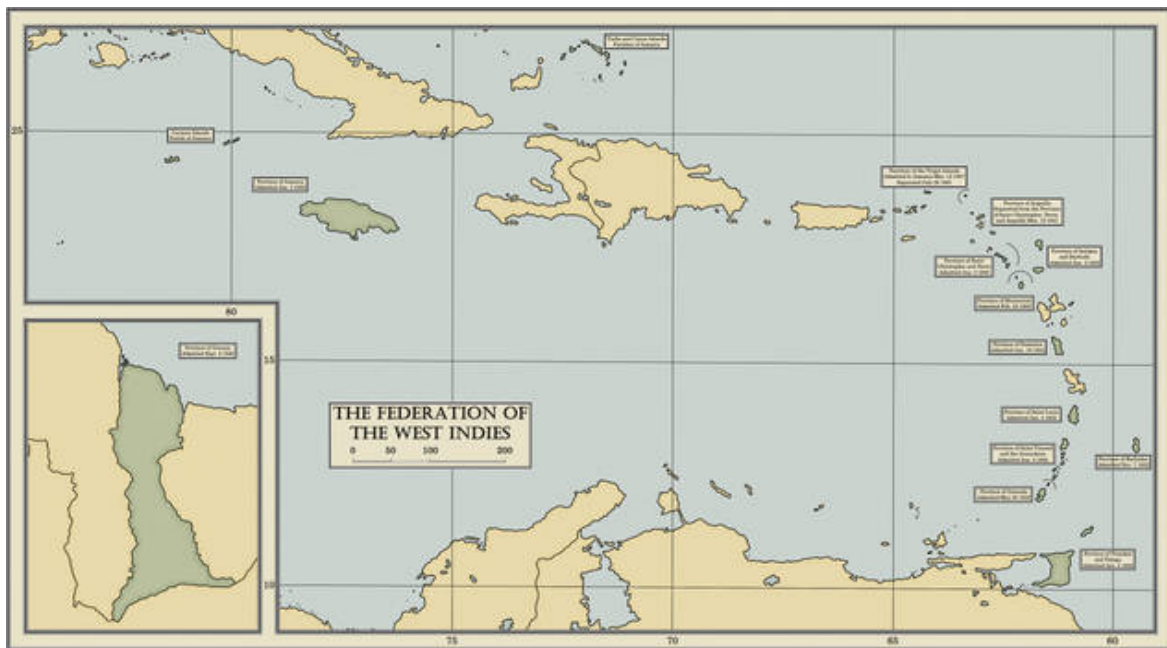
We look forward to seeing how you navigate these mechanisms and use all the resources at your disposal. We encourage you to think creatively about how you approach the problems you will face during the committee. Prior to the conference, we encourage you to visit the MUNUC website to familiarize yourself with typical

terminology as well as best practices to help you succeed in sessions. If there are any points of confusion, do not hesitate to reach out.

# HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

## A Brief Note

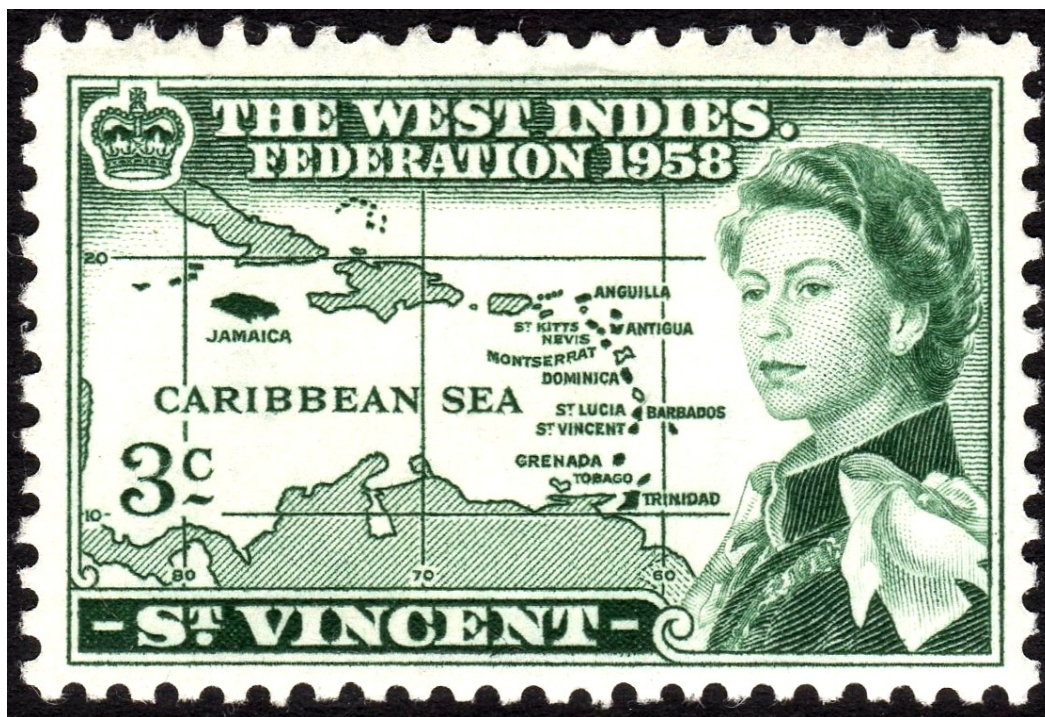
Before we begin to delve into the history of our new nation, it is necessary to identify which of the many islands in the Caribbean Sea are a part of the West Indies Federation. Our new federation encompasses the majority of the Caribbean islands besides the larger islands of Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. With that being said, the Caribbean islands that will be relevant to us are as follows: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. However, there are also two spectator states, those being British Honduras (Belize) and British Guiana (Guyana). The image below demonstrates the relevant landmasses (Belize and Guyana not included).<sup>1</sup> Despite their more modern names, this was the culmination of the West Indies Federation.



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<sup>1</sup> Dsfisher, *The Federation of the West Indies*, June 26, 2018, graphic, DeviantArt, <https://www.deviantart.com/dsfisher/art/The-Federation-of-the-West-Indies-751650074>.

The history of the Caribbean has been marked by colonization, exploitation, and the struggle for self-determination. The West Indies Federation, formed in 1958, was an attempt by the British Crown to unify the British Caribbean colonies into a single independent nation.<sup>2</sup> This idea of a federation was not without precedent. After all, both Canada and Australia (and some would even say the United States) were formed as federations between previously separate colonies of Britain. In the cases of Canada and Australia, the two federations had gradually gained increased autonomy, even if they continued to maintain the British monarch as their head of state. Using these two cases as a precedent, the West Indies Federation was thus expected to slowly gain autonomy and eventually achieve independence together—a process that was encouraged by both a large array of British diplomats and pan-Caribbean nationalists.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, these goals never came to fruition. As delegates, you will have the chance to change that outcome.



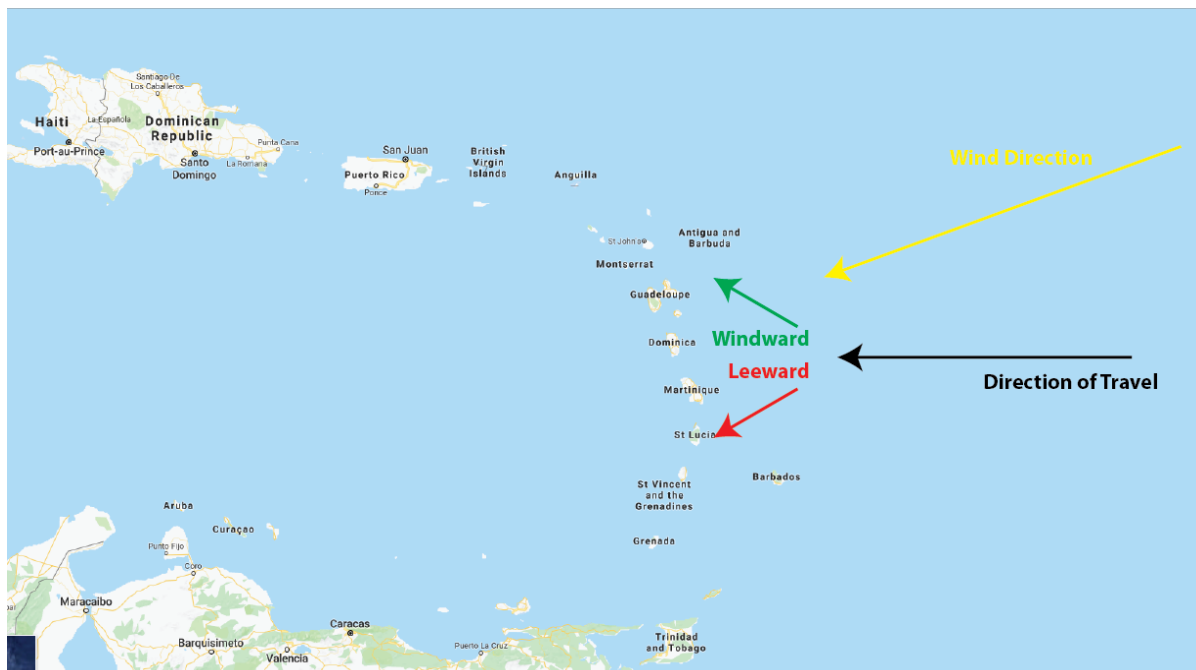
<sup>2</sup> Elanor Kramer-Taylor, "Forging the West Indian Nation: Federation and Caribbean Activism in Post-war Britain, 1945–60," *Modern British History*, Volume 35, Issue 2, June 2024, 147.

<sup>3</sup> Kramer-Taylor, *Modern British History*, 148.

*A stamp for use in the West Indies emblazoned with the image of Queen Elizabeth.<sup>4</sup>*

The West Indies Federation was officially inaugurated in 1956 with the British Caribbean Federation Act.<sup>5</sup> The British called for an internally self-governing state made up of ten provinces within the West Indies that would rely on a government like that of the United States. With their attempts at ensuring both political representation and autonomy amongst the states represented, there was reason for optimism.

However, a row between Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago pertaining to the location of the capital, alongside deep-seated economic disparities, political rivalries, and cultural differences among the territories, led to the dissolution of the Federation in 1962. The problems faced by the Federation reflected the broader challenges of post-colonial development, regional integration, and nation-building in the Caribbean.



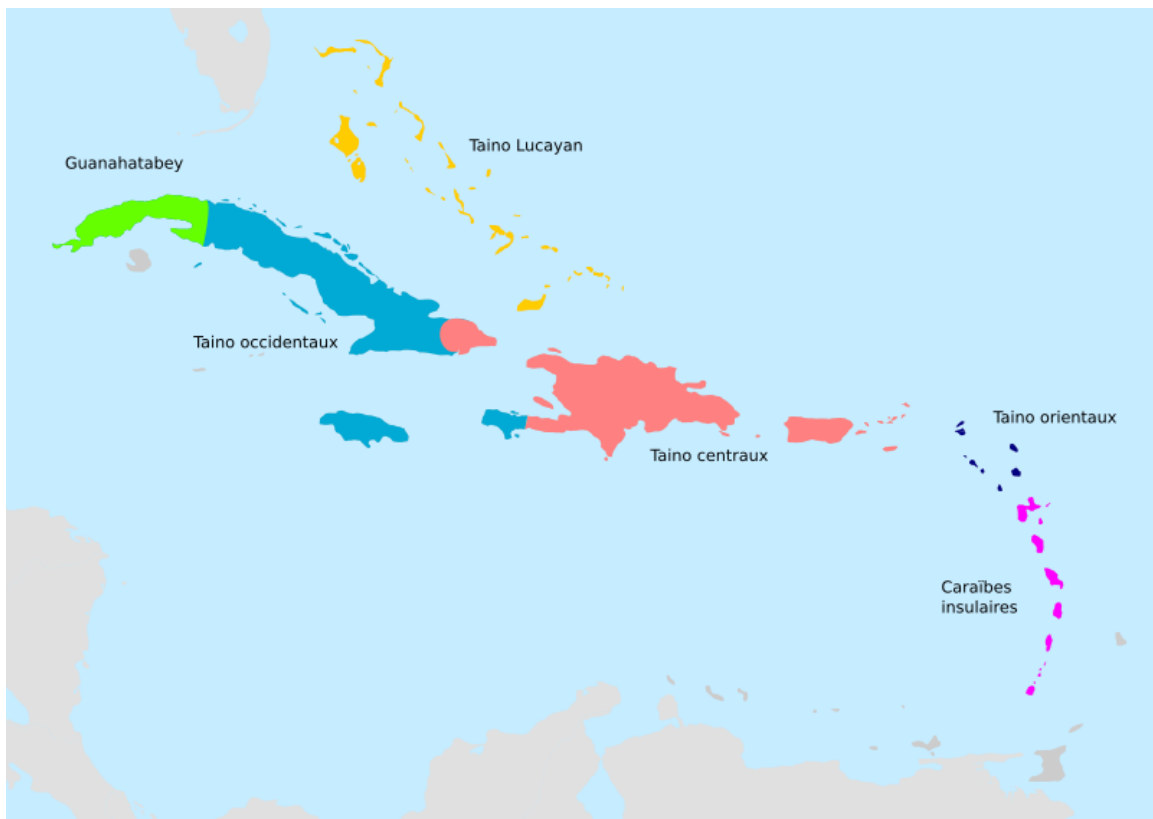
<sup>4</sup> British Government, *St. Vincent 3c West Indies Federation stamp 1958*, 1958, photograph, Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St.\\_Vincent\\_3c\\_West\\_Indies\\_Federation\\_stamp\\_1958.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St._Vincent_3c_West_Indies_Federation_stamp_1958.jpg).

<sup>5</sup> Kramer-Taylor, *Modern British History*, 157.

*A map of the Caribbean specifying the Windward and Leeward islands.<sup>6</sup>*

## Indigenous Peoples

The Caribbean was originally inhabited by indigenous peoples, including the Arawak, Carib, and Taino.<sup>7</sup> These groups had rich cultures and societies before the arrival of Europeans in the late 15th century. One of the largest indigenous groups in the Caribbean was the Taino, dominating most of the Greater Antilles region (Cuba, Haiti & DR) and most notably Jamaica.



*A map of the areas inhabited by the Taino.<sup>8</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> Gcvrsa, *Windward-v-leeward*, September 10, 2018, graphic, Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Windward-v-leeward.png>.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Hulme, "Making Sense of the Native Caribbean." Accessed August 22, 2024. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41849536>.

<sup>8</sup> Skimel, *Taino culture areas-fr*, August 17, 2018, graphic, Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Taino\\_culture\\_areas-fr.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Taino_culture_areas-fr.svg).

The Taino maintained a feudal social structure, but also developed remarkably advanced fishing and farming techniques. Another indigenous group was the Carib—also known as the Kalinago—who were masters at sailing and boat builders. As such, they were phenomenal warriors while also displaying artisan skill—creating many of the silver products found by Juan Ponce de León in his first expedition.<sup>9</sup> As we know, the arrival of Europeans brought disease, warfare, and enslavement, leading to a dramatic and irreversible decline in the indigenous population. The cultural and demographic impact of this loss has been profound, with the indigenous heritages of Caribbean islands being largely overshadowed by the African and European influences. The indigenous peoples that remain have left their mark on Caribbean language, technology, and society, even as they have endured centuries of discrimination. Despite what may have happened historically, we will not condone any oppression, exclusion or exploitation of indigenous peoples within this committee and seek to establish greater cooperation with said populations so that we may thrive in the years that come. Put simply, act responsibly, delegates.

## Slavery/Indentured Servants

From the 16th to the 19th century, the Caribbean economy—powered by sugar, tobacco, and cotton plantations—was heavily dependent on slave labor from Africa. The brutal conditions of slavery led to numerous uprisings and a legacy of racial and social tensions. In order to avoid being too gruesome, we will not be going over the violence that occurred, but rather some of the living conditions instead. Alongside the fundamental injustice enslaved people faced, they were also forced into what the Caribbean would call “slave villages.”<sup>10</sup> While the enslaved were provided with a meager “ration,” it quickly proved to not be enough, and, during times of drought

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<sup>9</sup> Hulme, Peter. “Making Sense of the Native Caribbean.” Accessed August 22, 2024. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41849536>.

<sup>10</sup> James A. Delle, and Elizabeth C. Clay, “Archaeology of Domestic Landscapes of the Enslaved in the Caribbean.” Home Page. Accessed August 21, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvx072g3>.



or after a bad harvest, it was common for starvation or malnutrition to claim the lives of many. Given the sheer misery of the conditions of enslaved people—who faced years of backbreaking labor, little food, and a complete lack of dignity or personal autonomy—it is unsurprising that slave revolts were a common occurrence across the Caribbean.<sup>11</sup> Following the abolition of slavery in 1833, the British introduced indentured servitude, bringing laborers from China and other parts of Asia to work on the plantations. Many workers came from other British colonies such as the British Raj (India) and other locations in southeast Asia. Given the low literacy rates and persistent famine present in India—famines that were arguably the result of British colonial policy—many accepted their contracts without fully realizing what exactly they had signed up for. Filled with both desperation and hope, many Indians perished on their journey to the West Indies and upon arrival faced treatment that was not dissimilar to what enslaved people had endured for centuries. Despite being an “indentured servant,” many plantation owners viewed the servants as “voluntary” slaves and exploited them as such. Nevertheless, indentured servitude did not ultimately match the brutality of slavery. Indentured servitude still involved harsh conditions and exploitation, just not to the same extent. Regardless, indentured servitude and the arrival of migrants from South and East Asia heavily contributed to the complex ethnic and cultural mosaic of the Caribbean today.

## Independence Movement

The idea of an independent state in the British West Indies had been in circulation since at least the late 19th century. This idea originated in the West Indian reaction to the growth of the British idea of an Imperial Federation that was in vogue among certain sectors of the British elite.<sup>12</sup> This Imperial Federation was an alternative to the colonial British Empire and aimed to consolidate the British Commonwealth into one unified

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<sup>11</sup> Delle and Clay, “Archaeology of Domestic Landscapes.”

<sup>12</sup> Kramer-Taylor, *Modern British History*, 148.

federal state based out of London.<sup>13</sup> Responding to the Imperial Federation idea and following in the footsteps of other British colonies such as Canada, some members of the West Indian elite began to envision a unified Caribbean and the potential benefits of West Indian unity. However, support for independence was by no means a widespread opinion among the elite of the West Indies, and even supporters of independence had wildly different conceptions of what independence meant and what it would look like.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout many years, the idea of independence evolved as different leaders and thinkers incorporated other ideologies. One area of heated debate was the question of nationalism and regionalism. One of the most prominent visions of an independent West Indies was the notion of a federation of islands, rather than many separate and independent states. Some also proposed that the West Indies gradually gain autonomy, as had been the case for Canada and Australia.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, some leaders on the islands had no interest in any kind of Federation or pan-West Indian independence; some wished to maintain the status quo and others sought complete independence for their island. In essence, the main divide between supporters of independence was the question of whether the islands should gain their independence as one state, or whether they should gain and maintain their independence as separate islands. Although many ideas were debated, the British encouraged and promoted the idea of a Federation between the territories. While the islands had differences, they also had some major similarities; the British Colonial colonies were largely similar in their economies (heavily based around agriculture), heritage, and future opportunities (none due to the high rates of unemployment and very few development opportunities).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> D. Bell, (2007). *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900*. Princeton University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7sz6b>.

<sup>14</sup> Kramer-Taylor, *Modern British History*, 149.

<sup>15</sup> Kramer-Taylor, *Modern British History*, 148.

<sup>16</sup> Sharon C. Sewell, "British Decolonization in the Caribbean: The West Indies Federation," *British Decolonization in the Caribbean: The West Indies Federation*, 1997, 2.

While the economy of the West Indies had always been heavily reliant upon agriculture and the export of cash crops—which meant that the vast majority of the population was deeply impoverished—the worldwide economic crash of the 1930s only served to worsen the economic woes of the colonies that had been struggling thanks to increased competition in the global sugar market.<sup>17</sup> Following the global depression, the populace began to revolt en masse, participating in many strikes and riots. These began with a strike by sugar workers in Trinidad in May of 1934 and St. Kitts in January of 1935. In February, the strikes in Trinidad expanded to include hunger strikes and strikes at oil refineries. In May, dock workers in Jamaica also went on strike. Moreover, the same year would see further unrest in St. Vincent—with revolts against increased taxes—and in St. Lucia—with strikes from industrial workers. 1937 and 1938 saw similar strikes and unrest in Trinidad, Barbados, St. Lucia, and Jamaica.<sup>18</sup> In response to the increasingly tense situation in the West Indies, the British established the Moyne Commission, which would conduct an internal investigation and report on the West Indies with the purpose of providing solutions for quelling the unrest and lifting the islands out of poverty.<sup>19</sup>

After a great deal of research, the Moyne Commission returned with its preliminary report in February 1940.<sup>20</sup> The report recommended that, in order to stimulate economic development, the islands of the British West Indies should form a federation. However, the report found that there remained many obstacles in the formation of said federation. Nationalism and rivalry between the islands were seen as major hindrances towards its formation. Drawing from witness testimony, the report mentioned how some believed that nothing good would come from institutions in other parts of the West Indies.<sup>21</sup> However, after the outbreak of WWII, the

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<sup>17</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 17.

<sup>18</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 19.

<sup>20</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 21.

British government put all discussions on the future of the West Indies on pause, as they had more pressing issues to deal with.

During WWII, the West Indies received a great deal of support from Britain through the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940.<sup>22</sup> This Act was the temporary British response to the findings found in the report. The governments of the islands were encouraged to draw up long-term financial and economic plans, notably with help from British experts.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the Act expanded suffrage and democracy in the West Indies.<sup>24</sup> Prior to the Act, most of the British colonies in the region were under a Crown Government; the Crown Government gave limited political power to the territories, as people could only vote for representatives in a local colonial assembly. However, this assembly served at the whim of the British-appointed governor, since all legislation enacted through the colonial assembly must have been approved by the governor, who also had the power to dissolve or suspend the colonial assemblies at any time.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the requirements to be eligible to vote were extremely restrictive, meaning that only the elite of the islands had any say in the political process.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the British government expanded suffrage by easing these restrictions which allowed more people to vote in the colonial assembly. The increased autonomy granted to the West Indies further strengthened the independence movement, as islanders became increasingly self-confident.

With many West Indians fighting in the war, local pride and self-belief only continued to rise. The booming economy caused by increased exports of sugar and cotton further added to this vigor. Increased American presence also caused further economic growth, as many began to work on the military bases. After the

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<sup>22</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 21.

<sup>23</sup> Ronald V. Sires, "Government In The British West Indies: An Historical Outline." *Social and Economic Studies* 6, no. 2 (1957): 124.

<sup>24</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 21.

<sup>25</sup> Sires, "Government In The British West Indies," 119.

<sup>26</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 20.

war, the West Indies, having experienced significant economic and political growth and having done a great deal to assist the British war effort, expected the British to reciprocate by granting them independence.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to the booming West Indies, Britain had been devastated by the war—particularly because of Nazi air-raids. The British economy was in shambles and the government was drowning in debt, having sold foreign assets in order to finance the war effort. Moreover, the British populace was longing for a dramatic expansion of social welfare, something that would be provided by the Labor government that won a landslide election in July of 1945. With the economy in disarray and calls to increase spending, the British hoped to receive financial support from the United States. Yet, American support came with some strings attached. For all their flaws, the American populace—and the American government for that matter—viewed the British empire and British colonialism quite unfavorably. Thus, the United States government wanted to see decolonization in exchange for financial support that would go towards rebuilding Britain.<sup>28</sup>

With the United States and the Soviet Union increasingly supplanting the British as the dominant global powers, the British began to ramp up decolonization efforts in the late 1940s. Throughout the British Empire, nationalist sentiment was widespread. The West Indies were no different. But while other colonies longed for complete independence, many in the West Indies instead wished to gain independence while remaining in the commonwealth. After all, given that the West Indies had been controlled by the British for centuries, many West Indians still saw themselves as British and thus wanted to maintain some ties with the British government.<sup>29</sup>

The British, knowing that times must change, were not averse to the idea of an independent West Indies Federation and believed that a unified federation would be the only way the islands could survive since

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<sup>27</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 23.

<sup>28</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 4.

independence for individual islands was projected to only leave them poor and weak.<sup>30</sup> Thus, in 1947, in Jamaica's Montego Bay, the islands formally requested that the British grant them independence in the form of a federation. That being said, support for a federation was still not universal among the West Indies. Many nationalist leaders knew that the British preferred to grant independence to a federation, rather than many smaller islands. Thus, it would be easier, some nationalists surmised, to gain independence from Britain through a federation and then seek complete independence for their island.<sup>31</sup> Despite the preferences of the British, creating a federation would be easier said than done. After all, under colonial rule, each island was governed separately, rather than as one polity. This organization meant that each island was accustomed to some degree of autonomous self-government and that there was very little attachment to a broader West Indian identity among the islanders.<sup>32</sup>

## Political Parties

The West Indies Federation had two major political parties—the West Indies Federal Labor Party (WIFLP) and the West Indies Democratic Labor Party (WIDL). The West Indies Federal Labor Party was mainly comprised of urban-based parties throughout the Federation, including many parties of pre-federation governments.<sup>33</sup> These pre-federation parties were primarily socialist, as the WIFLP required affiliated parties to declare that they are socialist. Being a socialist party, the WIFLP advocated for trade unions and wanted social and economic reforms that would create a strong central government and a customs union.<sup>34</sup> It was largely led by Norman Manley who was a Jamaican statesman.

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<sup>30</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Sewell, *British Decolonization*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> "West Indies Federal Labour Party." Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History.

Encyclopedia.com.<https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/west-indies-federal-labour-party>

<sup>34</sup> "West Indies Federal Labour Party."

Led by the Jamaican Alexander Bustamante, the West Indies Democratic Labor Party (WIDL) was the main opposition party to the WIFLP.<sup>35</sup> Just like the WIFLP, the WIDL was an alliance of political parties from the 12 different member countries of the federation. However, while the WIFLP offered clear socialist stances, the WIDL's ideology was much more amorphous.<sup>36</sup> The WIDL took a cautious approach towards federalism, fearing the consequences of policies such as freedom of movement between islands and the creation of a customs union.<sup>37</sup>

Although the two parties differed in some aspects, such as their preference for the extent of the federal style of government—where WIDL supported a loose federation and WIFLP favored a strong central government—the two parties shared many similarities. After all, many political parties in the West Indies Federation shared similar approaches and policies. Why was it the case that competing West Indian parties had so many similarities? The West Indies, unlike other democracies such as the United States and the United Kingdom, lacked a significant middle class. Instead, the West Indian electorate was dominated by a large lower-class population. This meant that many political parties could win elections just by appealing to poorer voters. Thus, many political parties articulated some form of socialism and promised increased economic opportunity and the elimination of poverty.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, pre-federation parties also largely appealed to the individual islands, espousing island-based nationalism.<sup>39</sup> Politicians who joined these political parties were often forced into the labor unions, as it seemed to be the only way to be a permanent political member since the people themselves saw these unions as having

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<sup>35</sup> "West Indies Democratic Labour Party." Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History. *Encyclopedia.com*. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/west-indies-democratic-labour-party>.

<sup>36</sup> "West Indies Democratic Labour Party."

<sup>37</sup> "West Indies Democratic Labour Party."

<sup>38</sup> Morley Ayearst, "A NOTE ON SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF WEST INDIAN POLITICAL PARTIES." *Social and Economic Studies* 3, no. 2 (1954): 189.

<sup>39</sup> Ayearst, "A NOTE," 189.

their best interest in mind and thus gave credibility to those that were in them.<sup>40</sup> It is also noted that many of these political parties were often very loosely organized. These political systems functioned by first having the local party groups which were then represented at the higher level of the party, which then voted for policies and leaders. Though, this organization has led to many politicians not really doing much and instead just following what the party overall does rather than have their own individual motives and opinions.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, it is noted that unlike other countries, The West Indies Federation lacks a large bloc of religious voters. The nation is home to many religions, and thus there is no dominant religion that could potentially have any significant political sway.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the political parties in the West Indies are poor. Their funds are severely limited due to the lack of financial support from their supporters. This lack of financial resources in turn hampers many smaller parties, as they cannot afford to do much campaigning, and allows parties with rich backers to gain an advantage.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ayearst, "A NOTE," 188.

<sup>41</sup> Ayearst, "A NOTE," 189.

<sup>42</sup> Ayearst, "A NOTE," 188.

<sup>43</sup> Ayearst, "A NOTE," 192.



# STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

## Economic Situation

While the West Indies Federation is composed of ten states, there is a large gulf in economic development among the participating members. From the outset, Jamaica has always been the clear economic powerhouse of the region. It alone contained more than half the Federation's population as well as more than half the amount of land. Meanwhile, Trinidad is the economic powerhouse of the eastern islands. It has more land and population than the remaining eight islands combined. Together, Jamaica and Trinidad contained approximately 80% of total land area, 78% of the total population, and 75% of the total wealth of the West Indies Federation.<sup>44</sup>

As of 1958, the economies of the member states of the West Indies Federation are still largely reliant on agricultural exports; namely sugar, bananas, and cocoa. In the Windward and Leeward islands, agriculture makes up 40-50% of the islands' incomes.<sup>45</sup> Sugar is an especially important crop in the economies of St. Kitts, Antigua, and Barbados. Although tourism is a potential area of economic growth, many of the islands in the federation may be competing with each other for a limited market. While there are islands like Barbados that are attempting to diversify their economy through developing local industrial production for domestic consumption, these islands' economies are still heavily reliant on agriculture. The islands, then, are economic competitors, selling the same agricultural products in the same overseas markets.<sup>46</sup>

As they are in possession of bauxite and oil, respectively (two of the only valuable minerals to exist in large quantities in the Federation), Jamaica and Trinidad have fared better than the others in their attempts to diversify

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<sup>44</sup> H.W. Springer, "The West Indies Emergent: Problems and Prospects." Essay. In *The West Indies Federation : Perspectives on a New Nation*, 1–16, n.d.

<sup>45</sup> Springer, "The West Indies Emergent," 1-16.

<sup>46</sup> Elisabeth Wallace, "The West Indies Federation: Decline and Fall." *International Journal* 17, no. 3 (1962): 269–88. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40198636>.

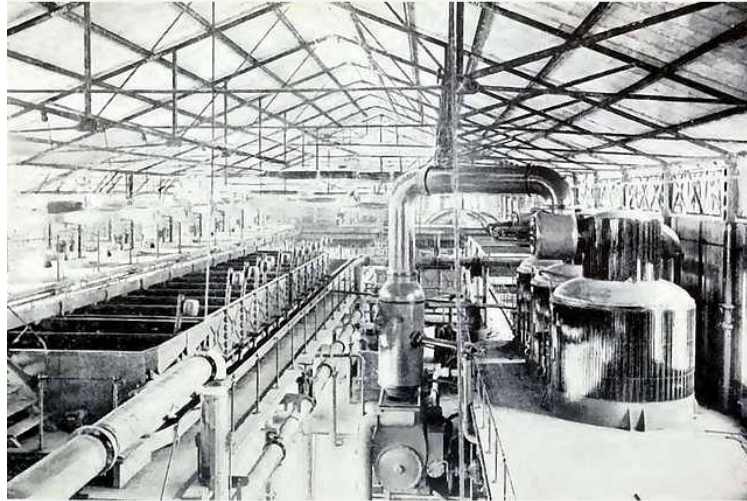
their economies. After discovering the materials, the mining, manufacturing, and construction sectors of Jamaica and Trinidad rapidly expanded at the expense of the agricultural sector. In Trinidad, oil exports have grown to be its largest source of income. In totality, oil and bauxite exports account for more than half of the exports in the West Indies Federation. However, despite these efforts to diversify, Jamaica and Trinidad are far from immune to sudden shifts in the agricultural market; agricultural exports still make up a significant portion of Jamaica's economic output, and the agriculture sector is still far and away the largest employer in Trinidad.<sup>47</sup>

As the economies of the West Indies Federation members were dependent on their agricultural products, fluctuating prices meant instability of income. A clear example of this phenomenon is sugar. In 1896, due to large outbreaks of cane disease, sugar prices were halved compared to their levels in 1881. This drop in prices led to shutdowns of sugar plantations en masse, with many owners going bankrupt. By 1915, the production of sugar was only 147,000 tons a year, down from the 208,000 tons during the 1850s. In Nevis, Montserrat, Dominica, St. Vincent, and Grenada, the sugar industry was severely affected, with production either abandoned altogether or sustained at levels merely enough for domestic consumption. Luckily, the rise of the central factory system allowed for more efficient production of sugar, tripling production rates from 1910-1945. However, the industry still suffered from frequent price fluctuation, increased production costs, and competition from foreign states.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Springer, "The West Indies Emergent," 1-16.

<sup>48</sup> Elisabeth Wallace, "Prologue." Essay. In *The British Caribbean From the Decline of Colonialism to the End of Federation*, 3-19, n.d.



*A sugar processing factory in the West Indies region.<sup>49</sup>*

The West Indies Federation currently enjoys relatively strong levels of economic growth due to favorable trade conditions and the worldwide post-World War II economic expansion. Thanks to the signing of trade agreements with Britain and other foreign nations—agreements that had begun in the 1930s and were expanded during WWII—the prices of West Indian agricultural goods have stabilized. These products have also enjoyed strong protection thanks to British protectionist policies—which favored members of the commonwealth and countries that used the sterling. This condition has allowed West Indies Federation agricultural products to face less competition from countries that do not use the sterling. The improved economic outlook has allowed governments to be more bold with their investments in manufacturing and tourism, which are expected to serve as possible buffers against a sudden collapse in the price of notoriously volatile agricultural goods.<sup>50</sup>

However, there are three reasons to suspect that these good times may not last. As mentioned previously, while there have been significant attempts to diversify their economies, the West Indies Federation islands are all

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<sup>49</sup> *Albion Plantation Sugar Factory c. 1890*, 1890, photograph, Picryl, <https://picryl.com/media/albion-plantation-sugar-factory-c1890-4e3a07>.

<sup>50</sup> Springer, “The West Indies Emergent,” 1-16.

vulnerable to instability in global agriculture prices. So far, favorable policies from Britain and worldwide peace have provided relative price stability. However, with the recent independence from Britain, there are fears that the protectionist policies from Britain (and unfettered access to the British market) will end. In addition, the European Common Market (a precursor to the EU!) has recently been formed. This alliance between France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg aims to decrease trade barriers between the countries with a goal of greater economic cooperation and integration. One of the main goals is the free movement of goods and labor between cooperating countries.<sup>51</sup> The establishment of the European Common Market has made it difficult for West Indies Federation islands' goods (particularly goods from the nascent West Indian industries) to penetrate the heavily industrialized Western European markets. Even worse, there are growing voices within Britain to join the Common Market due to the variety of benefits that it provides. Should these plans come into fruition, together with the West Indies' recent independence from the United Kingdom, there is a non-significant chance of a relaxation of currency controls. This action would result in greater competition in the United Kingdom's market, which would only further worsen already-existing market difficulties for West Indies' agricultural products.<sup>52</sup> Beyond Europe, the Cold War, an ongoing political rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union and their allies, is at its height. With greater world instability and more eyes on Caribbean nations such as Cuba, the Federation might be forced to pick a side in order to prevent greater economical disturbances.

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<sup>51</sup> "Europe's Common Market Founded in Major Step toward Economic Unity | March 25, 1957." *History.com*. Accessed August 19, 2024. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/common-market-founded>.

<sup>52</sup> Springer, "The West Indies Emergent," 1-16.



*This cartoon shows Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev watching with concern through the window of a construction site with the sign “Site of the European Common Market,” with his dog.<sup>53</sup>*

For the various islands of the Federation, there is a need to band together to ensure economic security. Establishing freedom of movement for goods and manpower between the member states would go a long way to allow for the growth of the intra-Federation market. However, economic powerhouses such as Jamaica and Trinidad are reluctant to integrate their economies with the less developed economies of the other islands and are increasingly passing more protectionist policies to protect their own economies in case of an economic downturn.<sup>54</sup> The strength of the federal government, the power of local island governments, and the

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<sup>53</sup> Edmund Valtman, *Viewing with Concern*. n.d. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016687286/>.

<sup>54</sup> Wallace, “The West Indies Federation: Decline and Fall,” 269–88.

interconnectedness of the islands (whether that be economically or politically) will be important sources of debate in the formation of the Constitution.

Another potential route to economic security is through foreign relations. In order to rapidly build diversified industries, the islands could look to outside investments. The islands already depend on foreign talents for technically intensive jobs and foreign industries to produce technical equipment. It is possible to reach out to foreign investors, particularly those in North America, to attract investment in new industries. However, the islands least likely to attract foreign investors will be those that are less developed and most susceptible to economic disturbances. With a unified government, it might be possible to negotiate an agreement that will benefit all the islands.<sup>55</sup>

## Sociopolitical

As of 1954, most people in the West Indies Federation were illiterate and in poverty. The average West Indian made on average \$235, compared to the average British citizen's income of \$860. Trinidadians have it relatively better, with the average income being \$350, while the average Windward and Leeward resident making \$128 and \$126 respectively.<sup>56</sup> Even with the recent invention of the airplane, which shows promise to ease the economic divide amongst the various islands by making the movement of labor less costly, the average West Indian could never afford a plane ticket given current incomes. Further exacerbating the issue, mass illiteracy has made developing industry all the more difficult.<sup>57</sup>

Beyond illiteracy and poverty, overpopulation is gradually becoming a problem—a problem that is only projected to worsen in the coming years. For example, Barbados has approximately 7.5% of the Federation's

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<sup>55</sup> Springer, "The West Indies Emergent," 1-16.

<sup>56</sup> Springer, "The West Indies Emergent," 1-16.

<sup>57</sup> Wallace, "The West Indies Federation: Decline and Fall," 269–88.

population on only about 2% of the Federation's land. As a whole, the West Indies Federation's population is set to double within the next 25 years. This is especially serious considering the lack of industry and high illiteracy rates. In addition, there will be less and less demand for agricultural jobs due to anticipated technological advancements over the coming years. Evidence of the declining demand for agricultural labor can be seen in Barbados, where the current estimated number of workers in the sugar industry was only 23,000, which is half of the roughly 46,000 workers employed in 1881. This decline in the number of Barbadian agricultural workers has come even as agricultural production has reached all-time highs. As a result, there is a serious need to form secondary industries, especially manufacturing, to support the growing population.<sup>58</sup>

Population movements are a serious concern for all the islands. The West Indies Federation has a population of around three million, which means that even an immigration force of tens of thousands will be considerable. In addition, as mentioned previously, the islands are economic competitors with each other. Thus, population is a powerful resource. In trying to set up secondary industries to diversify their economies, the islands will need many laborers who are willing to work at competitive rates. These laborers will also act as important consumers for the new products of the local industry. Finally, more skilled workers tend to emigrate at higher rates than less skilled ones, which leads to an outflow of desperately-needed talents and knowledge. As such, there needs to be careful planning to appease people to stay, all the while making sure that everyone is economically happy.<sup>59</sup>

Amongst the possible destinations of emigration, there are two standouts. In the 1950s, Canadian women began to enter the industry en masse. With encouragement from Britain, Canada implemented the West Indian Domestic Scheme to allow West Indian women to come to Canada to act as domestic workers. For many West Indian women, this was the greatest chance for them and their families to enter Canada permanently. After

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<sup>58</sup> Springer, "The West Indies Emergent," 1-16.

<sup>59</sup> Springer, "The West Indies Emergent," 1-16.

working for a year, the women were granted immigration status and were able to sponsor their families.<sup>60</sup> Domestically, Trinidad, which already faces high unemployment and a lack of adequate housing for its own population, is burdened with significant immigration from the Windward islands. As a result, there are increased voices within Trinidad that object to the freedom of movement of people for the other members of the Federation.<sup>61</sup>

Since political parties are intricately tied with trade unions in the West Indies Federation, the voices of laborers present an especially strong position in government. Most political parties depend on trade unions for political and monetary support. As members of a union usually voted for the politician the union prefers, union support often provided the easiest path to political power. It is common for occupants of high governmental positions to also hold tenure in a high position in a union. In some islands, the heads of government also head the leading union. Due to this connection with the workers, nearly all political parties advocated for better education, more social welfare, and improved economic situations. A lot of parties on the islands also advocated for socialism. Powerful political parties, such as the People's National Party in Jamaica, which was supported mainly by the educated middle class, ran on platforms of public ownership and socialism. In Trinidad, the Trinidad Labour Party, which was associated with the Socialist International, ran a wildly popular newspaper, *The Socialist*. By 1938, the party claimed a membership of over a third of Trinidad's population. It is worth noting that this widespread acceptance of socialism has the potential to lead to greater scrutiny from foreign powers, especially while the US and the Soviet Union and their allies are fighting it out economically and politically.<sup>62</sup>

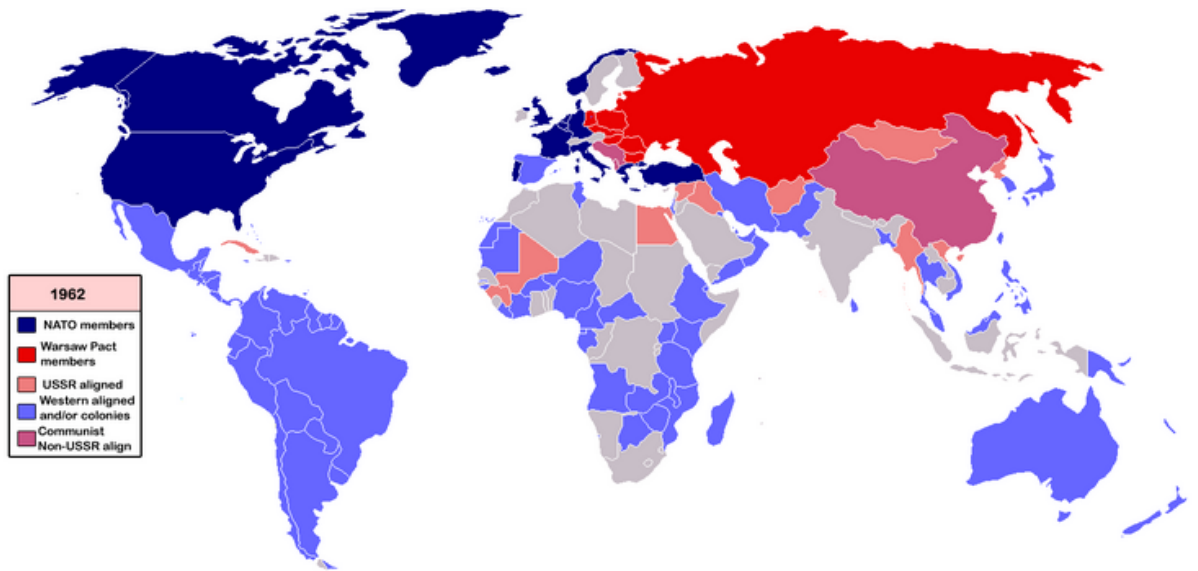
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<sup>60</sup> "West Indian Domestic Scheme: Nurturing A Nation." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, January 18, 2022. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/west-indian-domestic-scheme-nurturing-a-nation>.

<sup>61</sup> Wallace, "Prologue," 3–19.

<sup>62</sup> Elisabeth Wallace, "Governments, Unions, and Parties." Essay. In *The British Caribbean From the Decline of Colonialism to the End of Federation*, 19–56, n.d.





*A map of Cold War alignments.<sup>63</sup>*

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<sup>63</sup> Mosedschurte, *Cold War World Map 1962*, May 19, 2009, graphic, Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cold\\_War\\_WorldMap\\_1962.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cold_War_WorldMap_1962.png).

## ROSTER AND CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES

### Grantley Adams (Barbados)

Grantley Adams is a newly-elected legislator from Barbados. Although Adams was born into a middle-class family, many of his neighbors lived in desperate poverty—something that has stuck with him over the years. Thanks to his brilliance and hard work, Adams won a scholarship to attend the University of Oxford. During his time at Oxford, Adams joined the Liberal Party—a party defined by its support for individual rights, private enterprise, and free trade. After returning to Barbados, Adams used his strong oratory skills to whip up support for several workers' strikes throughout the early 1930s. In 1938, Adams helped found the Barbados Labour Party, a political force dedicated to ensuring economic independence for the everyday Barbadians. With a deep understanding of regional and international affairs, he is an advocate for regional unity, which he believes will be invaluable in helping the West Indies confront poverty and economic development. A fervent bibliophile, he loves spending the weekends at night markets to buy interesting books that he never seems to have the time to read.

### Dwayne Hill (Jamaica)

Dwayne Hill is a lawyer from one of Jamaica's wealthiest families. He grew up near Spanish Town, the former Spanish and British capital of Jamaica, sparking his initial interest in international relations. In school, he was a renowned track and field athlete, breaking several records that would have qualified him for the Olympics. However, to pursue his passion for education, he decided to study at University of Oxford in the United Kingdom, graduating with a degree in Civil Law with First Class Honors. After passing the bar exam in the U.K., Hill returned to Jamaica to work as a barrister. He was a strong advocate for universal suffrage, believing that it is through democracy and democratic deliberation that a strong Jamaica can emerge. A strong nationalist, he

supports Jamaican independence through the West Indies Federation, and is an ardent proponent of self-government. In his free time, he enjoys jogging by the beachside and fishing.

## **Ricardo Decaires (Jamaica)**

Ricardo DeCaires is a writer from Jamaica. Born into a family of Irish-born farmers, DeCaires grew up in poverty. When he was 21, DeCaires left for Cuba to search for job opportunities in their growing sugar market. Inspired by his upbringing, he was a strong advocate for the rights of the working class. He wrote frequent letters to *The Common Man's Journal*, where his writing gradually gained a wide following. He used his platform to rally people for labor rights as well as Jamaican independence from Britain. After the 1938 labor revolt, he founded the DeCaires Trade Union, where he became known as "The Chief." His activist activities appeared to have drawn American attention. On a business trip to Puerto Rico, he was briefly detained, but was released without any charges. He is a strong advocate for Jamaican independence and wishes to use his writing as a way to rally his voting base. He enjoys planting coconuts in his backyard and regularly invites his friends over to try coconut-based dishes.

## **Frank Worrell (Barbados)**

Frank Mortimer Maglinne Worrell is a Barbadian cricket prodigy. He had international influences at an early age; his mother moved to New York City, and his father frequently took him boating in the sea. He eventually moved to Jamaica, where he made his cricket debut by playing for the West Indian team against England. He loved the experience and settled in Lancashire to play in the Central Lancashire League while studying economics at Manchester University. After completing his studies, he returned to the West Indies, becoming the first black cricket captain of the West Indian Team, leading successful games in Australia and England. His cricket accomplishments won him international fame, and there are ongoing talks about inducting Worrell into the

Cricket Hall of Fame. After retiring from cricket, Worrell taught at the University of the West Indies, hoping to inspire and educate a new generation of West Indian economists and cricketers. He is a strong advocate for regional unity, believing that only through teamwork can the West Indies achieve prosperity.

## **Eric Williams (Trinidad and Tobago)**

Eric Eustace Williams is a professor from Trinidad and Tobago. Growing up in a middle-class family to civil servant parents, he had the opportunity to attend the Queen's Royal College in the Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago's capital city. He then won a scholarship to study at Oxford, where he graduated with first class honors in history. He also completed his PhD at Oxford, writing a hugely influential book, *Capitalism and Slavery*, in which he explores the economic factors driving the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire. Excerpts of his book were published and widely circulated in *The Key*, a popular journal. In 1939, he joined the Political Science department at Howard University, in Washington, DC. With the university's help, he organized a conference in which he discussed the future of the Caribbean, claiming that a united West Indies is vital to avoid economic domination by the post-colonialist powers.

## **C.I.R. James (Trinidad and Tobago)**

Born to two teachers, C.L.R James is a historian from Trinidad and Tobago. In 1918, he graduated from Queen's Royal College, before returning as a professor to teach English and History. During this time, he was a member of the Beacon Group, a society of anti-colonialist writers, that published regularly in *The Beacon Magazine*. Later, he advocated for Pan-Africanism, becoming involved in the socialist Pan-African International African Friends of Ethiopia, editing the society's newspaper and journal. He wrote *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, a widely acclaimed book on the Haitian Revolution. He also went on an extensive speaking tour in the US, discussing the history of the British Empire in major cities such as Los

Angeles and Philadelphia and briefly took a trip to Mexico, where he got the chance to meet with Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, which inspired his interest in art. He loves painting in his free time and giving his work to close friends and associates.

## **Derek Walcott (Saint Lucia)**

Derek Walcott is a poet from Saint Lucia. He got his start in the arts by training as a painter under Harold Simmons. However, he soon developed an interest in writing, publishing his first poem in a newspaper, *The Voice of St. Lucia*, at 14. With the help of his mother, he published two more poetry collections by the time he was 20, selling them to friends and family. He received a scholarship to study at the University College of the West Indies in Jamaica. After graduation, he moved to Trinidad, where he became involved in the Trinidad Theatre Workshop as part of its board of directors. He achieved major success with *In a Green Night: Poems 1948-1960*, a poetry collection which celebrates the Caribbean and its rich history. He is beginning to gain international recognition within the academic community, and there are talks of his taking a professorship at Boston University. His works are in the process of being translated into multiple languages, paving the path for potential acclaim in the future.

## **Elina Willis (Dominica)**

Elina Willis is an essayist from Dominica writing on the female consciousness and themes of displacement and identity. Although Willis was educated on her home island until the age of 16, she then moved to England to live with her aunt. This relocation affected her writing, where many of her characters deal with unfamiliar and hostile environments. She attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, where she studied acting without much success. She started her career by working as a dancer, touring small towns in Britain. After traveling to Paris, she began writing short stories—centering female characters struggling to deal with the burden of various societal expectations. She has since moved back to the West Indies, where she continues to write short stories.

Although she has yet to attain major success, she hopes her work will play a leading role in the current political tide. In her free time, she loves collecting fountain pens from the places she's traveled to.

### **Phyllis Shand Allfrey (Dominica)**

Phyllis Byam Shand Allfrey is a renowned West Indian writer, socialist activist, newspaper editor, and politician. Born in Roseau, Dominica in 1908, Allfrey was the daughter of Francis Byam Berkeley Shand and Elfreda Nicholls. She traces her ancestry to Lieutenant General William Byam, a Royalist commander who fled to the West Indies after being imprisoned by the Americans. Allfrey and Emmanuel Christopher Loblack co-founded the Dominica Labour Party in 1955, based on socialist and anti-colonial ideas. In addition to her political activity, Allfrey was an accomplished journalist who edited *The Dominica Herald* and developed *The Dominica Star*, which she utilized to advocate for social justice. However, her participation in politics and media has drained her, and her writing skill is beginning to suffer as a result.

### **Sir Shridath Ramphal (Guyana)**

Sir Shridath Surendranath "Sonny" Ramphal is a prominent Caribbean leader, diplomat, and novelist. Born on October 3, 1928, in Guyana, his achievements have had a considerable influence on international relations, law, and development, notably in the Commonwealth and Caribbean regions. Ramphal began his academic studies at King's academic in London, and then returned to the Caribbean to work as Crown Counsel in the Attorney General's office of British Guiana. Ramphal is highly engaged in global governance and environmental concerns. In his spare time, Ramphal enjoys playing the bagpipes, much to the chagrin of his wife and young children.

## Rex Nettleford (Jamaica)

Ralston Milton "Rex" Nettleford is a well-known Jamaican academic, choreographer, and a professor of dance at University of the West Indies. Born on February 3, 1933, in Falmouth, Jamaica, Nettleford grew up in a modest family and received his education at local institutions. He attended Unity Primary School in Bunkers Hill, Trelawny, and then graduated from Cornwall College in Montego Bay. He showed early skill in the arts by performing in school concerts, church choirs, and choreographing dance routines. Nettleford then won a scholarship to study dance at Juilliard College, where he focused on interpretive dance and ballet. After graduating from Juilliard, Nettleford returned to Jamaica, joining the faculty at UWI and allegedly joining a hard-line Jamaican nationalist secret society. Nettleford is an eligible bachelor and currently shares an apartment with two orange cats.

## George Lamming (Barbados)

George Lamming (born 1927) is a notable Barbadian author, essayist, and cultural critic, regarded as one of the main voices in Caribbean literature. His work frequently addressed issues of decolonization, identity, and the Caribbean's complex sociopolitical environment. Lamming was born in Carrington Village, near Bridgetown, Barbados, and attended Roebuck's Boys' School before going on to Combermere High School. After leaving Barbados in 1946, he taught in Trinidad before relocating to England in 1950—although he still spends much of the year in Bridgetown, where he participated in the Caribbean literary renaissance. Lamming is not only a novelist but is also a significant cultural figure and activist. He has engaged in discussions about the role of writers in society, advocating for the importance of dialogue and understanding in multiethnic communities. His essays have explored Caribbean politics, race, and culture in new and groundbreaking ways. His insistence on outreach from the writers was pivotal in his campaign to unify the Caribbean.

## **Sir Philip Sherlock (Jamaica)**

Sir Philip Manderson Sherlock (born 1902) is a renowned Jamaican educator, scholar, historian, and cultural leader. Born on February 25, 1902, in Manchioneal, Portland, Jamaica, Sherlock began teaching at the young age of 17. As a result, he has taught at numerous institutions, including Calabar High School and Wolmer's Boys School, where he rose to become Jamaica's youngest ever headmaster. In 1938, Sherlock was named Secretary of the Institute of Jamaica, where he promoted Jamaican literature, arts, and science. He tried to revive and expand the scientific programme, building Junior Centres to meet educational requirements, and establishing a lecture hall, art gallery, scientific museum, and archives. He is known as a strong orator and as something of a cosmopolitan figure—splitting his time between Jamaica and Paris.

## **Elsa Goveia (Guyana)**

Elsa Vesta Goveia is a historian who has made major contributions to the study of Caribbean history, notably on the topics of slavery and colonial society. Elsa Goveia was born on April 12, 1925, in British Guiana (modern-day Guyana). In 1944, she became the first woman to get the British Guiana Scholarship, which allowed her to study history at University College London, where she received her doctorate. In 1950, Goveia began employment at the newly-founded University College of the West Indies (UCWI) in Jamaica as an assistant history instructor. As she advanced through academia, she was appointed as UCWI's first female professor. Goveia has a dynamic teaching style and created the UWI's first university-level courses in Caribbean history. In addition to her scholarly contributions, she has been active in founding and expanding archives on various Caribbean islands in the 1950s and 1960s, and has been pushing for a greater focus on Caribbean history in secondary school curriculums. She lives in Kingston with her family and enjoys walking purposefully.



## **Eric Gairy (Grenada)**

Sir Eric Matthew Gairy was born in Dunfermline, St. Andrew's Parish, Grenada, to peasant parents. He began his career as a schoolteacher before migrating to Aruba in the early 1940s, where he became involved in the trade union movement. Upon returning to Grenada in 1949, he founded the Grenada Manual and Mental Workers' Union, advocating for better wages and working conditions, which led to the significant 1951 general strike known as the "Sky Red" riots. In 1950, Gairy established the Grenada United Labour Party (GULP) and has quickly become one of the most prominent figures on the island—where he has garnered a reputation as something of a populist and a nationalist. While some of Gairy's rivals accuse him of being a demagogue, he only wants what's best for real Grenadians. Gairy has a taste for the finer things in life, including Cuban cigars, champagne, and a good piece of grilled fish.

## **Robert Llewellyn Bradshaw (Saint Kitts and Nevis)**

Robert Llewellyn Bradshaw, born on September 16, 1916, in Saint Paul Capisterre, Saint Kitts, is a significant political leader and labor activist who has played a crucial role in the development of Saint Kitts and Nevis. Raised by his grandmother after his father emigrated to the United States, Bradshaw completed his primary education and began working as a machine apprentice at the St. Kitts Sugar Factory at the age of 16. His experiences in the sugar industry sparked his interest in labor rights, leading him to join the St. Kitts and Nevis Trades and Labour Union, of which he became president in 1944. Bradshaw's political career began in earnest when he was elected to the Legislative Council in 1946, representing the interests of sugar workers and advocating for social reforms. He founded the St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla Labour Party in 1945 and became a prominent figure in the labor movement, organizing strikes and protests to improve working conditions. That being said, his views on the federation are considered to be something of a mystery. In his limited spare time, Bradshaw tends to his many pet geese and performs with the local Shakespeare troupe.

## **William Henry Bramble (Montserrat)**

William Henry Bramble was born on October 8, 1901 in Montserrat. Bramble's early life was marked by economic challenges. As the son of J.T. Allen, a social activist, and Mary Ryan, he had limited formal education due to financial constraints. In his youth, he worked as a farmer and peddled religious books to make a living. Despite his undeniable intelligence, Bramble has never attended university—although perhaps this means he can better relate to the average West Indian.

In the 1950s, Bramble became involved in trade union activities, joining the Montserrat Trades and Labor Union (MTLU) in 1951. Bramble is somewhat skeptical of the West Indies Federation—and indeed of other members of this largely elite committee. Nevertheless, his ultimate duty is to the working poor of Montserrat and the West Indies, and he will do everything in his power to uplift those struggling to make ends meet. Unsurprisingly, given his history selling religious books as a youth, Bramble is a devout member of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

## **Rajesh Chandran (Trinidad and Tobago)**

Rajesh Chandran is an emerging writer from Trinidad and Tobago. Born in 1930 to a middle-class family of Indian descent in Port of Spain, he has always been interested in storytelling and public speaking. His mother, a primary school teacher, encouraged these pursuits and enrolled him in supplementary writing classes outside of school. Through his writing, Rajesh earned a scholarship to study English literature at the University of Cambridge. After graduating, he worked as a copywriter at the Times of London before moving back to Trinidad and Tobago to serve as the West Indies correspondent for the BBC. His vivid news reporting as well as short stories regarding the island's colonial history and diversity gained him a small following in Britain—although he is less well known on his home island. He has resigned from the BBC to serve on the upcoming convention of the West Indies

Federation Congress. He loves vacationing in Paris, where he claims he will gain the inspiration for the “ultimate romance novel.”

## **Lionel Bajan (Barbados)**

Lionel Bajan is a young soccer player from Barbados who is determined to popularize soccer in the cricket-dominated West Indies. Growing up, Bajan was an exceptional cricket player. However, a chance encounter with a group of visiting soccer players from Australia changed his fate. His passion for soccer quickly overwhelmed his desire to play cricket, and he spent hours honing his skills. At 18, he organized the Bridgetown Soccer Club, recruiting local teenagers to form a team. His talent in soccer quickly attracted the attention of the Barbados National Soccer Team, where he grew into a budding soccer star through his games against rival teams from Trinidad and Jamaica. He spends his free time promoting soccer, fiercely debating with cricket fans about why soccer is the superior sport. Bajan’s skills have attracted the attention of soccer officials in England, and there are rumors floating around of his potentially playing in a lower division English club.

## **Clarence Pemberton (Saint Kitts and Nevis)**

Clarence Pemberton is an actor from Saint Kitts and Nevis who aspires to create ‘Wollywood,’ or the West Indian Hollywood. Pemberton spent his childhood in and out of school before finding his passion for acting through local theater and cultural performances. He became involved in school plays, which he both organized and took leading roles. After taking a class in American cinema, he became inspired to pursue his dream to become an actor in the US. He sold all of his assets to afford a ticket to New York City, where he took acting classes and worked odd jobs to make ends meet. His big break came when he caught the attention of a prominent Broadway director and took an important role in a Broadway production. His performance received praise from many of the leading Broadway critics, setting the stage for a series of starring roles in various Broadway musicals. Empowered

by his success, he moved back to Saint Kitts and Nevis to start his own theater. He uses his growing fame in America to advocate for greater investment in the nascent West Indian film industry.

### **Nathaniel Carrington (Saint Lucia)**

Nathaniel Carrington is a self-described “brilliant economist” from Saint Lucia. Born to a prominent family in Castries, Carrington was academically gifted from a young age. In college, he gained an interest in economics, leading him to apply to the London School of Economics for his PhD. He won recognition for his PhD dissertation on the economies of developing nations. His innovative theory sets up a groundwork for understanding how policy makers and private companies approach new industries in developing regions—including the West Indies. Carrington’s dissertation caught the attention of the University of Manchester, which offered him a full professorship. He taught at the university for 10 years before moving back to Saint Lucia to train the next generation of West Indian economists. He spends his free time trying to set up a company that sells premium chairs, but has failed to be profitable thus far.

### **Stanley Eugene Gomes (Grenada)**

Stanley Eugene Gomes is a man with a hidden past. Apart from his nationality and birth in 1906, little is known about his upbringing—something that suits him quite well. Despite that, he was a prominent figure in the Caribbean, playing a crucial role in the political landscape of the West Indies Federation. Gomes was deeply involved in the movement towards regional unity and independence as a Grenadian-born leader. He has served in various governmental roles and was a strong advocate for the federation, believing it was essential for the economic and social advancement of the Caribbean islands.

## **T. Albert Marryshow (Grenada)**

Theophilus Albert Maricheau was born in Grenada on November 7, 1887, the son of a cocoa farmer who disappeared on the day of his son's baptism. His mother died in 1890, and Maricheau was brought up by his godmother. Theophilus Albert Marryshow, sometimes referred to as "The Father of West Indian Federation," is a key advocate for a united Caribbean; he hopes to expand the West Indies Federation to include Spanish and French-speaking islands. Utilizing his skills as a journalist, Marryshow—T.A. changed the spelling of his last name when he became a journalist—would co-found *The West Indian*, a paper advocating for a united Federation of the West Indies. The sheer influence of this paper and the message it spread has earned Marryshow said title of the father of the Federation. Marryshow, thanks to his lobbying of the British, was instrumental in bringing about the expansion of suffrage in island legislatures, and the formation of the West Indies Federation is certainly the crowning achievement of his career. In his spare time, Marryshow enjoys haiku-writing, gardening, and dog-breeding.

## **Arthur Lewis (Saint Lucia)**

William Arthur Lewis (born 1915) is a Saint Lucian economist who currently serves as a professor of Political Economy at Princeton University. Lewis was born in Saint Lucia in 1915, and his early years were characterized by his intense academic focus. Renowned for his work ethic, Lewis originally studied engineering, before switching to economics and pursuing a PhD at the London School of Economics. After receiving his PhD, Lewis joined the faculty at Princeton. He is a board-member of the New Jersey branch of the NAACP and has served as an informal advisor to the government of the newly-independent nation of Ghana. He returns to the West Indies hoping to shape an economic plan that will further integrate the economies of the islands. Nevertheless, he last lived in Saint Lucia nearly twenty years ago. Some delegates wonder whether Lewis has lost touch with the islands?

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