



The Eric Williams Memorial Collection

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U.K. University Partners with Eric Williams Memorial Collection

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MIAMI, Fla. December 27, 2006)— The Vice Chancellors of the University of Sheffield and the University of the West Indies will launch a new annual series in conjunction with the Eric Williams Memorial Collection (EWMC) on Tuesday, January 9, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. The event will be held at UWI’s Learning Resource Center and will include a film on Eric Williams and tour of the EWMC.

The one-day seminar will engage 60 Masters and Doctoral Caribbean educators in an analysis of Eric Williams’ 1940s treatise on West Indian tertiary education, Education in the British West Indies. This work provided the inspiration for an understanding of West Indian university instruction that was cognizant of the colonial condition. Williams drew upon models of learning systems in Latin America that were linked to the decolonizing and independence projects he had hoped could have been emulated in the West Indies.

“The aim of this seminar is to revisit the text and to draw upon critical issues proffered by Williams in examining the theoretical and practical issues facing Caribbean education in an era of globalization,” says Dr. Jennifer Lavia, Director, Caribbean Programme, University of Sheffield. “On the one hand, this effort seeks to resuscitate the historical context within which Williams was writing. On the other hand, it examines the current situation and provides glimpses of the future.”

Eric Williams was the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and head of government for a quarter of a century until his death in 1981. He led the country to Independence from Britain in 1962 and onto Republicanism in 1976. A consummate academic and historian, and author of several books, Dr. Williams is best known for his

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seminal work, the 62-year-old Capitalism and Slavery, which has been translated into seven languages, including Russian, Chinese, Japanese and soon for the first time, Korean. Few modern historical works have enjoyed its enduring intellectual impact and appeal, and in 1997 the *New York Times Book Review* characterized “The Williams Thesis” as remaining on the “cutting edge of slave trade research in academic circles.”

The seminar, made possible through the generosity of British Gas Trinidad and Tobago, is co-sponsored by the University of Sheffield and the Eric Williams Memorial Collection which was inaugurated by former **U.S. Secretary of State, Colin L. Powell** in 1998. It was named to UNESCO’s prestigious *Memory of the World Register* in 1999.

Books by Eric Williams will be available for purchase at the event.

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