

Labouring in the Vineyard

By

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I hope the advent of electronic 'readers' does not mean that there will no longer be books for authors to inscribe to their friends on publication. Some of my most treasured books are of that kind; among them, none more treasured than the copy of *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492 – 1969*, inscribed as follows:

My dear Sonny

We are both labourers in the vineyard.

It is in this spirit that I send you this book.

Bill.

That was 1970. "Bill", of course, was Prime Minister Eric Williams. The vineyard was economic integration. West Indians were nurturing Caribbean unity from the CARIFTA seedling to the sapling of Caribbean Community. The blossoms of CARICOM and the Treaty of Chaguaramas had actually sprouted. In this Lecture, I want to follow that inscription through the decades that have passed, asking what has come of our labours – what is the state of the vineyard?

The Eric Williams Memorial Lecture has a distinguished vintage; I am honoured and humbled to have been invited to join the list of those who have given it over the years. I thank the organisers and all those responsible for the invitation and the Governor of the Central Bank, in particular, Mr Ewart Williams. I am twice honoured, in giving the Lecture in this special year of the 50th Anniversary of Trinidad and Tobago's Independence.

With Jamaica, you mark the first 50 years of West Indian freedom in its larger sense; and you have much of which to be proud.

Today, May 26th, also marks 46 years of the independence of Guyana whose initial Constitution I had a hand in drafting as its Attorney-General.

But there are ironies which I must share with you – and questions which I hope you will allow me to ask.

Fifty years ago, in 1962, I lived among you, here in my West Indian Capital, in Port of Spain, Maraval. I was a younger labourer then; and the vineyard was of course 'Federation'. 'The West Indies', with a capital T, the

Federation for which West Indian leaders had struggled, intellectually and politically, for 40 years - none more so than Trinidadians like Captain Arthur Andrew Cipriani and Uriah 'Buzz' Butler - and for which its people had yearned, (the Federation) was about to become Independent on the 31st May 1962 – 50 years ago next Thursday.

We should have been celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Independence of the West Indian nation next week. That is how close we came to reaching the 'holy grail'. Instead, on that same day (31 May 1962), the Federation was dissolved. The immediate cause of the dissolution was, of course, Jamaica's referendum and Dr Williams' inventive, and now notorious, arithmetic that "1 from 10 leaves nought". But these were only the proximate causes. Federation's failure had many fathers.

As Assistant Attorney General of the Federation, I had been drafting the Federal Constitution. My vision, my mission, was regional – an independent West Indies. I left Port of Spain on 30th August 1962 for Harvard, where I would be reassured by the example of other federal founding fathers who had overcome their trials - trials much greater and more traumatic than our own - through sustained vision and leadership. I have never lost faith in real Caribbean unity as our regional destiny.

Nor, I believe, did Eric Williams. In the last pages of *From Columbus to Castro* he wrote this:

The real case for unity in Commonwealth Caribbean countries rests on the creation of a more unified front in dealing with the outside world – diplomacy, foreign trade, foreign investment and similar matters. Without such a unified front the territories will continue to be playthings of outside Governments and outside investors. To increase the 'countervailing power' of the small individual units vis-a-vis the strong outside Governments and outside companies requires that they should aim at nothing less than a single centre of decision-making vis-a-vis the outside world. [A SINGLE CENTRE OF DECISION-MAKING!].

He had earlier written in those same pages:

Increasingly, the Commonwealth Caribbean countries such as Trinidad and Tobago will become aware that the goals of greater economic independence and the development of a cultural identity will involve them in even closer ties one with another – at economic

and other levels. For the present disgraceful state of fragmentation of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries makes it extremely difficult (although not impossible) for a single country to adopt a more independent and less 'open' strategy of development.

You see why, within months of writing this, he could be addressing me as a 'fellow labourer in the vineyard' – the vineyard of economic integration: the new variety of unity, after 'Federation' had withered. It was his hope that those efforts - the drive from CARIFTA to Community and the fulfilment of the dream of Chaguaramas could ameliorate *the present disgraceful state of fragmentation of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries* – a state of disunity he so palpably deplored.

From all this two, questions seem to invite answers from us, one speculative; the other more definitive. The first is whether West Indians (all of us) would be better off were we celebrating, next week, the 50th Anniversary of the Independence of The West Indies? The second, given that we abandoned Federation, is whether we have rectified what Eric Williams called (in 1969) our *disgraceful state of fragmentation*.

In this special year, the first question is uniquely appropriate; the second, I suggest, is imperative. So let us look at the first. Would we have been better off had the Federation not been dissolved? Any answer to this must make some assumptions; but there are good clues. The first is that the patch-work Lancaster House Constitution agreed to in 1961 would have been the basis of Independence – i.e. a very weak central government but with a constitutional review in 5 years time. But another assumption is more positive. Norman Manley had pledged that if he won the referendum, he would offer himself for election to the Federal Parliament. His actual words were: "*As simply as I can, and with a full heart, I must state that when the first election for a new West Indies comes, I shall offer myself as a candidate.*" In other words, Norman Manley might be the Prime Minister of the independent Federation.

The new Federal Government would have minimal, indeed miniscule, powers. The *Economics of Nationhood*, by which Eric Williams placed such store but whose strong central government so frightened Jamaica, would be in cold storage. The Government would be essentially a vehicle for mobilising the people of the West Indies to nationhood - and with Manley at the helm inspiring in them and in the international community confidence in the maturity of the new Caribbean state. Five years later, constitutional

review, against the backdrop of those first years of nation-building, would give confidence to a process of endowing the Federal Government with more substantive but still limited powers. Perhaps, most important of all, would be the gains in the deepening of our West Indian identity and the enlargement of a West Indian patriotism.

They would be years of the West Indian people getting to know each other as never before. *The Federal Palm* and *The Federal Maple* – Canada's thoughtful gift to the Federation - would carry them where only their West Indian spirit had been before in their inter-island travels.

Independence for all of the islands, would be achieved within the framework of the Federation and each of the Island States would be autonomous within their substantial powers. On the international stage, The West Indies, though still small in world terms, would have become a sizable player, not least because of the quality and spread of our human resources. Would Guyana, which had inexcusably abstained from the federal project, not have been inexorably drawn in? It would, I believe, have become its unavoidable pathway to independence. Today, on the eve of its 50th Anniversary our national Federal State (with Guyana and Suriname in it) would have comprised more than 6 million people; it would have had vast resources of oil, gas, gold, diamonds, bauxite, forestry, uranium, manganese, tourism, and financial services; importantly, it would have had an educated and talented people who have shown by their global accomplishments and the demand for their expertise, that they could compete with any in the world community. It would have been a State that commanded our national pride – and respect of the international community – while keeping alive our several island cultures and values.

Against what might have been, we have to place what has been. Independence on an Island basis (and I regard Belize and Guyana as islands for this purpose) with our one West Indies formally fragmented into 13 separate states, with as many flags and anthems and seats in the United Nations. But, most of all, Independence in the context of very small communities without the checks and balances that larger size brings. In his frank Epilogue to Sir John Mordecai's invaluable record, *The West Indies: The Federal Negotiations*, Sir Arthur Lewis, after asserting that *(t)he case for a West Indian Federation is as strong as ever*, concluded his reasoning with the following:

Lastly, Federation is needed to preserve political freedom. A small island falls easily under the domination of a boss, who crudely or subtly intimidates the police, the newspapers, the magistrates and private employers. The road is thus open to persecution and corruption. If the Island is part of a Federation the aggrieved citizen can appeal to influences outside: to Federal Courts, to the Federal police, to the Federal auditors, the Federal Civil service Commission, the newspapers of other islands, and so on. If the Government creates disorder, or is menaced by violence beyond its control, the Federal Government will step in to uphold the law. These protections do not exist when the small island is independent on its own. So far West Indian governments have a fine tradition for respecting law and order, but in these turbulent days traditions are easily set aside. The West Indies needs a Federation as the ultimate guardian of political freedom in each island.

That was 1968. We have had up to 44 years of experience of separate independence to say whether he was right - not only here and in Jamaica, but in all the independences that followed, in Barbados and then in the smaller OECS islands – and, of course, in Guyana and Belize. Judgement will not be uniform; but I believe that many West Indians, in many parts of our Region, will say that Sir Arthur was right - and is; and that the answer to my speculative question is ‘Yes’, we would be better off as West Indians, were we celebrating next week the 50th Anniversary of the Independence of the Federated West Indies.

Besides Sir Arthur’s particular questions are others which we cannot avoid; questions not only for Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, but for all of us; questions which probe whether as independent countries we have done as well individually as we might have done collectively.

To mention only a few, starting with the specific and contemporary:

Had there been a Federation, with a region-wide regulatory agency, could it have done better in preventing the debacle of CLICO and BAICO and the terrible consequences for ordinary people now being felt throughout the region, including here in Trinidad and Tobago?

Would we have been in a better position to feed our growing population by mobilising the land resources of Guyana, Suriname and Belize, the capital of Trinidad and the skills of Barbados and other countries to create a viable food economy that reduces our import bill of over US\$3 billion?

Would we have been better able to manage the security of our borders, and to exploit the possibilities afforded by the Exclusive Economic Zone authorised by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, by the establishment of a seamless maritime boundary across much of the Eastern Caribbean island chain?

In the UN Climate Change negotiations and at the upcoming Rio+20 Summit on Environment and Development, would we have been listened to with greater respect and attention, speaking as a single voice from a bloc of island states and low-lying countries whose very existence is threatened by climate change, and having a common climate change mitigation and adaptation regime governed by a common political authority?

Would the Federation not have created a larger space for the creativity, productivity and advancement of our people, especially the youth? And, could we not have done better in keeping at home the over 60% of our tertiary educated people who now live in the OECD countries?

Would not our Caribbean companies been more competitive in the global community than our locally-placed nano-industries?

Would what Eric Williams described as *a single centre of decision-making vis-a-vis the outside world* have been able to bargain more effectively in the global community - including with the World Bank and in the WTO, with the European Union and now with Canada and China - for better terms and conditions for trade, aid and investment than our individual states with their smaller resources have been able to do?

With its greater resources and larger pool of human talent, would the Federation not have given us a wider field of opportunity and greater protection and prospects than our individual states have provided?

Of course not all will agree on the answers. Separatism has its beneficiaries: in political establishments, in commercial sectors, among anti-social elements that prosper in environments of weakness. That has always been the allurements of 'local control'. But what of the West Indian people – the ones for whom Norman Manley spoke when he looked to Federation as providing *a wider field for ambition*?

Whatever our speculation - and it can be no more than that - 50 years ago the moving finger of history wrote out 'Federation', and having 'writ' moved on. But in writing out solutions, history does not erase needs. What about

those needs of which Eric Williams wrote in 1969, within 7 years of Independence?

How have we done in our separate independences in responding to the *real case for unity* that he saw in *the creation of a more united front in dealing with the outside world – diplomacy, foreign trade, foreign investment and similar matters.*

How have we responded to his view that *‘to increase the countervailing power of our small individual units... requires nothing less than the creation of a single centre of decision-making vis-a-vis the outside world?*

How have we acted to change *the present disgraceful state of fragmentation of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries* of which he wrote with trenchant authority? Having disposed of Federation for better or for worse, have we retrieved through economic integration the gains we had hoped for from Federation?

What success has attended our labours in the vineyard? Have we been labouring? These are all aspects of the second question; and our answer can, indeed, be more definitive.

Within 3 years of the dissolution of the Federation, these imperatives had actually ensured the resumption of the Caribbean dialogue of unity through the Antigua/Barbados/Guyana initiative of 1965 which led to the establishment of CARIFTA – the Caribbean Free Trade Area, in which ultimately all the previously federated territories would be involved. But CARIFTA was just the beginning. The Agreement establishing it had expressly foreshadowed the ultimate creation of ‘a viable economic community of the Caribbean territories’ – a Community itself enabled by closer economic integration between its units.

When Eric Williams inscribed *From Columbus to Castro* to me in 1970, the Caribbean Community and Common Market was on its way to being agreed. The vineyard was being planted; but the labour of nurturing would continue. Work on the Treaty to formalise and fill it out was in hand under the guidance of William Demas at the Secretariat – another brilliant son of this soil who toiled in the vineyard of regional economic integration and inspired a generation of West Indian regionalists: economists and others. The Treaty was signed at Chaguaramas on July 4th 1973 – the original Treaty of Chaguaramas – signed initially by Prime Ministers Barrow,

Burnham, Michael Manley and Williams. The signing of the Treaty has been described as *a landmark in the history of West Indian people*; and so it was.

It was a highpoint of regional unity and confidence. In that same year we were negotiating with the still new European Community as one Caribbean – with our own Community – and using our oneness to forge the unity of the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (the ACP) – reducing the developing countries negotiating the Lomé Convention with Europe from 46 to 1. We were holding our own at the UN in New York and Geneva in the international ‘make-over’ debate on a New International Economic Order. Just months before the signing of the Treaty, on Guyana’s initiative Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago had defied hemispheric opinion and broken the diplomatic embargo against Cuba in December 1972. And there was more. Long before US President Ronald Reagan’s Caribbean Basin Initiative we had advanced proposals for an Association of countries of the Caribbean Basin, with Trinidad and Tobago offering to host the defining Summit Conference.

But we had flattered to deceive. Within years, we relapsed into inertia and worse. For 7 years, from 1975 to 1982, the Heads of Government Conference – with the Common Market Council, CARICOM’s ‘principal organ’ - did not meet. This is not the time or place for an inquest into Caribbean dissipation; the excuses were multiple: the enlarging economic disparity between Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana and Jamaica in particular; the virus of ‘ideological pluralism’ that infected the integration process; the divisive effects of the emergence of Grenada’s Revolutionary Government specifically, and the threat of a return of the region to external power rivalries; the deterioration of personal relations between Caribbean leaders to the point of incivility. By the end of the 70s it was realised that an impasse had been reached in Caribbean affairs and the CARICOM Council turned to William Demas and a team of regional experts to ‘review the functioning of Caribbean integration.....and prepare a strategy for its improvement in the decade of the 1980s’.

The Group’s findings were blunt and worth recalling:

An analysis of the performance of CARICOM in its three areas of activity shows that, although gains were registered in many aspects of functional cooperation and to a lesser extent with respect to inter-regional trade, inadequate progress was made in production

integration and coordination of foreign policies....The misunderstandings.....that characterised certain initiatives taken by some member countries in the field of external economic relations also gave a poor public image to the Community.

Their conclusions contained seeds of hope:

The fact, however, that the institutional framework of the community remains intact, that an inter-governmental dialogue was and is being sustained and that intra-regional trade and functional cooperation continue to show resilience and in some cases growth, indicate that the foundations of the movement are still intact.

But hope was misplaced. The Grenada invasion in 1983 effectively put paid to any 're-launch' of CARICOM. As Professor Anthony Payne commented in his indispensable 2008 *Political History of CARICOM*:

It was not just that the region disagreed about what to do in Grenada once the internal coup had taken place, but that the countries that actively supported and promoted the idea of a US Invasion (Jamaica, Barbados and the OECS states) deliberately connived to conceal their intentions from their remaining CARICOM partners – Trinidad, Guyana and Belize... No mention was made of such a commitment during the CARICOM discussions, which focussed exclusively upon the sanctions which could be brought to bear on the new military regime in Grenada.

In these circumstances, the other leaders – especially George Chambers and Forbes Burnham....understandably felt that they had been made to look foolish. Bitter recrimination followed... Many commentators wondered whether CARICOM would finally fall apart. The critical factor was whether anyone would actually work to destroy it.... A number of (leaders) came increasingly to suspect that (the then Prime Minister of Jamaica, Edward Seaga's real aim was the replacement of CARICOM with a looser organisation embracing

non-Commonwealth countries and excluding any existing member state that was not willing to accept US leadership in regional affairs. He fuelled these fears by speaking of the possible creation of CARICOM Mark II, arousing the suspicion in Trinidad and Guyana

that he was making a threat directed mainly at them. ... The Region was left in no doubt that during the 1980s CARICOM matters were a much lower priority in Kingston than the question of Jamaica's dealings with Washington.

I have quoted at length – and from such a dispassionate source – because we need to remember how we used our separateness, some will say our sovereignty, against each other.

No wonder that CARICOM languished during the 80's as well; but towards the end of the decade fortunes changed. Michael Manley replaced Seaga in Jamaica and in Trinidad A.N.R. Robinson entered the vineyard lamenting CARICOM's lack of *not only political but philosophical underpinnings*. Manley brought Jamaica back to its Caribbean roots; but it was Robinson that helped CARICOM return to its intellectual moorings. His Paper addressed to the 1989 Heads of Government Conference at Grand Anse, Grenada, which he entitled *The West Indies Beyond 1992* was a 'wake-up' call to the region. It stressed that:

The period since political independence has been one of continuous awareness of the common identity which distinguished the Caribbean people, and the structural constraints imposed upon them as small units in the international community.

It warned that:

Against (the) background of historic change and historic appraisal (in the world) the Caribbean could be in danger of becoming a back-water, separated from the main current to human advance in to the twenty-first century.

It called on West Indians to:

prepare for the future ... to consider how best to bring about real betterment in their condition of life, to achieve their full potential as free people responsible for their own destiny, and to improve their Region's place in the community of nations.

It proposed that a West Indian Commission be established *to help the people of the West Indies to prepare for the 21st Century*. In adopting this proposal, CARICOM Heads mandated that the Commission should formulate proposals for *advancing the goals of the Treaty of Chaguaramas*.

We were back in the vineyard, led by another Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago; another regional labourer. This time Caribbean political leaders went further; they decided on the tasks they would undertake and set targets for their completion. In the “Grand Anse Declaration and Work Programme for the Advancement of the Integration Movement”, they asserted that:

.... inspired by the spirit of cooperation and solidarity among us (we) are moved by the need to work expeditiously together to deepen the integration process and strengthen the Caribbean community in all of its dimensions to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by the changes in the global economy.

This cannot be dismissed as mere rhetoric. It was followed by clear commitment and a comprehensive Work Programme which stated:

We are determined to work towards the establishment in the shortest possible time of a single market and economy for the Caribbean Community. To that end, we shall ensure that the following steps are taken not later than 4 July 1993.

Today, 23 years after Grand A'nse, it is interesting that among the 13 specific actions enumerated were:

- *arrangements by January 1991 (21 years ago) for the free movement of skilled and professional personnel as well as for contract workers on a seasonal or project basis; and*
- *immediate and continuing action to develop by 4 July 1992 (20 years ago) a regional system of air and sea transportation including the pooling of resources by existing air and sea carriers conscious that such a system is indispensable to the development of a Single Market and Community.*

How do we feel about these commitments now? Both their specific undertakings and their promises of fraternity, when in our time irritations and worse are the daily experience of West Indians at West Indian immigration counters, and affordable travel in their Caribbean homelands remains the dream of our one people? Can we just shrug off these commitments of two decades by simply saying: ‘well, that was then’? If that is so, what is now? Where are we going, and who is the pied piper calling the tune?

I do not intend to traverse the ground covered by the West Indian Commission's Report, *Time for Action* (also mandated by Grand Anse), save to recognise that when its recommendations came to be considered at the 1992 CARICOM Summit here in Port of Spain, Prime Minister Robinson was gone from office; and with him the light of Grand Anse seemed to have gone out of the Region. Later that year, Trinidad and Tobago's new Prime Minister Patrick Manning, as CARICOM's Chairman, wrote the West Indian Commission. It was a letter of encouragement. He assured us that it was the *firm determination* of CARICOM Heads to *continue to give most serious consideration to all aspects of the Report*. Suffice it to say that, over the last 20 years, such 'serious consideration' did not induce acceptance of the Commission's crucial recommendation for a central executive authority to ensure implementation of the decisions taken together by CARICOM Heads in their collective sovereignty.

They came close to doing so at Rose Hall in Jamaica on CARICOM's 30th Anniversary in 2003 under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister P.J. Patterson; but qualified their conclusion to develop 'a system of mature regionalism', along the lines urged by the West Indian Commission, by calling it 'an agreement in principle'. Nothing more happened to that 'Rose Hall Declaration'; it simply joined the already long list of forgotten CARICOM Declarations, Affirmations and Commitments.

What of Grand Anse and the specific decisions on the Caribbean Single Market and Economy? A year ago, the Institute of International Relations of the University of the West Indies here at St Augustine – as I recall, very much the creation of Eric Williams - conducted a study of the region's record by some of the most eminent scholars on the Caribbean. It is the most authoritative contemporary commentary on the state of Caribbean integration – the state of the vineyard. Entitled *Caribbean Regional Integration*, its Executive Summary said the following:

There was a real sense that the optimistic era of Caribbean integration may well have passed just at the time when it is most desperately needed. The difficulties facing the region are no longer simply about competing effectively in a globalising economy. Rather, they are 'existential threats' which bring into question the fundamental viability of Caribbean society itself. Climate change, transnational crime, the decline of regional industries, food security, governance challenges, international diplomacy and so on are problems which

can only be effectively addressed by co-ordinated regional responses.

Moreover, these problems are becoming increasingly acute in the immediate present; failure to act immediately, decisively and coherently at the regional level could quite conceivably herald the effective decline of Caribbean society as a 'perfect storm' of problems gathers on the horizon. The regional leadership is seen as critical to either the continued deterioration of the integration process, or its re-generation. This report is therefore timely in terms of both its recommendations and the window of opportunity that has opened for the region – and especially the Heads of Government (HoG) – to seize the integration initiative. It cannot be stressed just how critical the present juncture is; this may well be the last chance to save the formal integration process in the Caribbean as we know it, and to set the region on a new development path. Another opportunity might not present itself in the future.

The study was available before last year's CARICOM Summit in St. Kitts; but there is no indication that Caribbean Heads took notice of it. Certainly their decision to 'pause' the integration process; *slow down the pace a bit*, as the Chairman insisted, is at total variance with the Study's call for the regeneration of the integration process.

At the St. Kitts Summit, the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago – and a successor of Eric Williams - asserted that: "Trinidad and Tobago is for CARICOM and for regional integration", So, in different words, did many other political leaders. Why then is 'one West Indies' an oxymoron to so many?

We all need to ponder this as we celebrate 50 years of independence; not just Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica this year; but everyone over the years to come. While we celebrate survival; we must not ignore our under-achievement and pretend that they were 50 glorious years. On the regional slate, which is ours collectively, the record is not good, and the trends beyond 50 are palpably worrying. Caribbean people know of these failures, they know the state of the regional vineyard. They are no longer moved by political promises of its imminent improvement. Yet, political leaders over the years have sustained the pretence that regional integration is moving forward. The opposite is now so obvious that pretences are being abandoned.

Within recent months, political leaders have been speaking out: Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerritt of Dominica, recalled Derek Walcott's acceptance speech as he received the Nobel Prize for Literature and likened the Caribbean to a beautiful vase that had been shattered by its history into many pieces. The Prime Minister spoke of 'fitting these broken pieces together'; but concluded:

To be quite frank, for the most part, the Community exists in the words of the Treaty only, rather than (as) a tangible entity that is seen by its people as a vital part of their lives. The force of historical necessity which might otherwise have driven the peoples together naturally are weak or non-existent. The Community at this time needs both unifying cultural symbols and an inspiring rallying call that 'all ah we got to be one'.

On the eve of the recent Inter-Sessional Meeting of Heads in Suriname the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, in an open letter to the Secretary General of CARICOM circulated to all Heads of Government asserted that:

CARICOM's mode of marking time, at an historical moment of overwhelmingly awesome challenges for our region, which compellingly demands a more profound integration, is mistaken. ...The times demand that we move resolutely beyond minimalism (in the integration process) which inexorably leads to regression: 'pausing' is but a euphemism for standing still, which, in a dynamic world, is sliding backward.

Even more recently, Owen Arthur, who, while he was Prime Minister of Barbados, had responsibility for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) in the quasi-Cabinet of CARICOM, citing the UWI St. Augustine Study, warned:

In a word, the region faces the spectre of becoming a 'failed society', we must build new strategic alliances within the region and with entities beyond the region to avert such a catastrophe. It is the challenge which makes it imperative that we strengthen every facet of our integration movement and move to a more perfect union. As we seek to move towards a more perfect union the most fundamental challenge which must be addressed in the years

ahead is that of improving and securing the weak and inadequate foundations on which integration has hitherto been made to rest.

These are serious signals of concern sent by West Indians who care. They come from the weaker of our countries and from the stronger. You in Trinidad and Tobago are in some respects the strongest now. When Jamaica precipitated the fall of federalism 50 years ago they were the strongest in our Region. But they precipitated that fall on a lack of knowledge and false belief – deliberately fostered by those who opposed Federation for their narrow political purposes. *Federation is an octopus anxious to suck Jamaica dry*, recorded John Mordecai as being a symbol used by the JLP to embroider their opposition campaign.

You must not, in your present strength, do the same to Caribbean integration. Remaining out of the full appellate jurisdiction of the Caribbean Court of Justice is one of those acts that, without meaning to, could precipitate a collapse of more than the Court. Continuing to squat on the door-step of the Privy Council 50 years after Independence; keeping the CCJ on 'probation' while clinging to its Headquarters, is not the integration model to which this country is legally bound. Fortunately, Prime Minister Persad-Bissesar has said enough to suggest that all is not lost for that model.

Were it lost, we would all be the weaker. You would lose not only a guaranteed market for your manufactured goods and for your services, but also allies – kith and kin – who would stand at your elbow and strengthen your arm in your bargaining with countries larger and stronger than you; and in resisting external forces that threaten the safety of your society; all those gains that Eric Williams saw – after Independence – as the pillars on which rested *the real case for unity of the Caribbean countries*.

But let me be more positive. The Caribbean Community needs Trinidad and Tobago not just as a player but as a leader – an intellectual leader most of all. It would not have escaped you how central – and, indeed, how indispensable - have been the roles that Trinidadian leaders and technocrats have played in the history of moulding our scattered archipelago into a West Indian Community, if not yet a West Indian nation. You are engaged at home in that necessary process of creating one people out of many; of resolving the challenge that Eric Williams recognised at Independence.

At this time that marks both 50 years of national independence and 50 years of stagnating regionalism it is well to remember that in the Introduction to his *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* (which Williams published on Independence Day) he wrote of conjoined challenges. This first was:

Division of the races was the policy of colonisation. Integration of the races must be the policy of Independence. Only in this way can the colony of Trinidad and Tobago be transformed into the Nation of Trinidad and Tobago.

But he added with respect to the *integration of the separated Caribbean Territories*:

Separation and fragmentation were the policy of colonialism and rival colonialisms. Association and integration must be the policy of Independence.

As he saw it, (and who would challenge that vision?) you – the people and leaders of Trinidad and Tobago - need to continue to labour in the regional vineyard even as you pursue your destiny of unity at home.

It is your vineyard; every bit as much as Trinidad and Tobago is your homeland. I suspect that every native of Trinidad and Tobago has been a West Indian from the first moment of rational awakening. These twin islands that nurture you command your devotion and your loyalty; but, in a further dimension of belonging, the West Indies is also your native land. I know that is true of me. So let me end this Memorial Lecture to a great West Indian with words I have used before here in Trinidad. In 1978, 34 years ago, I was privileged to receive an honorary LL.D degree from UWI at the St. Augustine Campus. I gave the Graduation Address, and ended it with these words which I believe are even more insistent in their message now:

*I end with an exhortation by one man for his country as the 20th Century began, and I invoke it as exhortation to you and as a prayer for our Region that is our country also. They are the immortal words of Tagore's **Gitanjali** that have such a resonance for us now:*

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

*Where the world has not been broken
up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the
depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its
arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has
not lost its way into the dreary desert
sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by
Thee into ever widening thought and action –
Into that heaven of freedom, my
Father, let my country awake.*

Into that realm of reason, I, too, pray – let the West Indies awake!