

PROFESSOR HAMID GHANY

Key:

EHdK: Dr Eve Hayes de Kalaf (Interviewer)

HG: Professor Hamid Ghany (Respondent)

Date/Location:

9th November 2023. Alma Jordan Library, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.

EHdK 00:00 Here with me today is Professor Hamid Ghany who is the former director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine in Trinidad. He is professor in Constitutional Affairs and Parliamentary Studies and also former Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. He is a very well-known expert in constitutional and parliamentary affairs. It's an absolute pleasure to speak with you today professor. Can we start by giving an overview of Trinidad [and Tobago] and some background and some context into the country?

HG 00:49 Well, Trinidad and Tobago is one of those plural societies in the Commonwealth Caribbean that has a mixed population primarily deriving from the descendants of African slavery and the descendants of Indian indentureship that took place between 1845 and 1917 which came after the period of emancipation of African slaves by 1838. So that you have as a consequence of those labour schemes a very mixed society that is plural, predominantly made up of two major racial groupings, an Afro-descended and an Indo-descended component. And it is a multi-religious society because the fact that you had a number of Christian missionaries who came to the West Indies at various times and converted people to Christianity. And then you had the arrival of Indian indentured immigrants who brought with them either Hindu or Muslim religions from the Indian subcontinent and therefore the onset of that is a legacy of a multi-religious society. So, it's a complex society that has operated within the confines of what I prefer to call a Westminster/Whitehall tradition of governance. With the concept of a government and an opposition set out in a Constitution. The premise of the Constitution is that there must be division in the society between the government and opposition. So, it doesn't work exactly as comfortably as Her Majesty's Government and Her Majesty's loyal opposition, or as it would now be said His Majesty's government and His Majesty's loyal opposition. So that transplantation dimension of it has given us a constitutional environment that has created its own divisiveness in a society such as this with those population dynamics. However, this society has remained stable ever since independence in 1962 and we are talking here now in November of 2023. And there have been several general elections and there have been changes of government. So that there is relative political stability in the face of these population dynamics which perhaps is a credit to the functioning of the system of government alongside the existence of such a diverse population.

EHdK 03:32 And how does the situation in Trinidad's socio-political context...how does that compare and contrast with other parts of the Caribbean?

HG 03:42 Apart from Guyana, which perhaps would come nearest to the kind of socio-political composition, the rest of the Commonwealth Caribbean would be considered largely homogenous. In respect of the population dynamics. Guyana operates a system of government that is presidential and moved away from the Westminster/Whitehall traditions after it got independence in 1966. It became a republic in 1970. Republic using a parliamentary system and then in 1980, it became a republic using a presidential system. In 2000, some amendments were made to the Constitution to bring back in certain parliamentary techniques with respect to the issue of the president being removed by a motion of no confidence which became quite controversial in 2018 when it happened. And then you had a general election by 2020 which saw a change of government. Other societies in the Commonwealth Caribbean do not have the Guyanese model. The Guyanese model is a standalone, separate constitutional entity from the other 11 countries that make up what we would call the Commonwealth Caribbean.

EHdK 05:01 Okay, thank you. Can you give me a bit more of a background into the historical context around what discussions were taking place in the lead-up to independence and particularly in the late 1950s, early 1960s period? Eric Williams, for example, who was major and huge political force within Trinidad but really in history as well. What was happening at that time?

HG 05:35 Well, in 1955 Eric Williams, who was a private citizen at the time, had just resigned from the Anglo-American Commission gave a speech in Woodford Square in Port of Spain on the 19th of July 1955 in which he set out his mandate for constitutional change in Trinidad and Tobago. This was done under the auspices of the Teachers' Educational and Cultural Association. And Eric Williams pointed out in that speech that if the British constitution is good enough for Great Britain, it should be good enough for Trinidad and Tobago. And he argued that the Colonial Office did not need to go looking for any type of constitution, it just needed to use the British constitution suitably modified to put it into Trinidad and Tobago. So that was the outlook that he took.

EHdK 06:36 And that was in contrast to Norman Manley as well?

HG 06:39 Right. I've written about the Norman Manley contrast. In January of 1962, Norman Manley in the Jamaican House of Representatives took the view that Jamaica's constitution was part of an evolutionary process. And that what was coming at Independence was the end product of an evolutionary process so that Williams and Manley had different views on the introduction of basically a Westminster/Whitehall model of constitutional governance. And essentially one would say that they ended up most probably in the same place because Williams' argument about importation and adaptation after importation might have gelled

with Norman Manley's view of the evolutionary process. And essentially, the constitutions of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago more or less along the same lines are in the same genre. But there are alterations here and there. There are no independent senators in Jamaica, you had independent senators in Trinidad and Tobago. So, you had those kinds of minor differences but essentially the thrust of the constitutional arrangements they were largely similar but those two leaders had differing views on the way in which the Constitutions should be adapted.

EHdK 08:09 And what's your view?

HG 08:11 I think that the evolution argument is one that that would explain to us how we ended up with this system of government. And I say that primarily because there really has not been too much energy for constitutional reform and change in the years gone by. There's only one major constitutional reform in Trinidad and Tobago in 1976 when we went from a monarchical parliamentary system to a presidential republic with a quasi-ceremonial president parliamentary system. So that, I think that, you know, if we take the Manley view, we can understand that all of this has evolved over time. If we take the Williams view, it more or less imports a constitution that is adapted to suit local circumstances. And, to my mind, you both end up in the same place.

EHdK 09:16 What discussions were taking place with the UK Government around that time?

HG 09:23 Well, there were discussions with the UK Government in the sense that between 1956 when Eric Williams comes to power in Trinidad with the compliments of the British government who allowed him to nominate two of the five nominated members to give him a working majority in the Trinidad and Tobago Legislative Council. It was a policy change that was implemented.

EHdK 09:54 And Williams had really strong ties to the UK already. He studied at Oxford, didn't he?

HG 09:59 Yes, he was at Oxford and he got his PhD in 1939. And he subsequently left to go to teach at Howard. His PhD was published in 1944 by the University of North Carolina Press and it was called "Capitalism and Slavery". In a sense, he and CLR James were contemporaries at the time. And James published the Black Jacobins in 1938. And the reality was that the arguments were somewhat similar as regards the reasons why slavery and the slave trade were ended. Williams dealing with the British imperial side and James dealing with the French imperial side and linking the Parisian masses to the slaves in Saint Domingue. While Williams was arguing that the industrial revolution in Great Britain in the 19th century was to a large extent the reasons why the British government opted to terminate the slave trade first and then slavery. So that he sort of put the humanitarian argument in a secondary position and put the economic argument in a primary position. And

therefore, in that context, Williams more or less opened a new debate about the end of slavery and the slave trade. So you have that end of the spectrum. James was a committed Marxist. He had certain views his book “World Revolution, 1917-1936” was one of those texts that established him. But, of course, James fell out with Stalin over the issue of socialism in one country where Stalin wanted to turn away from advancing the cause of socialism in the developing world. And with his alliances with the UK and with the US in order to fight Hitler. It changed the dynamic. George Padmore, another writer at the same time was of the same view. And he fell out with the Kremlin as well, over the same issue. So, I think that what you had is that in the emerging socialist world, there were differences of opinion as regards how the developing world would have been treated and they saw Stalin as having committed an unspeakable betrayal. And then you have others like Williams and so on who, in writing about Capitalism and Slavery, university thesis, PhD thesis, then followed by publication, then his own work with the Anglo-American Commission and then his resignation and then his entry into politics put him on a completely different path to James. And James made his way back to Williams. And then Williams and James fell out. And Williams put James under house arrest at one time before James went his way. So that I think that there is a lot...but James was very insightful into society at the time. His book, “Beyond a Boundary” that celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2023, was one that was more about society and less about cricket, even though it was supposed to be about cricket.

EHdK 13:34 Talking of cricket, we’re at UWI at the moment at the Alma Jordan Library. So, I was quite interested in looking into the life of Learie Constantine as well who was a famous Trinidadian cricketer who then became a very important figure actually in Britain in terms of his kind of political activism as well as his denunciation of racism in the country. And I thought it was just quite interesting his relationship with CLR James and the fact that, I think, they grew up together and had a friendship as well. So, I just wondered, do you do you know anything about that?

HG 14:18 Well, Constantine was the first Chairman of the PNM [People’s National Movement] when Williams took over the PNM. And Constantine became the first High Commissioner to London after independence in 1962. And he has had a long and distinguished career both on and off the field of play, so to speak. So, he is someone who is perhaps not as celebrated as he could have been. But he is someone who made a very significant contribution to the evolution of Trinidad and Tobago but also at an earlier time in the UK, he had his own advocacy issues that he pursued and therefore he is someone worthy of further research. If others, you know, maybe listening to this, at a future date might decide that the life of Learie Constantine is worthy of further inquiry, I would highly support and recommend that.

EHdK 15:24 I'm just thinking about this project because we've been looking at Caribbean High Commissioners but also their role in terms of political activism and their responses to the UK government. I think Learie Constantine is a really good example of somebody who wasn't afraid to speak his mind. A very important figure at that time. So, what were the specific...thinking a bit more about the changes to British immigration and citizenship legislation around the time. What were some of the acts or some of the legal changes that were happening from a Caribbean perspective that we might consider as being important? I know there was the West Indies Act of 1967 which had modifications of the British Nationality Act of 1948 and 1965. I just wondered...because this project is thinking about the transnational linkages and the connections between the Caribbean region and the UK. Is there anything that springs to mind?

HG 16:37 The West Indies Act of 1967 was really a response to the failure of Federation. And because the reality is that the British government, after the establishment of the Federation in 1958, it took a long time to get to 1958 in terms of a Federation and a federal idea. Because in September of 1947, there was a standing...there was this conference that was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica to discuss the issue of standing closer. And a number of representatives came from various countries.

EHdK 17:20 Was that just from the Caribbean?

HG 17:22 West Indian colonies. Arthur Creech Jones was Secretary of State for the Colonies in the Labour government of Clement Attlee. And he had convened this but that in itself came out of a recommendation from the Moyne Commission whose report had been completed by 1939. But because of the Second World War, it was not released until 1945. Primarily because one, the British government during the war was afraid of enemy propaganda for the Germans, and also they were afraid of the American media sensationalising some of the recommendations. So that in 1945, when it was made public, it was really date stamped 1939. And there was a change of government. Churchill and the Conservatives lost the election in 1945. Clement Attlee and Labour came to power. And they took up the recommendation in the Moyne Commission report that while they sensed that there was a lot of insularity that they picked up in their tour of the region, the Moyne Commissioners did.

EHdK 18:37 Can you remember where specifically they travelled to?

HG 18:38 They went to many countries in the British West Indies. It's detailed in the report so I really don't want to call names of places and omit anybody in error but the report itself has all of the territories that they visited. They felt that that the prospect of Federation was unlikely to succeed. However, it was something that they felt was a laudable goal. And the Attlee government took it up and in 1947, Arthur Jones convened this conference in Montego Bay. And the coming out of that Standing Closer Association Committee was

formed that did not report, I think, until around 1953 or thereabouts. And they recommended a weak Federation. One with a weak centre and strong individual units. And then in the...there was a British Caribbean Federation Act of 1956 that laid the foundation and then there was an Order in Council of 1957 that established the Constitution. Lord Hailes was named as the first Governor-General of the West Indies. He arrived in Trinidad, which was the federal capital, which is where the federal capital was located, on the 3 of January 1958. And on the 25th of March 1958, the federal elections, general elections, were held. And Sir Grantley Adams became the first Federal prime minister. Now, the British government proceeded to have a conference to discuss independence with the Federation in March of 1961 and the issue in Jamaica at the time was that the Jamaican electorate and Alexander Bustamante, who was opposed to Norman Manley, wanted to assert a measure of self-determination which led to Manley giving an undertaking that he would have a referendum. So, in May of 1960, I think, Manley gave an undertaking that he would have a referendum on Jamaica's future in the Federation. And on the 19th of September 1961, there was a referendum in Jamaica on the issue which resulted in a narrow majority in favour of secession from the Federation. As a consequence of that, Sir Grantley Adams, the Federal prime minister, hired Sir Arthur Lewis as a sort of special advisor. And Lewis then proceeded to travel around the region to try to convince the other governments to go ahead with a federation of the nine because it was originally 10. Jamaica had voted to come out. The British government accepted the result of the referendum. So as far as they were concerned, Jamaica was going. And as a consequence of that, the key to the whole operation became Eric Williams and Trinidad and Tobago. There were a number of exchanges between Lewis. Lewis met Williams at least on three occasions in his house and he that he detailed his views about his meetings.

EHdK 22:18 What was the main motivation for the formation of the Federation? What were some of the arguments that were used?

HG 22:23 I think that essentially the British government was seeking to...it would have been a more economical way to run the colonies in the British West Indies rather than having all of these...this multitude of colonies operating on their own. Bringing them into some kind of economic union and political union. But the degree of insularity being what it is and what it was, is something that the Moyne Commission has picked up on it. That it was likely to scuttle the whole idea. And that is exactly what happened in the end primarily because Jamaica, with its act of self-determination in the referendum, said we want out. The nine that remained Eric Williams...between September/October of 1961 and December of 1961, Lewis met Williams at least on three occasions. And I've written about this, some declassified notes that Lewis sent to the Colonial Office about his meetings at Williams. He was telling the British government what Williams was saying. The W. Arthur Lewis Reader that I edited in 2019, published by Ian Randle press, has a number of things. And I have an article in there that details some of these confidential notes that he sent to the Colonial Office. And basically, he said that Williams wanted to mash the Federation up and to restart on his terms. But interestingly, Williams had a general election on the 4 of December 1961

and for the entire election campaign he kept the issue of Federation off the table. Once he had been reelected, he then proceeded to make moves towards having the Federation dismantled by virtue of Trinidad and Tobago coming out. And on the 14th of January 1962, the General Counsel of the PNM, People's National Movement, Williams' party, they passed a resolution calling for Trinidad and Tobago to withdraw from the Federation. And, as a consequence of that, essentially the Federation was going to be over so that you then had a situation in which the British government made moves to terminate the Federation. So, there was a West Indies Act of 1962 which effectively terminated the Federation. The British government then attempted to create a federation of the so-called Little Eight because Trinidad and Tobago was now going. By August of 1962, Jamaica on the 6 and Trinidad and Tobago on the 31 both became independent in their own right. And these negotiations for a federation of the Little Eight continued. By 1966, Barbados was going through its own independence and was coming out because Barbados was expected to be the Big Brother in the whole operation. Barbados withdrew because Errol Barrow wanted to pursue his own independence dreams for Barbados. And the response of the British government to that was to go with associated statehood and the West Indies Act of 1967 which led to Montserrat being taken out as a form of federal territory and returned to direct colonial rule. The establishment of associated statehood for the remaining seven states created a situation in Saint Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla where Anguilla embarked on an attempt to secede from the associated state of Saint Kitts Nevis Anguilla. That created a constitutional and political crisis on the island of Anguilla. The British government sent in paratroopers and the Metropolitan Police to try to keep...1967. So, by 1968, there were all kinds of negotiations and discussions going on. And it really wasn't until 1980 that it was finalised. But for all intents and purposes, Anguilla was now separate from Saint Kitts and Nevis. And by 1980, it was officially formalised that Anguilla was returned directly to colonial rule, was a British dependent territory, overseas dependent territory. Saint Kitts and Nevis remained together and then they got independence three years later in 1983. So that, as it stands now, there's the state of Saint Kitts and Nevis and Anguilla remains a British Overseas Dependent Territory. So that Montserrat, that was in the Federation, was returned to direct colonial rule in 1967. And Anguilla, by virtue of the post-secession, attempted secession negotiations, was returned officially to direct colonial rule by 1980 or thereabouts. And Saint Kitts and Nevis, what remained, they got independence in 1983.

EHdK 27:20 But the Federation itself, I mean, lasted four years.

HG 27:24 It lasted four years, from 1958 to 1962. It did not include British Guiana that became Guyana. It did not include The Bahamas. It did not include Belize, that was the former British Honduras. They were not part of the Federation. So that it was just 10 territories called the West Indies.

EHdK 27:46 I visited the West Indies Federal Archives in Barbados, and they have some fascinating archives there. And particularly what caught my attention was the discussions that the Federation was having around the introduction of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. It was very clear that Caribbean leaders of the time were really very displeased, basically by the debates that were taking place in the UK Parliament and also the introduction of changes to make it more difficult for Commonwealth citizens to be able to enter and settle in the UK. I just wondered what knowledge or background you have into any of those discussions or debates that were taking place?

HG 28:37 It has not been a frontal area of my research so that it's not something I think I could offer an expert opinion on, but I know that there were concerns about it. I mean, this was a matter that bedevilled the UK in the 1960s. And then you had the Enoch Powell Rivers of Blood speech and so on. It was something that was an extremely difficult period. And I know that immigration as a by-product or end product of imperialism and colonialism, and having these colonies and their citizens, how do you engage them? Because the West Indies Act...you know, citizenship was reserved to the UK Government and was not given to the...citizenship, defence and external affairs was to be handled by the UK Government and internal self-government was what these associated states would have.

EHdK 29:38 What caught my attention was that Grantley Adams requested a conference. He wanted to hold a conference in London to discuss some of the main themes that were coming through. And I think the British government either didn't pay attention to those concerns and didn't follow through with that request. I just wondered in your own research, what evidence you found of the British government responses and reactions to Caribbean diplomats and leaders when they, in terms of kind of deprioritising the region and stepping away from its colonial responsibilities as the region was transitioning?

HG 30:26 I haven't done extensive research on the immigration aspect of this. But one of the things that has struck me is the extent to which the British Honours System remains in the front...it's a frontal thing with a lot of persons who desire knighthoods and damehoods and membership of Her Majesty's or His Majesty's Privy Council. And it is something that, even in places like Barbados and Saint Lucia and Antigua and Grenada, where you have had this woven into the national awards system, keeping knighthoods and damehoods. I mean, as we speak now, the president of Barbados is a Dame. And in that context, you know, the first president of Barbados is a Dame so that you have that issue. And I contrast that with Trinidad and Tobago that when Sir Ellis Clarke, who was the last Governor-General, became the first president of Trinidad and Tobago, he dropped the use of the title Sir although he couldn't give back the GCMG and so on that he had. But he dropped the use of the title Sir when he became president. But I have noticed in Barbados that the new president of Barbados, who was the last Governor-General, she has kept the damehood. But then you have the Order of Saint Andrew which is designed to be an indigenous

Barbados award under which knighthoods and damehoods are given. What has happened in Barbados, I think, is that you have had an incorporation of the monarchical system with a local veneer being put over with a parish in Barbados being used. These are local Barbados awards so that you have local knighthoods and local damehoods. It was previously obviously because Barbados was a monarchy, the Governor-General would have been the person to convene on behalf of Her Majesty at the time, or His Majesty...well Her Majesty because she died after Barbados had become a republic. But now with the presidency, these awards would still be given. So, the knighthoods and damehoods still exist. And we cannot underestimate the power of the British Honours System even in its mimicked form. Antigua as a lot of knighthoods that have been given to famous cricketers and others and so on.

EHdK 33:13 Who makes the decision on that? Is that a local decision?

HG 33:15 That's a local decision. It's a local political decision which you advise... let's put it this way that the local awards have been recalibrated from their British origins and are still continued. So that you still have knighthoods and damehoods being given. The big issue that has emerged now is the question of the membership of His Majesty's Privy Council. Because the title Right Honourable is also a very desirable title. The prime minister of Jamaica, Andrew Holness, he had taken on becoming a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council at the time when she was alive. And he still is but then there is an issue going on in Jamaica now about becoming a republic.

EHdK 34:09 And it's hugely significant, I think, the difference between when Trinidad [and Tobago] became a republic in 1976 to Jamaica still transitioning, basically, into that status. I think that there's something to be said.

HG 34:25 Well, you know, in Jamaica, the constitutional arrangements are such that you need to get the two-thirds majority in both houses after, of course, you have the bill being laid there for a six-month delay before you can proceed on it. And then you have to have a referendum afterwards. And that's going to be the interesting part because the people get the final say. Some of the constitutions in the Commonwealth Caribbean have this referendum...post-parliamentary referendum technique. So, in Saint Vincent the Grenadines, for example, in 2009 you had the government of Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves with a constitutional republic bill that they got approved in the house, they had the special majority, they had the time delay, everything that was satisfied. Three months after the first reading, you can proceed to second reading and then second reading and you go on and get the bill passed and then you have to have a referendum after that. So, in November 2009, they had a referendum in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the electorate did not give them the two-thirds majority of the referendum that they required. So, the bill died at that stage and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains a monarchy. A number of countries in the region have that referendum proposal built into it. And there seems to be little energy to pursue republicanism after Guyana in 1970. Trinidad and

Tobago in 1976 and Dominica in 1978 became republics. It wasn't until 2021 that Barbados got into the republican...

EHdK 36:09 Just to understand, are you also arguing that the case for Jamaica is partly made more difficult because of its...the system of government that it's got in place and how easy that would be to then acquire a two-thirds majority the referendum? What difference was there in Trinidad and how easily did that pass?

HG 36:34 It passed because in 1971, the opposition embarked on a no vote campaign. They did not really contest the election and the PNM, led by Eric Williams, won all 36 seats in the House of Representatives. And that allowed the government to proceed with the Constitution Commission that reported by 1974. By that time, one member had crossed the floor in the House of Representatives to have a leader of the opposition who could have appointed independent senators...opposition senators so that you had government opposition independent senators. The independent senators at that time were to be appointed on the advice of the prime minister from among groups that the prime minister felt ought to be represented. And that, obviously, was a factor that we saw the bill going through both Houses of Parliament. Primarily because the PNM had been gifted all of the seats by the opposition's no vote campaign. They were complaining about the voting machines that were being used and opted not to participate. And there were other participants in the election. But the PNM won eight seats unopposed on nomination day and won the other 28 in the election in which the opposition asked people not to vote. So that Eric Williams was gifted that and, in the case of Guyana where you had the change, there was clear evidence of overseas vote-rigging that took place in the 1968 general elections in Guyana which permitted [Forbes] Burnham to have the kind of majority that he needed. And he was able to effect changes to become a republic by 1970. And then by 1980, they became an executive presidency in 1980 after a highly questionable referendum in 1979 where he said there was a massive turnout in favour of Republic. But the evidence on the ground suggests that many of the polling stations were like ghost towns. So, Guyana has had a troubled history with regard to the issue of elections and the handling of elections and election results and so on. And it wasn't really until the post-Burnham era that you started to get a change. So, by 1992...the 1992 general election in Guyana, the Carter Center in the US, took part in those elections and provided a high degree of oversight. And you had the return of the PDP [Progressive Democratic Patriots] to power led by Cheddi Jagan who became the president. And since that time there have been elections and there has been change in Guyana, electoral change in Guyana, which depended on going back and forth is something that was not the case prior to the...during the Burnham years.

EHdK 39:50 What knowledge do you have about the influence and the role of the British High Commissions within the Caribbean or within Trinidad specifically? What kind of political discussions would they have been involved in? Where would they have provided political influence, if any? Just thinking more historically about British diplomacy and how that looked.

HG 40:18 It is apparent now, from declassified documents that I have seen, that the British government was being closely briefed by the then Governor-General Sir Ellis Clarke about what Eric Williams was planning. And to that extent, there was a senior civil servant, and the name is Duncan Watson, who was sent out here to meet with the High Commissioner and go and meet with Ellis Clarke who was Governor-General. It was obvious that Ellis Clarke was giving information to the British government.

EHdK 40:52 What was the British government's stance on Eric Williams behind the scenes?

HG 40:56 They seem to have been...they were favourable to him. It appears so on the surface and then some of the declassified documents...there seems to be the favour for Eric Williams as opposed to the opposition which really was in disarray. I mean Dr [Rudranath] Capildeo was elected as a member of parliament in 1961 and then shortly after independence, he went back to England. He became a professor at London University in mathematics. And it was an absentee leadership arrangement so that it was difficult for them to go against Eric Williams despite some of Williams' rhetoric, Williams' actions and some of the corporate interests that supported him. When he faced his darkest hour in 1970 with the Black Power uprising in 1970, one of the complaints... one of the first things that he did, he reached out to the British government to try to get them to get troops from Tanzania and Nigeria, to come to Trinidad and he wanted the British government to be the one to make all the arrangements... I have written about that and have spoken about that. It's in declassified cabinet conclusions. In April of 1970, there are cabinet conclusions where the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster reported that the cabinet said certain things,

EHdK 42:40 Where are these archives held?

HG 42:40 Cabinet conclusions? The National Archives at Kew.

EHdK 42:40 In London.

HG 42:43 Yes. I've seen those. And April 1970, the cabinet conclusions for a couple of cabinet meetings show that Williams had actually requested the British government to get Nigeria and Tanzania to send troops to Trinidad. So, what Williams appeared to have in mind was to put African troops on the streets to face the protesters. It didn't come to pass though because he changed his mind. So, I don't know, you know, he may have gotten support from somewhere else. But it was on the cards and the George Thomson, I think,

was the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Denis Healey was Secretary of State for Defence. And Harold Wilson was the prime minister. And that was the request. But one of the things I think that that needs some investigation is the ability of Williams to get around the Black Power protesters because he survived politically. And he had a special convention of his party in November of 1970 where he introduced the Chaguaramas Declaration which was the People's Charter revised. Now the People's Charter was a founding document of the PNM.

EHdK 44:08 And I was looking at that yesterday in the National Archives.

HG 44:10 The Chaguaramas Declaration, he basically established the concept of state control of the economy. And that essentially is his game changer with regard to this challenge that he had. And he set up an institution called a national commercial bank which was designed to provide loan finance to a number of persons who might not otherwise have qualified for loan finance. But very cleverly, you know, the corporate class that supported him obviously were going to be the main beneficiaries because when they took their loans, they would have to go to the persons who sell the appliances and the hardware and the motor cars and all the other things and so on. So, in many respects, it was a very clever use of political tactics in an economic sphere to be able to survive politically and quell what was going on. After that, we saw the emergence of a middle class in Trinidad and Tobago by virtue of that. And I think he was able to dodge a political bullet that was very dangerous at one time. And then by 1971, the no vote campaign of the opposition played right into his hands and gave him exactly what he wanted. No opposition. And then he was able to change the constitution to reflect something different. Ellis Clarke was in the centre of all of this because he took over from Solomon Hochoy. Hochoy was another one who was giving information to the British.

EHdK 45:54 In what respect? I mean, were they sending telegrams or meeting...?

HG 45:58 Well, they could send internal notes, telegrams, they could do various things. And they had a number of meetings. Hochoy, interestingly, was a tremendous ally to the colonial office. You don't become the first non-British governor of a colony in 1961 without having some kind of nexus and Hochoy was a very influential person in the politics of Trinidad and Tobago until the time that he retired as Governor-General by 1972.

EHdK 46:35 How would those communications be sent?

HG 46:39 It could be conversations with High Commissioners. It could be, you know, various ways in which it can be done. Making documents. I mean, the fact that Ellis Clarke, for example...Christopher Diggines was High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago at the time of the republican discussions in 1975, 1976 and so on. And he was reporting to the Colonial Office everything that Ellis Clarke was telling him. And what Ellis Clarke was telling him is what Eric Williams was thinking. And it's all in the public record, declassified now

after more than 30 years. It hasn't been held back like some other documents that are held for quite a while or heavily redacted. So, Ellis Clarke basically unloaded a lot of what Williams was thinking to the British government and in 1975, 1976, that was critical. And even though we were a republic, Her Majesty visited...Queen Elizabeth II visited Trinidad and Tobago in 1985. And when she came here in 1985, she awarded Ellis Clarke a GCB. You don't get a GCB as the president of a republic without some kind of pre-existing history of good relations with the British government. And I'm not criticising it. I'm simply saying that for services rendered, he was very well rewarded. And after he left the presidency in 1987, he resumed usage of his titles. So, the knighthood came back. The Sir that he had stopped using came back. And this is very significant because the Chief Justice at the time, Sir Isaac Hyatali, had a different view. He took the view that he wanted to retain his knighthood during the time that we are a republic because he argued he had to meet other foreign dignitaries and other members of the judiciary, overseas and so on. And he gave a completely different argument. And he retained the use of his knighthood during his tenure as Chief Justice which coincided with Trinidad Tobago becoming a republic. So, you've had two different responses. And this is why I say that the impact of the British honours system on our politics is something that we cannot underestimate.

EHdK 49:13 To what extent was Britain motivated by Trinidad and Tobago's economy as well and its oil wealth?

HG 49:21 A lot of interest here. There was a lot of business interest. And in the cabinet conclusions in 1970, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster speaks about British interests in Trinidad and Tobago so that they were mindful of the fact that there were significant interests here. You still had Tate and Lyle here at the time. And so there were British interests in Trinidad and Tobago that you had to look at.

EHdK 49:51 I'm making a bit of a chronological leap here, but I think that it gets forgotten about in discussions about the English-speaking Caribbean. How much was Cuba in the 1950s and the rise of Communist Cuba...How much was that influencing British decisions or discussions that were taking place?

HG 50:14 Well, there might have been a more of an Anglo-US discussion about what to do with colonies in the West Indies. And it certainly would have been an issue that would have come up. Which is why the constitution in British Guiana was suspended in 1953 and then reinstated. And then Burnham and Jagan fell out afterwards. And I think that's an issue that is worthy of further exploration because of the ideological issues. And Burnham was able to advance a very left-wing agenda because his opposition was even more left-wing than him. So that the Americans may have had a different view on Burnham because what was to the left of Burnham in opposition was not someone they would have wanted to come into power. The British government may also have had a similar outlook and that may have, you know, supported the idea of looking the other way over the elections of 1968 and 1973 which would by all accounts from the Commonwealth observer team that monitored them,



al, rigged and not fair by any means. So, I think it's an interesting point to be looked at and it lingers you under 1983 in the Grenada crisis. And this was perhaps one of the more interesting aspects of it. I've written about this...the fact that the US government did not tell the British government what their actual plans were. And there is considerable evidence to show that President Reagan made certain decisions in concert with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States which was led at the time by Prime Minister Eugenia Charles of Dominica and made a request for American intervention. And that was the genesis of it. And the declassified documents on the US side have also shown that to be the case. But the British government was in the dark. And what has emerged is that in 2014, a verbal apology emerged after a Freedom of Information request, showing Ronald Reagan apologising to Margaret Thatcher for not telling her upfront but what he was saying to her is that he was afraid that there would have been a leak. And that's the reason why they didn't want...so it wasn't anything to do with her, it was to do with them. And he navigated his apology very cleverly and she accepted it whether that was, you know, orchestrated otherwise or whatever. But the reality is, there is a verbal apology on record. And I think that what happened in Grenada, if you go to Grenada now, I mean, it's like a blip on the radar of history. You don't really know about it or hear about it. But it was very, very significant. And I think that the implosion of the revolution really just ended at all when they turned against each other.

EHdK 53:28 Thank you. I think that you've provided such a rich historical context there that speaks across a lot of very important issues that explain the different dynamics that were happening in the region at the time and some of the political challenges and responses to all sorts of issues. Our project is called 'The Windrush Scandal in a Transnational and Commonwealth Context'. The scandal emerged in 2018 and part of the reason that it hit the front pages was the responses of Caribbean High Commissioners at the CHOGM meeting in London whereby they requested a meeting with Theresa May. And they were outraged, basically, at the number of stories that were coming out about the UK government's treatment of Caribbean nationals who were essentially being rebranded or recategorised as illegal immigrants living in the UK, some of whom were subjected to incarceration and deportation. And many others who were blocked from returning from the Caribbean region to the UK. While I understand it's not your field of expertise, per se, I just wondered more broadly your take on how that scandal was able to develop over so many decades. And part of it, I think, we've talked about today has been the stepping back from the UK's interest in the Caribbean and its lack of will in actually listening to or engaging with Caribbean leaders. Or possible not. That is possibly my take on it. Do you have anything that you want to add or say about that broader situation? I thought what you talked about with the awards and the British honours system is fascinating because it's a really clear example of where the UK has still got his tentacles really in the system...in the Caribbean as well as its kind of Westminster model influence.

HG 55:47 Well, I think that the issue of why the Windrush generation was permitted to enter in the first place. I think if we go back to there and the extent to which they provided a critical support at a critical time just after the war. The British economy was in need of people from the West Indies, as it turned out, to come to work in a number of areas and to provide support to help continue and support the British economy. And there was that natural connection between the motherland and these colonies. And I think the tragedy of it all is the treatment that was meted out several years later to persons who felt that they belonged but because it didn't have documentary evidence, and a variety of other issues, were then penalised under the law. And I think that's the hurtful part. And that's the part I think that made it a political scandal. How the Home Office handled it was not something that showered any glory upon Theresa May. And I think that how the Home Office will handle it going forward, I think is going to be the critical issue. The matter, I think, has assumed even greater proportions in the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter movement which I think has shone a different light on the issue. And from that standpoint, I think that if there is agreement that the Windrush generation provided critical economic support to Great Britain in the post-war period then there must be something in there for the generations who have lived on after and have come after that continue to be part of Britain. And, therefore, I think it's going to be an interesting challenge as to how these future generations of Windrush arrivals are going to be treated in British society. And because Britain has emerged as a kind of melting pot of different races, colours, creeds and cultures. So, it's one way the West Indian component is a prominent component in that and how those generations are treated and how the children of those people are treated. I think it's going to be an interesting thing under Home Office, obviously, and the British government as a whole. Future British governments will obviously have to have a response to it. But I think that, from my point of view, on this side of the pond, I think that there is a case to be made for more favourable treatment having regard to the kind of support and service that was provided by that first generation.

EHdK 58:47 Thank you so much for your time today. And before we conclude the interview, is there anything else that you would like to add?

HG 58:52 No, just that I am very happy to have been able to make a contribution to this project. And I hope that some of the things that have provided will provide insights to others to continue further research.

EHdK 59:04 Thank you so much for your time today.