



The confederation riots: a mirror of postemancipation Barbados

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The Confederation Riots: a mirror of postemancipation Barbados

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Abstract

This thesis explores the British and the Barbadian perspectives on the Confederation Riots that occurred in April 1876 in Barbados. It looks at how the conflict emerged and in what context, on the imperial as well as on the local level. Confederation in the British Empire in the nineteenth century is scrutinised to understand the imperial policy beyond the Caribbean, and reports from the Colonial Office and newspapers from the period are used to see how the colony of Barbados was seen from afar. As the British government tried to establish a Crown colony in Barbados by joining the island in a confederation with the Windward Islands, the white Barbadian elite's response to this scheme is discussed as well as that of the African-Barbadian labourers'. Their different reactions to debates about Confederation led to violence in the form of the riots in April 1876. This thesis thus combines an understanding of the colony from both the oppressed and the persecutors' points of view, which the current historiography on the event has failed to do. It examines how the population was divided over the conflict with approaches to race as well as to class, and it evaluates who was involved in the riots. It analyses these debates in the Barbadian society prior to the riots and looks at what role Governor John Pope Hennessy had as a mediator between the population and the Colonial Office in London. However, the postemancipation society was already split between planters and former slaves, thus this thesis aims to analyse how the conflict was both a postemancipation struggle and a constitutional crisis. For the scholarship on the Confederation Riots does not look at the other islands concerned by the confederation scheme, this thesis also analyses reactions to and impacts of the riots and the confederation in the other colonies of the Windward Islands.

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List of Abbreviations

BDA: Barbados Defence Association.

BL: The British Library, London.

BOA: British Online Archives.

CO: The Colonial Office.

HC: House of Commons.

HL: House of Lords.

MP: Member of Parliament.

TNA: The National Archives, London Kew.

WIC: The West India Committee.

Introduction

The Confederation Riots

On 17 April 1876, riots broke out in Barbados. Hundreds of African-Barbadian labourers plundered and set fires to the plantation estates where they were working.¹ On 24 April 1876, the Colonial Office received five telegrams carrying the news of “fearful riots” in Barbados.² However, by that day the riots had been put down; Governor John Pope Hennessy had sent troops to make arrests and disperse the mob. The riots had also broken out in the context of confederation. The Colonial Office was trying to implement confederation with the Windward Islands and the white Barbadian elite opposed it, while African-Barbadian labourers supported it.³ The 1876 riots came to be known as the Confederation Riots. This thesis seeks to understand the reasons behind them and to explain why they emerged.

Barbados: an old British colony

Barbados became a British colony in February 1627 under an expedition led by Henry Powell.⁴ The following decades “laid the foundation for the emergence of a proprietary mindset.” With the introduction of slavery in 1660, the white community represented 40% of the population and gained autonomy with their Legislative Assembly in 1652. By the late eighteenth century, they only represented 20% of the total.⁵ By the nineteenth century, white families had been established in the island for four generations;

¹ Hilary McD.Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Caribbean Single Market*, 1990, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 176-177.

² C. 1539, No. 108, p. 181 (Apr. 24, 1876), Copies of various telegrams delivered at the Colonial Office by the West India Committee respecting the serious disturbances in the Colony.

³ The Windward Islands were composed of Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago. In the nineteenth century, the terms confederation and federation were interchangeable. In this thesis, I will use the term confederation except when resorting to direct quotes.

⁴ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 9.

⁵ Karl Watson, “Barbados and the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade,” *Slavery & Abolition* 30.2 (2009), p. 180.

planters had a considerable importance and ruled the society.⁶ In 1833 its Governor became Governor-in-chief of Barbados, Grenada, Tobago, and St. Vincent. St. Lucia was added to the group two years later. These five colonies constituted the Windward Islands but retained separate legislatures.

In the 1870s, the Colonial Office tried to establish a closer union between the islands and to group them under the Confederation of the Windward Islands. The scheme was met with strong opposition in Barbados and it is reflected by the failure of successive Governors to pass it.

The Governors and the House of Assembly

First, the responsibility of carrying confederation in the Windward Islands was assigned to Rawson William Rawson from 1868 to 1875. He had been private secretary for W.E. Gladstone, who was president of the Board of Trade in 1841. A year later, Rawson was appointed Chief Secretary for the Canadian colonies but faced conflicts about autonomy of the colony. He was transferred to Mauritius in 1844, then to South Africa in 1854. From Africa, he was sent to the Caribbean; firstly, to the Bahamas in 1864, and then to the Windward Islands in 1868.⁷ Once he settled in Barbados, he favoured the white elite and disregarded the African-Barbadian population, especially in terms of education, perpetuating the white colonial hegemony.⁸

However, his friendship with the white population did not last long and he met opposition over bills for confederation. Nonetheless, he did gain the support of Sir William Brandford Griffith and Sir Thomas Graham Briggs, members of the Legislative Council who favoured the scheme through a change to a single chamber.⁹ The Governor reported all the difficulties he had to face to the Colonial Office and thus, the Earl of Kimberley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, said of him that he “could see nothing but lions in

⁶ Samuel Briggs, *The Archives of the Briggs Family*, (Cleveland: T.C. Schenck, 1880), p. 26.

⁷ Dane Morton-Gittens, “Sir Rawson William Rawson: Governor of Barbados, 1869-1875,” *Ideology, Regionalism, and Society in Caribbean History*, Ed. Shane J. Pantin and Jerome Teelucksingh, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 180-181.

⁸ Ibid, p. 184.

⁹ Ibid, p. 193.

his path.”¹⁰ Rawson was finally recalled by the Government and asked to retire in March 1875. In *Barbados & the Confederation Question*, Bruce Hamilton argued that it was not really his fault that confederation did not succeed, but more that the Colonial Office was “blind to the realities and strength of opposition” in Barbados and “deaf to Rawson’s warnings.”¹¹ Rawson was not hindering the imperial policy, he was making London aware that it would meet opposition.

In a despatch to Carnarvon, John Pope Hennessy, Governor-in-chief of the Windwards from November 1875 to December 1876, wrote that

[t]he local papers had boasted that Governor Rawson, after his six years of service, had quitted the wharf at Bridgetown without a single member of the Assembly or the Council to pay him the compliment of attending him on his departure.¹²

Rawson had irritated both the population and the Colonial Office as he had failed in his mission. After his recall, the Lieutenant-Governor of Grenada, Sanford Freeling, became acting Governor-in-chief. He arrived in May 1875 and remained in office until the following November, succeeded by John Pope Hennessy.

During his few months in Barbados, Freeling was not able to do much in the Windward Islands towards Confederation. He was also met with substantial resistance from the Barbadian House of Assembly. Hennessy said to Carnarvon that the “hostility to the Executive became more violent in Mr. Freeling’s time, and led to a complete stoppage of public business three days before [his] arrival.”¹³ Nothing could be achieved in Barbados and Freeling had to dissolve the House of Assembly. There was, nonetheless, another underlying issue to the dissolution. July 1875 was the time of new elections, and the House of Assembly decided that candidates should pledge to reject any proposal towards confederation. The elections in the parish of St. Thomas were contested and the

¹⁰ Bruce Hamilton, *Barbados & the Confederation Question*, (London: Crown Agents for Oversea Governments & Administrations on behalf of the Govt. of Barbados, 1956), p. 33.

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 198-199.

¹² C. 1559, No. 17, p.75, (May 1, 1876), Calls serious attention to the urgent necessity for a change in the Constitution of the Island, owing to the bitter hostility existing between classes.

¹³ Ibid.

House of Assembly asked Freeing to declare them void, which he refused to do, with the support of the Attorney General. The House did not reconsider the demand and Freeing was forced to dissolve it. The white elite became highly dissatisfied with the acting Governor and requested to bring the matter before Law Officers, which was denied by the Colonial Office. By the time Hennessy arrived in Barbados, Freeing was anything but appreciated in the House of Assembly.¹⁴

As governor of the Bahamas, John Pope Hennessy was on an eight-month leave in 1875 when he was appointed Governor-in-chief of the Windward Islands. Hennessy was a Roman Catholic and Irish politician born in Cork in 1834 and it was his first appointment to a first-class colony; a colony that had representative institutions.¹⁵ He arrived in Barbados in November 1875 at a salary of £4,000 per annum.¹⁶ He had first been Governor of Labuan from 1867 to 1871, of the British West Africa settlements – Gambia, the Gold Coast, Lagos, and Sierra Leone – from 1872 to 1873, and of the Bahamas from 1873 to 1874, before arriving in the Windwards. In Labuan, he wanted to give more power to local populations. In Africa, he advocated for the appointments of locals to high positions, which the Colonial Office refused.¹⁷ Therefore, before arriving in Barbados, the Governor was seen to be sympathetic to the local populations.

His mission in the Windwards was to implement confederation, thus his plan was to convince the population of its benefits. The Governor made it clear that he was going to help them thanks to confederation when he declared: “confederation will benefit every class in the community ... It will provide larger field for your redundant population, and

¹⁴ Hamilton, *Barbados & the Confederation Question*, pp. 40-43.

¹⁵ *Queensland Parliamentary Debates: First Session of the Seventh Parliament*, (Brisbane: James C. Beal, 1874), p. 640.

¹⁶ *Barbados 1875-1876*, p. 1, Bodleian Library, MSS Brit Emp. S. 409, Box 7/4, ff1-78. HENNESSY 1875-77.

¹⁷ David Lambert and Phillip Howell, “John Pope Hennessy and the Translation of ‘Slavery’ between late nineteenth-century Barbados and Hong Kong,” *History Workshop Journal* 55.1 (2003), p. 4; Stearn, Roger T, “Hennessy, Sir John Pope (1834-1891), politician and colonial governor,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 2004-09-23. Oxford University Press.

www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-22537, Accessed Jun. 25, 2018.

thus check poverty and crime at its sources.”¹⁸ It was to help the labourers by opening new job markets. He could be perceived in the Caribbean as wanting, in the future, to give more power to the African-Caribbean population. Planters in Barbados eventually opposed Hennessy and his policies and were obstructive to any changes. The African-Barbadian labouring population, on the contrary, supported him. Debates about confederation intensified and violence erupted under the Confederation Riots.

Literary Review

This section is going to discuss the relevant historiography of the Confederation Riots. Postemancipation in Barbados was scrutinised in the 1970s, with works by Bruce M. Taylor in 1973 for instance, as well as more recently in the 2000s and 2010s, including works by Karl Watson in 2009, and by Woodville K. Marshall in 2014.¹⁹ In 2005, David Lambert gave a comprehensive analysis of the white local population and the poor whites in Barbados during abolition, thus he does not go further than the 1840s.²⁰

Postemancipation studies tend to focus on struggles experienced by the formerly enslaved population that resulted in riots. Michael Craton paralleled three different occurrences of unrest: the Angel Gabriel riots in 1856 Guyana, the Morant Bay rebellion in 1865 Jamaica, and the Confederation Riots in 1876 Barbados. Postemancipation had given way to a wage labour system and a new relationship evolved between land and labour. What is more, it was difficult to find an alternative to the plantation system in the British Caribbean.²¹ Wages were also very low for the agricultural labourers, which kept

¹⁸ “The Condition of Barbadoes,” *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* (Apr. 17, 1876), p. 4. Gale Historical Newspapers.

¹⁹ Bruce M. Taylor, “Black Labor and White Power in Post-Emancipation Barbados: A Study of Changing Relationships,” *A Current Bibliography on African Affairs* 6.2 (1973), pp. 183-197; Watson, “Barbados and the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade,” pp. 179-195; Woodville K. Marshall, “Routes to Chattel Village: Bequest and Family Villages in Post-Slavery Barbados,” *The Journal of Caribbean History* 48.1&2 (2014), pp. 86–107.

²⁰ David Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity during the Age of Abolition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²¹ Michael Craton, “Continuity Not Change: The Incidence of Unrest among Ex-slaves in the British West Indies, 1838-1876,” *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present: A*

them in a state of inferiority.²² By analysing these three riots, Craton was able to conclude that, most of the time, Governors aligned with the plantocracy on matters of law and order. He also noted that, by the second half of the nineteenth century, communication between the Colonial Office and the colonies was made easier thanks to submarine cable, the growing number of printed materials and telegraphs. All this supposedly made control over the territories easier.

Nigel Bolland looked at how, even if it ended forced labour, emancipation gave way to other forms of control. He stressed the relationship between land and labour and how the two were dependent on the same form of power.²³ Gad Heuman has also focused some of his works on the transition to emancipated societies in the Caribbean. His analysis began with the rejection of apprenticeship system, and continued onto postemancipation revolts emerging as early as the 1840s, their repressions leading the establishment of Crown Colonies in the 1870s.²⁴ Elizabeth Cooper commented on these uprisings as “impending ‘war of the races’ rather than as outcomes of post-emancipation

Student Reader, Ed. Hilary McD. Beckles and Verene Shepherd, (Princeton: M. Wiener Publishers, 1993), pp. 192-206.

²² Bridget Brereton, “Chapter 4: Family Strategies, Gender and the Shift to Wage Labour in the British Caribbean,” *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition: essays on postemancipation social and cultural history*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), pp. 77-107; George F. Tyson, “‘Our Side’: Caribbean Immigrant Labourers and the Transition to Free Labour on St. Croix, 1849-79,” *Small Islands, Large Questions: Society, Culture and Resistance in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean*, Ed. Karen Fog Olwig, (London: F. Cass, 1995), pp. 135-160; Jean Besson, “Land, Kinship, and Community in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean: A Regional View of the Leewards,” *Small Islands, Large Questions: Society, Culture and Resistance in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean*, pp. 73-99.

For post-emancipation struggles and low wages in Jamaica, St. Croix and Tobago see Gad Heuman, “Post-Emancipation Resistance in the Caribbean: An Overview,” *Small Islands, Large Questions: Society, Culture and Resistance in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean*, pp. 123-134.

²³ Nigel Bolland, “Systems of Domination after Slavery: The control of Land and Labour in the British West Indies after 1838,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23.4 (1981), p. 598.

²⁴ Gad Heuman, “From Slavery to Freedom: Blacks in the Nineteenth-Century British West Indies,” *Black Experience and the Empire*, Ed. Hawkins Morgan, Philip D. Morgan, and Sean Hawkins, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 141-165.

political and class conflict,” contributing to the strengthening of white supremacy.²⁵ Therefore, postemancipation conflicts in that sense were more analysed as racial issues.

The Confederation Riots were a postemancipation uprising and this is how most historians have studied the event. Hilary Beckles attempted to draw comparisons between the Confederation Riots and Bussa’s rebellion, the island’s only slave rebellion.²⁶ He argued on the significance of the fact that it occurred on the sixtieth anniversary of 1816. Both conflicts were looking to “overthrow the rule of the planter elite” and showcased a “rise from oppression,” and both also took place in April, right after Easter.²⁷ His analysis echoed another of his books *Great House Rules: Landless Emancipation and Workers' Protest in Barbados, 1838-1938* and the views of other historians who have focused on the perspective of the African-Caribbean population during the Confederation Riots and how abolition had failed to answer their prayers of freedom.²⁸ Beckles’ *A History of Barbados* (1990) covers the history of the island from the fifteenth century to present day. In the chapter in which he dealt with the Confederation Riots, Beckles saw the conflict as “an attempt to restore the integrity of the emancipation promised,” and analysed it from the Barbadian’s perspective, failing to develop on the parliamentary debates.²⁹

Inarguably, Barbados faced problems of race and class, thus the Confederation Riots have sometimes been analysed by historians, such as George Belle, as a class struggle.³⁰ In *A Concise History of the Caribbean*, Barry W. Higman only briefly

²⁵ Elizabeth Cooper, “The Conundrum of Race: Retooling Inequality,” *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and Its Peoples*, Ed. Scarano Palmié et al., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 395

²⁶ Hilary McD. Beckles, “The Slave-drivers’ war: Bussa and the 1816 Barbados Slave Rebellion,” *Boletín de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe* 39 (1985), p. 85.

²⁷ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, pp. 175-177.

²⁸ Hilary McD. Beckles, *Great House Rules: Landless Emancipation and Workers' Protest in Barbados, 1838-1938*, (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003); Trevor G. Marshall “Post Emancipation Adjustments in Barbados 1838-1876,” *Emancipation IV: A Series of Lectures to Commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Emancipation*, Ed. Alvin O. Thompson, (Cave Hill: University of the West Indies, 1984), pp. 88-108; Henderson Carter, *Labour Pains: Resistance and Protest in Barbados, 1838-1904*, (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2012).

²⁹ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 177.

³⁰ George Belle, “The Abortive Revolution of 1876 in Barbados,” *The Journal of Caribbean History* 18.1 (1983), pp. 1-34.

mentioned the Confederation Riots as “a violent class war [that] failed to become a revolution held down by the planter militia.”³¹ Thus, it was different and more intricate than the racial antagonism described by other historians. These authors therefore decided to look at the uprising as a postemancipation struggle, and have omitted to look at the conflict from the perspective of the planters and of the Colonial Office, relating the political debates.

On the contrary, in 1956, Bruce Hamilton wrote *Barbados & the Confederation Question, 1871-1885*, in which he gave a lengthy explanation of the debates in the Barbadian House of Assembly and Legislative Council. He only talked about the riots from the point of view of the white elite and how they rejected any attempts to change their Constitution.³² The Constitutional issue was also addressed by James Pope Hennessy, who was Governor Hennessy’s grandchild, and Claude Levy. They looked at the changes in the Barbados Constitution from 1833 and how the Colonial Office tried to convince the population to support the 1876 plan.³³ However, both works were respectively published in 1964 and 1980; this underlines the lack of novelty on this perspective.

On the contrary, works focusing on the African-Caribbean populations were published more recently. However, these authors have only focused on Barbados and have not compared the reactions to those of the other Windward Islands or tried to place the confederation issue in the broader context of confederation in the Caribbean. Therefore, concerning comparisons of confederations, a reduced amount of work has been done. Confederation had been achieved in the Leeward Islands in 1871,³⁴ historians such as Cecil Kelsick and Coleridge Harris have aimed attention at the constitutional

³¹ B. W. Higman, *A Concise History of the Caribbean*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 211.

³² Hamilton, *Barbados & the Confederation Question*.

³³ James Pope Hennessy, *Verandah: Some Episodes in the Crown Colonies: 1867-1889*, (New York: Knopf, 1964); Claude Levy, *Emancipation, Sugar, and Federalism: Barbados and the West Indies, 1833-1876*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1980).

³⁴ Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Nevis, St. Kitts, and the Virgin Islands.

history of the islands, but their works date back from 1960.³⁵ Despite the similarities between the Windward and the Leeward Islands, recent studies have failed to draw comparisons between the two. What is more, the confederation which Barbados was supposed to take part in concerned other colonies, some of which also experienced disturbances in 1876. In “Post-Emancipation Protest in the Caribbean: The ‘Belmanna Riots’ in Tobago, 1876,” Bridget Brereton undertook to make a statement about the Belmanna Riots that took place in May 1876 in Tobago and the Confederation Riots in Barbados, events that occurred within a few weeks from each other.³⁶ The Barbadian disturbance has, most of the time, been studied as an isolated event and a case study for the colony. It is thus essential to look at the 1870s and what happened in the other colonies concerning postemancipation struggles and constitutional issues.

The Confederation of the Windward Islands was attempted in 1876 but the provinces of Canada had been confederated in 1867, and so had the colonies of the Straits Settlements.³⁷ In 1871, the Leeward Islands encountered the same fate. During the rest of the 1870s the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Carnarvon, attempted to pass similar changes in South Africa. Therefore, it is essential to look at what historians have undertaken in the field of confederation in the British Empire.

Historians have written about British Imperial Federation; however, because the movement intensified in the 1880s and 1890s, 1876 is not always taken into account.³⁸ Even though other confederations had been achieved in the British Empire in the 1860s and 70s, most of the research tends to specialise in one specific geographical location and to have study cases of specific colonies rather than as a whole group. Thus, the Confederation Riots have not been set in a broader background of confederation throughout the British Empire. Michael Burgess explained how confederation came about in the British Empire. Even though he mentioned a conference with MPs in April 1871,

³⁵ Cecil A. Kelsick, “Constitutional History of the Leewards,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 6. 2&3 (1960), pp. 177-209; Coleridge Harris, “The Constitutional History of the Windwards,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 6. 2&3 (1960), pp. 160-176.

³⁶ Bridget Brereton, “Post-Emancipation Protest in the Caribbean: The ‘Belmanna Riots’ in Tobago, 1876,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 54.4 (2008), pp. 111-128.

³⁷ Singapore, Malacca and Penang.

³⁸ H. A. Will, *Constitutional Change in the British West Indies, 1880-1903*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

he claimed that it had been forgotten by historians because it took place too early on in the debates about Imperial Federation. Thus, talking about the 1870s, he should have expanded on the Leewards and the Windwards, but his focus remained on Canada, New Zealand and Australia and their settler generations, similarly Peter Price studied the same topic more recently, focusing on the 1880s.³⁹ Other historians have worked on the South African Confederation, but have argued that it remained weak and had to be strengthened.⁴⁰ Individual works on the Straits Settlements and the Canadian Confederation have also been done but do not mention other confederations.⁴¹

Overall, it seems that the scholarship on the Confederation Riots has failed to include the conflict in a broader context, and historians have perpetuated the divide between the “constitutional crisis” and the labourers’ struggles. This thesis aims to look at the Confederation Riots from both perspectives in order to understand how the conflict in fact reflected the organisation of the Barbadian society in the 1870s – an organisation that resulted both from the rule established by the Colonial Office as a broader scheme for the Empire, and from how things had evolved after the abolition of slavery. There is gap in the historiography of Barbados in the second part of the nineteenth century;

³⁹ Michael David Burgess, *The British Tradition of Federalism*, (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), pp. 25-26; Michael David Burgess, *The Imperial Federation Movement in Great Britain, 1869-1893*, (Dissertation, Leicester University, 1976); Peter Price, “Steppingstones to Imperial Unity?: The British West Indies in the Late-Victorian Imperial Federation Movement,” *Canadian Journal of History* 52.2 (2017), pp. 240-63.

⁴⁰ R. L. Cope, “Local Imperatives and Imperial Policy: The Sources of Lord Carnarvon’s South African Confederation Policy,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 20.4 (1987), pp. 626; For the South African Confederation also see Norman A. Etherington “Labour Supply and the Genesis of South African Confederation in the 1870s,” *Journal of African History* 20 (1979), pp. 235-253; Clement Francis Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African Confederation: 1870-1881*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1966).

⁴¹ Constance Mary Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements 1826-67: Indian Presidency to Crown Colony*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1972); Andrew Abraham, “The Transfer of the Straits Settlements: A revisionist Approach to the Study of Colonial Law and Administration,” *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 42 (2002), pp. 1-31; Ged Martin, *Britain and The Origins of The Canadian Confederation, 1837-67*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995); Price, “Steppingstones to Imperial Unity?” pp. 240-63; C. P. Stacey, “The Defense Problem and Canadian Confederation,” *Revista de Historia de América* 138 (2007), pp. 169-175; Andrew Smith, *British Businessmen and Canadian Confederation: Constitution Making in an Era of Anglo-Globalization*, (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008).

therefore, it failed to address both issues in depths. In 1982 Susan Craig James had already noticed a need for studies in Caribbean societies “written in macro- and micro-perspective.”⁴²

Chapter outline

The first chapter of this thesis will discuss the policy of confederation in the British Empire during the 1860s and 1870s. It will provide information on the purposes of the scheme, highlighting how the Windward Islands Confederation was not an isolated case directed by Lord Carnarvon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1874 to 1878. It will help to understand how the island was perceived by the Colonial Office and at what scale.

The following chapter will look at the reasons for the Barbadian elite opposition to the imperial policy. It will discuss the pre-riot debates in the House of Assembly and Legislative Council of Barbados as well as in the local press. This will provide insight on the white elite’s leadership in an emancipated society.

The last chapter will provide a brief summary of the Riots. It is significant to understand the strong antagonism present in Barbados in the 1870s and how the riots were a consequential effect of a society divided by a class and race barrier. It will look at what triggered the Confederation Riots and what their impacts were in the other Windward Islands to interpret their significance.

The combination of these chapters will enable this thesis to demonstrate how the Confederation Riots were both a response to a constitutional issue and akin to a postemancipation struggle, all of this being contextualised in a broader imperial design.

⁴² Aviston Decourcei Downes, *Barbados 1880-1914: A Socio-Cultural History*, (Dissertation, University of York, 1994), p. 5.

Chapter 1

Confederation as an imperial policy

This chapter will explore the development of confederation in the British Empire in the second part of the nineteenth century, in order to contextualise the Windward Islands Confederation into a broader sphere. Firstly, it will look at how the policy of imperial confederation came about and from which debates it emerged. Confederations elsewhere in the Empire will then be examined, in order to understand how they benefited the imperial government. The provinces of Canada had been confederated in 1867, so had the colonies of the Straits Settlements, and a South African Confederation was also on the agenda of Lord Carnarvon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in the 1870s.¹ Then, reactions to these policies from Barbados will be analysed to understand if Barbadians regarded confederation generally in the same way as in the Windward Islands. A following section will then have a specific focus on the Caribbean; it will consider the Barbadian perspective on the Leeward Islands Confederation.² Finally, this chapter will delve into the imperial administration of the Windward Islands from the first attempts of unification in 1833, to understand how confederation came about in these colonies. It will provide insight to the Colonial Office's familiarity with these territories and how adequate their policies were, in order to end the chapter with the arrival of the man who governed Barbados during the Confederation Riots, John Pope Hennessy, and how he tried to ease in the imperial scheme.

Early debates around confederation

Confederation in the British Empire supposed a rethinking of the relationship between Britain and the colonies, in which the latter would be more autonomous on a local level while not being independent. In 1839, the anonymous pamphlet *The Colonies and Great Britain must be incorporated to form one universal and indivisible empire* explained why the imperial system needed to be changed. It argued that all the colonies

¹ The Straits Settlements comprised Singapore, Malacca and Penang.

² Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Nevis, St. Kitts, and the Virgin Islands.

were dissatisfied and would break away from the Empire to become economic rivals, similarly to the United States. The author believed that Great Britain and the colonies should be united “under one Sovereign, one Government, and one Parliament, with equal representation, the same laws, institutions, similar rights and privileges, and uniform taxation.” He did not think that the geographical distance would make it difficult, it was similar to ruling Ireland and Scotland in the past. The Empire would thus be stronger; it would dissuade foreign attacks and calm discontents.³ In 1844, Robert Lowe, who became Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1868 and 1873, had talked about the British Empire as “one mighty confederacy.” Undoubtedly, the concept of confederation and union was common to the period, in which colonists were perceived as “second-class citizens” and representation was to make them part of the Empire rather than of the dependencies.⁴ With confederations, the colonies would get imperial representation and make decisions on their own without necessarily having an approval from London. It would loosen the ties to the colonies to make them more egalitarian. Thus, they would have more flexibility while remaining part of the Empire. On 6 November 1875, during his address to the Philosophical Institution, W. E. Forster, MP, explained that the idea had been to “welcome them as [partners] in a common and mighty empire,” which goes along the lines of Lowe’s “mighty confederacy.”⁵ The question of a shift needed from virtual to direct representation was also prominent in the debates in London whether the colonies should be represented in the British Parliament. This suggestion was defeated.⁶ Confederation was envisioned as a possible solution as it was to give the colonies more independence for local matters, without them interfering in Westminster on broader imperial matters.

³ *The Colonies and Great Britain must be incorporated and form one universal and indivisible empire*, (London: Pelham Richardson, 1839), pp. 40-47. BL General Reference Collection Mic.F.232 [no. 21712].

⁴ Ged Martin, “Empire Federalism and Imperial Parliamentary Union, 1820-1870,” *The Historical Journal* 16.1 (1973), pp. 72-80; quote from Lowe p. 72.

⁵ “The Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P. on our Colonial Empire,” *The Manchester Guardian*, (Nov. 6, 1875), p. 8. ProQuest.

⁶ Martin, “Empire Federalism,” pp. 66-69.

An imperial policy to strengthen the white hegemony

The imperial directives were to strengthen the ties to the Empire but also to have a more efficient Colonial Office. The 1870s were a turning point for the “appeal and relevance of federalism in British politics.” The shared goal was the “greater understanding of what were then British colonies.”⁷

In January and April 1876 two essays written by Edward Jenkins, MP, were published in *The Contemporary Review*, respectively entitled: “Imperial Federalism” and “An Imperial Confederation.” Both tackled the greater imperial scheme of confederation throughout the British Empire and the project of Imperial Federation. According to Jenkins, Imperial Federalism was commanded by personal interests combined with benefits to all. Jenkins even asserted that the Canadian Confederation was an example of what the British Empire could become. There was an Executive power of the sovereign through viceroys, the Legislative Council acted as a House of Lords, its members being nominated by the Crown, and the House of Assembly had its members elected by the whole confederation.⁸ It was an effective and reputed system. Additionally, it was led by white people which made it a better example to the rest of the Empire than for instance Barbados, which had a similar system with an Executive Council, a Legislative Council and a House of Assembly.⁹ As a matter of fact, responsible government was only seen as possible for colonies which had a large white settler population.¹⁰ It would give these populations more autonomy, giving them a Parliament, thus making them appreciative and less in opposition with the Empire, all the while making sure that they, whether in the colonies or in London, retained power.

Even though Barbados had a similar government to that in Canada, its efficiency was only recognised on a wider level in 1888. Charles Spencer Salmon wrote *The*

⁷ Burgess, *The British Tradition of Federalism*, pp. 39, 23-24.

⁸ Edward Jenkins, “An Imperial Confederation,” *The Colonial Question: Being Essays on Imperial Federalism*, (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1871), pp. 72-73.

⁹ Charles Pitcher Clarke, *The Constitutional Crisis of 1876 in Barbados*, (Bridgetown: Herald Press, 1896), p. 135.

¹⁰ John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 198.

Caribbean Confederation, in which he explained that the government established in Barbados could be a model for the fifteen other British colonies of the region.¹¹ The Canadian system was praised by the government, whereas the Barbadian one only worked as an example for the Caribbean for ideological reasons: it had been a slave colony and Canada had not. The system in Barbados had been established for a colony that needed to maintain a white hegemony over a population predominantly of African descent. On the contrary, by the end of the nineteenth century colonies such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, were considered as an “extension of Britain.”¹² In *Greater Britain*, Charles Dilke emphasised the similarities between the Canadians and the British people and highlighted that Australia was “chiefly inhabited by the English race.”¹³

What is more, it can be argued that one of the main goals of achieving confederation was the emergence of ideas about an “English Federation.” Indeed, the British press started to headline the Constitutional changes in Canada as an “Anglo-Saxon” and “English Federation.”¹⁴ This had a particular resonance in Canada as confederation was also a solution to unite British Protestants and French Catholics. Calling it an English Federation would strengthen the ties with the British Empire and obliterate other links. Debates materialised themselves because if this Federation was to be a federation of the English-speaking people, the United States of America should have been included and it was not the case. What is more, these debates were of another vein as the United States was not a British colony anymore. It was a question of rhetoric as the British Empire was not an only English-speaking empire anymore. Before then, Britain had acquired new colonies, which used to belong to the French and Dutch empires — St. Lucia and Grenada or even the Boer republics in South Africa.

Confederation in South Africa supports this argument. The colonies of the region had not been united before confederation was brought about. On an economic, social or

¹¹ Charles Spencer Salmon, *The Caribbean Confederation*, (London: Cassell and Company, 1888), p. 135.

¹² John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830–1970*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 99.

¹³ Charles Wentworth Dilke, *Greater Britain: A Record of Travels in English-Speaking Countries during 1866-67*, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1869), pp. 77, 98.

¹⁴ Burgess, *The Imperial Federation Movement*, p. 64.

constitutional level, no alliance existed.¹⁵ Confederation was an opportunity to shape the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Carnarvon's "English speaking community." He desired the British colony to be closer to the Empire without taking away liberties and previously acquired legislatures.¹⁶ However, to be part of the confederation, territories had to be annexed and thus colonised; in the Northern part of the Cape Province, the area of Griqualand West had only become a British territory in 1871 and a colony in 1873. *The Natal Witness* of 11 October 1872 stated that the "Anglo-Saxon race shall hold undisputed sway from Cape Town to the Zambezi."¹⁷ This is a clear example that the policy, in this region, was to empower the white population to the detriment of the African population; to privilege Britons over Boers.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a clear divide between the predominantly white settler and formerly slave colonies in the Caribbean, and all the colonies without a large white population. Responsible government and representative assemblies were granted to the former, while the latter, with a more numerous African and light-skinned population, were deprived of representation and were on the path to become Crown colonies.¹⁸ Crown colony equated to direct control from the Crown, the fact that the Colonial Office wanted direct rule in colonies with a predominantly African population can be related to paternalistic views of the white racial superiority. Imperial disenfranchisement of these colonies would ensure that even with franchise reforms that could give the vote to labourers, these populations would not have a political voice.

The ultimate goal for officials of the British Empire was to secure the imperial apparatus, the strong link between Britain and the colonies, rather than really working hand-in-hand with them. W. E. Forster had made it clear that the different communities should remain loyal to the monarchy, to the common nationality, and to the alliance

¹⁵ Goodfellow, *Great Britain and South African Confederation*, p. 10.

¹⁶ Cope, "Local Imperatives and Imperial Policy," p. 610.

¹⁷ Etherington, "Labour Supply and the Genesis of South African Confederation in the 1870s," p. 243.

¹⁸ Brinsley Samaroo, "From Unicameral to Bicameralism: Trinidad's Constitutional Advances (1831-1962)," *Evolution of a Nation: Trinidad and Tobago at Fifty*, Ed. Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, (Hertford: Hansib Publications, 2012), p. 68.

against foreign powers.¹⁹ It supposes that the colonies would have to follow Britain's decision in regard to foreign affairs, where Britain's dominance still prevailed. Thus, "Imperial Federation was perceived as the universal panacea for most of Britain's outstanding problems."²⁰

However, if confederation was seen as a solution for the whole Empire, James Anthony Froude thought it was not adequate for colonies of the Caribbean. He criticised the British government's desire to establish Crown colonies, especially through confederation. It was sometimes done in haste for countries "unfit for it." In *The English in the West Indies; or, The bow of Ulysses*, he discussed the change in government after emancipation and the place of African people in the society, and how administration was to be modified. He thought that if there was to be a West Indian Confederation, African-Caribbean people would have to be admitted as "full rights" citizens, which he strongly opposed, as he thought African-Caribbean people were an inferior race.²¹ Confederation in the Caribbean colonies highlighted racial and ideological divisions.

Financial benefits of the policy

Nonetheless, other reasons existed to advocate in favour of confederation. In "Imperial Federalism," Jenkins argued that the aim was not really to give more political independence to the colonies, but rather independence on a financial level; the aim was to lower the costs to Britain in matter of expenses, either by reducing the numbers of colonial officials or by the colonies becoming more financially self-sufficient.²²

When the British government decided in favour of the 1867 Crown colony petition in the Straits Settlements from Europeans in Penang and Singapore, the reasons were similar to why the East India Company had ruled over these colonies: "Singapore's

¹⁹ "The Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P. on our Colonial Empire," *The Manchester Guardian*, (Nov. 6, 1875), p. 8.

²⁰ Burgess, *The British Tradition of Federalism*, p. 39.

²¹ James Anthony Froude, *The English in the West Indies; or, The bow of Ulysses*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1888), pp. 4-7.

²² Edward Jenkins, "Imperial Federalism," *The Colonial Question: Being Essays on Imperial Federalism*, pp. 6, 11.

geographical position made her natural centre of British trade and potentially a prosperous Crown colony.”²³ Debates about the acceptance of the Settlements as a Crown colony evolved around military expenses. At the time, the Colonial Office’s main aim was to “reduce unnecessary expense.”²⁴ The Crimean War of 1853 had left the British military weakened, it was deemed necessary not to increase military expenditure in the Straits. These territories had requested Crown colony status, and not been pressured into it, therefore the British Parliament had some margin in the negotiations to make it official. The Straits would have to make concessions, one of which was that Britain was to reduce its part in defence expenditure. In June 1866, Britain decided to contribute up to £6,700 out of £66,000. A confederation aimed at lowering the costs, which was why they only committed to about 10%. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Hugh Childers, justified this decision by stating that the revenue of the Settlements was enough to cover this expenditure.²⁵ Canada also did not contribute towards the cost of her annual defence which amounted to three million per annum. Charles Dilke explained this expense by the preservation of the hatred towards America: “we must pay at least three millions a year for the hatred that the Canadians profess to bear toward the United States.”²⁶

Pecuniary issues were also raised for South Africa. The South African Confederation secured British control over the territories that secured a route to India.²⁷ In the last two cases, confederation was to facilitate British trade. Its purpose was to secure and to strengthen the Empire on financial grounds, as well as guaranteeing that the colonies were to remain British. It would be more complicated to divide them.

Barbados’s reaction to other confederations

After the success of Crown colony in the Straits, the Colonial Office tried to replicate the situation in the Caribbean but these colonies proved less cooperative: in 1865 only Jamaica had become a Crown colony after the bloodshed of the Morant Bay

²³ Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements 1826-67*, p. 351.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 365.

²⁵ C. 3672, No. 36, p. 48. (May 12, 1866), Hugh C. E. Childers to Sir Frederic Rogers.

²⁶ Dilke, *Greater Britain*, p. 131.

²⁷ Cope, “Local Imperatives and Imperial Policy,” p. 601.

rebellion.²⁸ By the 1870s, when questions of confederation were pressing in the British Caribbean, the Barbadian press reacted to both confederation in Canada and the Straits Settlements. They believed that what had occurred in the other colonies of the Empire was irrelevant to them. First, they argued that the British Caribbean and British North America worked fundamentally differently. On 25 January 1876, *The Agricultural Reporter*, a Barbadian newspaper, stated that “there is no analogy between the British West Indian Colonies and her North American provinces with their vast continuity of extent, vastness of resource and facility of communication.”²⁹ Confederation was implemented across the British Empire for different reasons and Lord Carnarvon had emphasised it twice in the House of Lords.³⁰ The Canadian Confederation was not mentioned during the debates on the Windward Confederation in the House of Commons. It implies that the government was well aware that comparisons between the two were difficult. That same issue of *The Agricultural Reporter* did, however, criticise how irrelevant it was to mention it, which meant that it was used at some point.³¹ There were certainly few elements of comparison between them. Canada had a population with a white majority, while 65.36% of the population of Barbados was of African descent and 24.42% were light-skinned in 1871. The 1881 census in Tobago showed that people of African descent represented 83.5% of the population.³²

However, if in London other confederations were not mentioned or only briefly, the case was different in Barbados. In November 1875, John Pope Hennessy had been appointed Governor-in-chief of the Windward Islands, and on 3 March 1876, he addressed the Council Chamber in Barbados and argued in favour of confederation using the Straits Settlements as an example of success. The Governor had provided the audience with the positive effects confederation had had on the Straits: trade and productive powers

²⁸ See Gad Heuman, “*The Killing Time*”: *The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica*, (London: Macmillan, 1994).

²⁹ TNA, CO 321/9(27), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (Jan. 25, 1876).

³⁰ HL Deb 28 April 1876 vol 228 cc1817-28; HL Deb 01 August 1876 vol 231 cc236-53.

³¹ TNA, CO 321/9(27), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (Jan. 25, 1876): “One great argument which the advocates of Federation persistently reiterate is derived from the case of the Canadian provinces.”

³² Dilke, *Greater Britain*, p. 131; Kortright Davis, *Cross & Crown in Barbados*, (Bern: Peter Lang, 1983), p. 69; Susan Craig James, *The Changing Society of Tobago, 1838-1938: A Fractured Whole - vol 1*, (Arima: Cornerstone, 2008), p. 198.

had increased and employment was abundant.³³ On 14 March 1876, the Barbados Legislative Council complained that it was more relevant to talk about a closer confederation, for which he had not given any information, that of the Leeward Islands.³⁴ Attorney General of Barbados Mr Semper came to Hennessy's defence saying that "his Excellency had selected the Straits Settlements because he had a personal knowledge of their past and present condition, while he was entirely unacquainted with the Leeward Islands."³⁵ Indeed, on 11 March 1876 Hennessy had justified himself to Carnarvon: "I alluded to my own experiences of the advantages and economy of a consolidated Government as established in the Straits Settlements."³⁶ One of Hennessy's previous appointments by the Colonial Office had been Governor of Labuan from 1867 to 1871, territory located in Malaysia that became part of the Straits in 1906. Another reason for the government to mention the Straits Settlements was that the European population had asked for Crown rule; it showed that it was not imposed on everyone and that some requested it. However, the government failed to fully understand that it was not the case in the Caribbean. The colonies there, and especially Barbados, had been governed by the British government for centuries and did not want them to meddle even more in their local affairs. What is more, the white elite had had quite a lot of power having its own House of Assembly since the seventeenth century and did not want that watered down.

In 1877, debates in the House of Commons showed that confederation had been imposed on the South African population. Peter Ryland, MP for Burnley, had claimed that there was a "feeling in Africa that the Government wanted to compel Colonists to adopt a policy of Confederation," to which Charles Parnell replied that "nothing could be for the interests of the Empire which was not for the interests of the States it was proposed to confederate."³⁷ Interestingly enough, the South African Confederation was not

³³ *The Barbados People and Windward Islands Gazette*, (Mar. 23, 1876), p. 4 Readex. *Caribbean Newspapers, 1718-1876*. www.readex.com/content/caribbean-newspapers-series-1-1718-1876-american-antiquarian-society, Accessed Dec. 3, 2017.

³⁴ "Rejoinder of His Excellency Governor to the Reply of the Legislature, 14th March last," *The St. Lucia Observer* (Apr. 15, 1876), BL, General Reference Collection Microfilm Microform. MFM.MMISC972.

³⁵ C.1679, No. 17, p. 61, (Jul. 11, 1876), Transmitting a Memorial from the House of Assembly, for an inquiry into the late riots, &c. *UK Parliamentary Papers ProQuest*.

³⁶ C. 1539, No. 65, p. 123, (Mar. 11, 1876), Transmitting the speech made to both Houses of the Legislature.

³⁷ HC Deb 30 July 1877 vol 236 cc176-205.

mentioned in Barbadian newspapers, nor by the British government. The latter might have avoided the topic so as not to talk about the difficulties they encountered there between 1875 and 1877, and as the government kept that to themselves, the Barbadian press could not refute their argument and use it against them, just as they did for Canada and the Straits.

South Africa was similar to the British Caribbean in terms of population, but there was another confederation which better resembled the project of the Windwards: the Leeward Islands Confederation, which was established in 1871.

The Leeward Islands Confederation and Barbados's perspective

The Leeward Islands comprised Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Nevis, St. Kitts, and the Virgin Islands. They had intermittently been colonised by the British since the seventeenth century. It was by the 1850s that significant constitutional changes emerged. The colonies had shifted from bicameral to unicameral legislations. A change was necessary to make things easier to move towards confederation. In 1869, the scheme of confederation passed and Benjamin Pine was appointed Governor-in-chief of the Leeward Islands; his goal was to turn these six colonies into one. They were to have one Governor, one Legislature, one Treasury and Audit Department, one Code of Laws and one Police Force and administration of justice. Even if it met some opposition and was not popular in all the islands, the new constitution was inaugurated in May 1872.³⁸ Its government was located in Antigua, while all the colonies were to be governed by a president. The president was nominated by the Crown and chosen among the members of the Legislative Council of the colony. They were also paid by the local treasuries instead of the Imperial government.³⁹

By 1875, although confederation had been achieved, the Leeward Islands suffered from severe poverty. On 12 January 1876, Governor-in-chief George Berkeley gave a

³⁸ Joseph A. Boromé, "How Crown Colony Government Came to Dominica by 1898," *Caribbean Studies* 9.3 (1969), p. 32; T. B. H. Berkeley, *The Leeward Islands: Past and Present*, (London: S. W. Silver & Co., 1881), p. 16.

³⁹ C. 353, No. 18, p. 26 (Jul. 11, 1870), Copy of a despatch from Governor Sir B. C. C. Pine to the Earl Granville K.G.; C. 1539, Enclosure in No. 9, p. 21, (Jul. 1, 1875), public meeting held on the 24th ultimo protesting against Federation.

speech in Nevis, during which he talked about the “unfortunate condition of affairs,” the economy of the Leewards was not as prosperous as he had wished. On 11 February 1876, Hennessy wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies to report that Berkeley’s words had had a terrible impact in Barbados and were interpreted as the Governor of the Leewards admitting the failure of the Confederation.⁴⁰ A few months later, at a public meeting on 24 June in Barbados, Sir William Grant Ellis, member of the Barbados House of Assembly for St. Thomas, reflected on how confederation had been a betrayal in the Leewards:

The people awoke from their mesmeric trance to find they had been shamefully imposed upon, to find that in no single instance was any promise intended to be kept. Almost one of the first things done was to do away with the Lieut.-Governors and to substitute Presidents, to be paid out of the local treasuries, and not out of the Imperial treasury, as was the case with the Lieut.-Governors.⁴¹

One of the main fears of confederation for the Caribbean white population was that they would have to spend more money to support a new system. Here, Mr Ellis clearly showed that it was going to be the case.

The Leeward Confederation was described by many as a failure, and was used as a strong argument against the imperial policy, especially by the Barbadian press. *The Agricultural Reporter* and *The West Indian*, Barbadian newspapers, strongly advocated against the policy. In a debate in the House of Lords on 1 August 1876, Lord Stanley of Alderly had stated that some Barbadian newspapers had lowered their prices to make their issues more accessible to the population and to convince them to be against confederation.⁴² Stanley criticised *The Barbados Globe* and *The Agricultural Reporter* of exaggeration while he believed that *The West Indian* was a “very fair and moderate paper” even though it had been reported as patriotic by *The Agricultural Reporter*.⁴³ The first two newspapers strongly opposed confederation while the latter had a more balanced

⁴⁰ TNA, CO 321/9(63), Hennessy to Carnarvon, (Feb. 11, 1876).

⁴¹ C. 1539, Enclosure in No. 9, p. 21, (Jul. 1, 1875), public meeting held on the 24th ultimo protesting against Federation.

⁴² HL Deb 01 August 1876 vol 231 cc236-53.

⁴³ TNA, CO 321/9(22), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (Jan. 25, 1876).

opinion and not always being as violent. Indeed, in the Colonial Office papers, most of the newspapers that were attached in the correspondences were from the *Times*, the *Globe* and the *Reporter* and very few from *The West Indian*.

On 27 July 1875, a letter to the editor was published in *The Agricultural Reporter*, in which the authors said that “[they] should be unwise to copy the bad example set by the Leeward Confederation.”⁴⁴ On 25 January 1876, in the same issue in which they talked about the Canadian Confederation, *The Agricultural Reporter* talked about the Leeward Confederation as a failure without, however, giving any further details.⁴⁵ On that same day, *The West Indian* made the following comparison:

A pot is boiling on the fire, says the speaker; we see our neighbor go up to it and put his hand into the boiling fluid, and he burns his fingers severely; and we are asked to do the same.

According to the newspaper, although confederation in the Leewards was supposed to reduce expenditure, it added to it and it had created even more delays in the Courts of Law.⁴⁶ It was because they saw what failure had occurred in the neighbouring islands that Barbadians did not want to have it in their colony, or at least they used the lack of success in the Leewards as an argument in their favour. Some MPs in London became aware of the situation, but they only mentioned it as a problem and did not debate to find an alternative to the Leewards argument. In May 1876 Sir William Charley, MP for Salford, said that Barbadians “pointed to the Leeward Islands as a proof that Confederation did not mean social and material improvement,” while in July 1876 Edward Jenkins stated that “there was a strong feeling in Barbados that [that policy] had been effected by official influence, and not been fairly carried.”⁴⁷

Opponents to confederation in Barbados argued that the policy was a failure in the Leewards because poverty there was still prevailing, those who defended it

⁴⁴ C. 1559, Enclosure in No. 31, p. 102, (May 4, 1876), With reference to certain assertions of the members of the West India Committee that there was no political agitation in Barbados until he laid before the legislature his six points of administrative Confederation.

⁴⁵ TNA, CO 321/9(26), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (Jan. 25, 1876).

⁴⁶ TNA, CO 321/9(34), *The West Indian*, (Jan. 25, 1876).

⁴⁷ HC Deb 28 July 1876 vol 231 cc42-59; HC Deb 05 May 1876 vol 229 cc144-65.

emphasised how it was a success. The *Barbados People and Windward Islands Gazette*, a newspaper owned by Sir Thomas Graham Briggs, a member of the Legislative Council of Barbados who was in favour of confederation, transcribed a debate held in the Legislative Council of Barbados on 14 March 1876. Briggs argued that confederation did not bring more poverty in Antigua, one of the Leeward Islands; instead poverty had developed there because the colony had suffered four droughts in five years.⁴⁸ Briggs tried to distance the state of the island from the result of confederation. During that same meeting, Mr Semper also asserted that these statements were false and that Antigua's finances were better than they used to be, and that there was a surplus in the revenue of St. Kitts.⁴⁹

A few weeks later, the newspaper published an extract from *The St. Lucia Observer* in which the author wrote that failure in the Leewards was not sufficient enough to abandon confederation. The decrease in sugar production in the islands was the result of natural causes — “severe storms and droughts” — and he wrote that confederation had led to “the happiest results” in the Straits Settlements. The article also stated that the Windward Islands should learn from their neighbours' mistakes and do things differently, to have a better operating confederation.⁵⁰ In a similar vein, but with a slightly different argument, the London *Pall Mall Gazette*'s issue of 12 April 1876 set forth that as soon as the new policy was in place in the Leewards, “the efficiency of government was at once improved.”⁵¹

All these articles show that both opponents and defendants of confederation in the Windwards mentioned the Leeward Confederation. They obviously had to, as the colonies were very similar. Each side twisted the components related to the Leewards to make a case, and none of them was taking into account the opposition to their argument, which made it easy for the other side to retort to it, just as Mr Semper had done. The

⁴⁸ *The Barbados People and Windward Islands Gazette*, (Mar. 23, 1876), p. 3. Readex. *Caribbean Newspapers, 1718-1876*.

⁴⁹ *The Trinidad Chronicle*, (Mar. 31, 1876), p. 3, BL, General Reference Collection Microform. MFM.MC524.

⁵⁰ *The Barbados People and Windward Islands Gazette*, (Apr. 6, 1876), p. 1. Readex. *Caribbean Newspapers, 1718-1876*. www.readex.com/content/caribbean-newspapers-series-1-1718-1876-american-antiquarian-society, Accessed Dec. 3, 2017.

⁵¹ *Pall Mall Gazette*, (Apr. 12, 1876).

government justified it with the natural causes (droughts) while the opponents did not respond to it. They complained when Hennessy referred to the Straits Settlements instead of the Leewards, but when others did so, it was still not working in their favour.

Organisation of the Windward Islands in the past

Confederation was still to be achieved in the Windwards but the islands had already been in some sort of union in the past. Barbados had been a British colony since 1627 and was granted a House of Assembly and Legislative Council in 1652. By 1763, Grenada, St. Vincent and Tobago had also acquired assemblies comprised of sixteen and nineteen members each. Nonetheless these House Assemblies were not really working hand in hand with the Colonial Office. In order for the latter to have more control, Executive councils were created in the 1850s, whose members answered directly to the Governor. The case was different for St. Lucia. After the end of the Napoleonic Wars, it was returned to the British Empire by the French and this time for good. The island had always been a Crown colony, either as part of the British or the French Empire, and therefore it reverted to its old status. Coleridge Harris claimed that making St. Lucia a Crown colony was a way to avoid the mistake of 1763 that granted obstructive representative governments, which according to Coleridge Harris had impeded abolition.⁵² St. Lucia did not have an Assembly; therefore, the white population could not reject the reforms – which would be convenient for confederation.

The first attempt at getting a constitutional union between the Windward Islands occurred in 1763, when the Governor of Grenada was also Governor of St. Vincent, Dominica and Tobago. It resulted in protests in the colonies, and the scheme disintegrated as a consequence each island had its own governor. Therefore, the first time they had tried to unite the islands, it had already failed. However, the imperial government was persistent with this unification, as another attempt was made in 1833 with the creation of two colonies: the Windward and the Leeward Islands. Although the two Crown colonies

⁵² Harris, "The Constitutional History of the Windwards," pp. 161, 163, 165; Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2000); Jack Philip Greene, "The Jamaica Privilege Controversy, 1764-67: An Episode in the Process of Constitutional Definition in the Early Modern British Empire," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22.1 (1994), pp. 16-53.

of the geographical Windwards, St. Lucia and Trinidad, were left out, they finally both joined the group in 1835, with Trinidad leaving again in 1842.⁵³ The reason for its leaving might have been for its proximity to British Guiana, which would put these colonies together. The government might also have had more direct control of the island, “ruled in the shadow of widespread regional unrest from Haiti to British Grenada.”⁵⁴ This argument also worked for the other Windward Islands, Trinidad however is located only a few miles from South America and although it is in the Caribbean, it belongs to the South American continent while the other islands belong to North America.

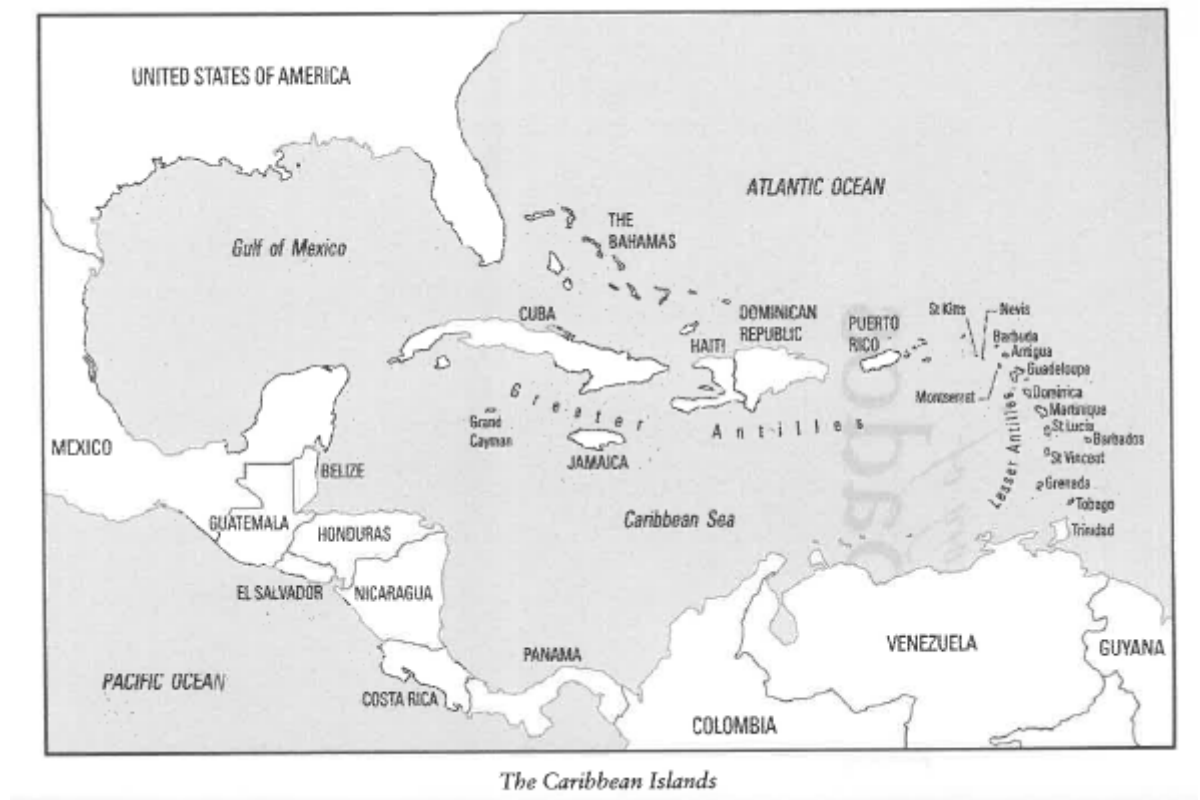


Figure 2: The Caribbean Islands.
Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p.ii.

Some sort of constitutional union was established after emancipation in the British Caribbean. First, in 1837 and 1857, a court of appeal and a court of judicature were created for the Windward Islands, and the former had a provision for the creation of a

⁵³ Harris, “The Constitutional History of the Windwards,” pp. 172-173; Boromé, “How Crown Colony Government Came to Dominica by 1898,” pp. 26-67; Kelsick, “Constitutional History of the Leewards,” pp. 177-209.

⁵⁴ Lauren Benton and Lisa Ford, “Island Despotism: Trinidad, the British Imperial Constitution and Global Legal Order,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (2017), p. 2.

federal court of the Windwards. In 1874, the Governor-in-chief of the Windwards, Rawson William Rawson repealed the 1837 Act, making the remodelling the judicial system one of the first goals of John Pope Hennessy, his successor.⁵⁵ Hennessy also pointed out that by 1875 there was a centralisation in the Windwards on several points. The first one was that the Caribbean troops were under the command of a Major-General in Barbados. The second was that the head of the Anglican Church in the Windwards was the Bishop of Barbados, and students from the five colonies attended Codrington College, Harrison's College, and the Codrington Grammar School all located in Barbados. The colonial bank was the Bank of Barbados and had branches in St. Vincent, St. Lucia and Grenada, and the Barbados Mutual Life Assurance Society also had branches in St. Vincent and Grenada. Therefore, there were military, ecclesiastical, educational and commercial unions in addition to the judicial one.⁵⁶ Hennessy used these unions to explain that confederation was not irrelevant to the cases of the Windwards; in the past, they had agreed to be joined on other levels. However, these centralisations had not deprived the white elite of their representative system while confederation would, with a change of status to Crown colony.

The fact that all these institutions were centralised in Barbados highlighted its importance among the four other colonies. There were reasons why it had been chosen to be the centre of the government. James Anthony Froude argued that emancipation had been a disaster for the Caribbean colonies, but it had not been as harmful in Barbados: there was a large African-Barbadian population there and the island was small, therefore there were considerable labour forces. Furthermore, it was suited to sugar-growing as there are not a lot of forests or mountains. All mails and passengers arrived in Barbados first as it is the most eastward island.⁵⁷ Barbados was the first stop for the steamers, and, as a consequence, they received the information first. For the British Empire, the island had been a strategic position, a stronghold. However, the government did not emphasise this point too much, it might have been by fear of repelling the other colonies who could resist

⁵⁵ Pope Hennessy, *Verandah*, p. 166.

⁵⁶ C. 1539, No. 21, pp. 66-67, (Nov. 26, 1876), Discussions with local gentlemen on the subject of the extent of Confederation in the Windward Islands.

⁵⁷ Froude, *The English in the West Indies*, pp. 41, 105, 45.

a supposed Barbados domination. As a matter of fact, the island was already the most populous of the Windwards and thus, attracted more attention from the Colonial Office.⁵⁸

Plans for stronger unification of the British Caribbean did not stop with the two confederations. In the Leeward Confederation Act, there was a section for merging them:

in the 32nd section of the Leeward Islands Act, 1871, provision was expressly made for the admission of other West Indian Islands into the union which at present comprises the Leeward Islands only. In the event of Barbados and the other Windward Islands being disposed to enter into a new Federation, an Imperial Act must be passed giving effect to the resolutions of the Legislatures; which would be unnecessary in the case of a Colony joining the existing Federation.⁵⁹

This clause, making a greater Caribbean Confederation possible, had been drafted in 1873 and would include all of the British Lesser Antilles. However, a bigger plan for confederation in the Caribbean was not the main goal in the early 1870s, although it was the first step towards the Caribbean Confederation, which later emerged in the twentieth century.

The Colonial Office's views on the Caribbean

The Colonial Office tried to unite the British Caribbean on several occasions, but it failed because they did not have a proper grasp of the situation there. They wanted to confederate colonies in the Caribbean because they thought they were similar, even though communication between the islands was difficult, creating a “barrier between the social, political and economic life” of the communities — “the sea tends to divide rather than unite,” as Edward Wood, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies in the 1920s commented.⁶⁰ In the twentieth century, Wood, a member of the Colonial Office finally conceded that the colonies were different and unifying them might not be the solution. In

⁵⁸ TNA, CO 28/215(64), Letter from Rawson to Kimberley, (Sep. 8, 1871).

⁵⁹ C. 1539, No. 8, p. 8, (May 1, 1873), Directing his attention to some points which have an important bearing upon the Federation of the Windward Islands, an object which, in the interests of those Colonies, Her Majesty's Government earnestly desire to see accomplished.

⁶⁰ Cmd. 1679. pp. 30-31, (1922), West Indies. Report by the Honourable E. F. L. Wood, M.P.

1876, this was acknowledged by the London *Times*, which recognised that it was difficult to have a perspective on the situation, being an outsider, far away from the Caribbean: “To an outsider, it is difficult to understand why the Barbadians have offered such as desperate resistance to a scheme which would apparently result in increasing the importance of their island.”⁶¹ The newspaper did not give any response to this lack of understanding, it even seems that the editor did not understand Barbados’s resistance to the scheme. The editors of the London *Times* positioned themselves as aliens to colonies of their own Empire, which highlights the fact that there was a lack of understanding of the situation, which impeded the realisation of adequate reforms in the colonies. What is more, the colonies of the Caribbean were small islands and tended to be overlooked. By the 1870s important changes were occurring in other parts of the Empire directing the government interests elsewhere. For instance, Queen Victoria became Empress of India in 1876, the same year as the Confederation Riots in Barbados. Members of the government, such as Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, had paid considerable attention to India before securing the Queen’s title. As a matter of fact, Disraeli had suggested this imperial project for India after the Mutiny in 1858 and it had been suggested by Lord Ellenborough, Governor-General of India, as early as 1843.⁶² The government’s attention was drawn to bigger parts of the Empire.

Furthermore, it was even more difficult for London to be aware of the difficulties brought about by the differences between the colonies; governors in the Leewards supported the Colonial Office assumptions that the colonies should have a shared legislature. Benjamin Pine, Governor of Antigua from 1868 to 1871, wrote to the Earl Granville, Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1868 to 1870, that the colonies had to be confederated for the following reasons:

they are people by the same races, they yield the same productions, their general interests are identical, they lie comparatively close together, and are under one Governor. These things form at least an *à priori* argument in favour of their having a common Legislature to legislate for their common interests.⁶³

⁶¹ “The Windward Islands,” *Times*, (Jul. 3, 1876), p. 5.

⁶² L. A. Knight, “The Royal Titles Act and India,” *The Historical Journal* 11. 3 (1968), pp. 488-489.

⁶³ C. 353, No. 8, p. 6, (Oct. 25, 1869), Governor Pine to the Earl Granville.

This point of view was indeed not from London or from afar, because Benjamin Pine was Lieutenant-Governor of St. Kitts from 1860 to 1866, and Governor-in-chief of the Leewards from 1871 to 1873. Pine spent more than a decade in the Caribbean and could see what was happening in the islands. He had also worked for a long time for the Colonial Office, as he had been Governor of Natal and of the Gold Coast before that. Thus, it reflects a difference between settler demands and government aspirations.

Nonetheless, he also noticed that the white elite in the colonies had reasons to be against the confederation scheme and his explanation for their resistance was a “spirit of self-importance and narrow patriotism.”⁶⁴ Pine did not pay the elite compliments for being attached to their colony; he thought it was a wrong argument that made them hold on to a form of government they had held for centuries and, with his experience, the Governor should have understood the elite’s resistance. He did not reflect on public opinion for his imperial endeavours. Even though he was following orders from the Secretary of State, he could have argued against confederation instead of supporting it. His experience as Governor in different colonies led him to believe that confederation could be successful in the Caribbean.

On the contrary, George Berkeley, Governor-in-chief of the Leewards from 1875 to 1881, acknowledged the inconsistencies with the British government’s regulations. Berkeley was familiar with the Caribbean colonies, before being governor of the Leewards, he had been President of Dominica from 1860 to 1861, then Lieutenant-Governor of St. Vincent from 1864 to 1871. According to him, the British government in London had ideas and opinions about colonies they did not know anything about. The Secretary of State for the colonies was busy with bigger islands — Jamaica, for instance, as well as larger colonies elsewhere — but there were also schemes about confederation in the South African colonies, and the Canadian Confederation had just been achieved. Thus, there was not enough attention directed to the Leeward Islands and Berkeley pointed out that the government implied that their importance was to increase thanks to confederation.⁶⁵ The difference of opinion between Berkeley and Pine could be due to the fact that Pine was born in London, and Berkeley in Barbados, he had worked for the administration of British Honduras, Dominica and St. Vincent from 1845. He had

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Berkeley, *The Leeward Islands*, pp. 17-18.

experienced different positions in the Caribbean and could reflect on how different the islands were and what the British government genuinely knew about them. Giving more importance to the Lesser Antilles was a strong argument for confederation.

Pine and Berkeley had different opinions on the governance of the Leewards and the likely effects of confederation. Governors of the British Empire were appointed to different places throughout their careers.⁶⁶ Thanks to their various appointments they created networks but also assumptions. They tried to replicate things they had achieved elsewhere in their new role. What is more, they built narratives, such as William Des Voeux, Administrator of St. Lucia from 1869 to 1878, who wrote *My Colonial Service in British Guiana, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Fiji, Australia, Newfoundland, and Hong Kong, with Interludes*, which “were influential in constructing the geographical imaginations of those who had stayed ‘at home’ in Britain itself.” They gave great input for officials who were seeing from afar but they already came with a background that influenced them. “The discourse of colonial governmentality was also profoundly a product of the mobility of governors themselves.”⁶⁷

What is more, in the case of the Windward Islands, more than not being in touch with the British Caribbean, the Colonial Office only focused its attention on Barbados and disregarded the other colonies. From this point of view, confederation was indeed necessary because the territories were too insignificant on their own for individual administrations, and that was reflected in the British press as well as in the debates in Parliament. Therefore, even though they had different ways of approaching the policy, both Berkeley and Pine were right in the sense that it was necessary on a wider imperial scale.

⁶⁶ For instance, Anthony Musgrave Lieutenant-Governor of St. Vincent from 1861 to 1864 became Lieutenant-Governor of Natal from 1872 to 1873. Geoffrey Bolton, “Musgrave, Sir Anthony (1828–1888), colonial governor,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. September 23, 2004. Oxford University Press. www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19658, Accessed Aug. 13, 2018; Zoe Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections 1815-45: Patronage, The Information Revolution and Colonial Government*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

⁶⁷ David Lambert and Alan Lester, “Imperial spaces, imperial subjects,” *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 1, 11.

In a letter addressed to Lord Carnarvon on 8 December 1875, Hennessy said that St. Lucia was “favourable to the scheme” while on 28 January 1876 the Minutes stated that the Governor’s despatches conveyed the idea that “St. Vincent and Grenada [were] not likely to make difficulties.”⁶⁸ The islands did not give any trouble, therefore all the attention was focused on Barbados because of the white elite’s strong opposition. However, even before the island was a concern, Governors-in-chief were hardly visiting the other islands, showing that those were already neglected.

This negligence can also be perceived in Parliament. In the records of the debates in Parliament, there are only a few occurrences of the other islands’ opinion on confederation. The issue of confederation in the Windward Islands and the riots in Barbados were discussed several times between April and August 1876, but only briefly did they comment on Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Tobago. In the House of Commons, Grenada and St. Lucia were mentioned once in regard to public debt while St. Vincent had not been dealt with.⁶⁹ Tobago was discussed twice, on 9 and 11 May in relation to disturbances.⁷⁰ In a discourse on 14 January 1876 to the Barbados House of Assembly Hennessy claimed that the “other islands should be taken into consideration and that in the proposed machinery they should be duly represented.”⁷¹ The Governor was aware of the difficulties of unifying five islands and even though the government was to be centralised in Barbados, the other colonies should not be put aside with regards to the decisions which had to be taken. This, however, did not reflect fear in the other islands that confederation was going to be dominated and directed by Barbados, these colonies favoured it. Hennessy’s discourse was inclusive of the five colonies which might have contributed to the Barbadian planters’ being more upset as they did not want to take into account the other islands of the confederation.

On 19 September 1876, Mr Robert Wyndham Herbert, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, said he had had a lot of conversations on confederation

⁶⁸ TNA, CO 321/6(685), Hennessy to Carnarvon, (Dec. 28, 1875); TNA, CO 321/9(14), Minutes (Jan. 28, 1876).

⁶⁹ “The public debt of Grenada was £7,000, and that of St. Lucia, £15,000; but Barbadoes had no public debt at all,” HC Deb 05 May 1876 vol 229 cc144-65.

⁷⁰ HC Deb 09 May 1876 vol 229 c265; HC Deb 11 May 1876 vol 229 cc367-8.

⁷¹ TNA, CO 321/9(22), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (Jan. 25, 1876).

with Briggs and John Sealy, both members of the Legislative Council, as well as with Rawson's predecessor, Governor James Walker, but that he had also talked to "an occasional planter or two from the Minor Islands."⁷² This clearly indicates that four of the five colonies were not considered as equally significant.

The relative lack of importance of the British Caribbean colonies was also reflected in Carnarvon's diaries. When discussion about confederation in the Windwards was at its peak, Carnarvon's attention was mainly focused on South Africa. In his 1875 diary, he only mentioned difficulties with the Cape Colony and the scheme, and discussion on Natal.⁷³ The only pages of his 1876 diary that are available at the British Library are from 17 May to 2 June, and the Secretary exclusively talked about his mother's health.⁷⁴ What is more, it seems that there was a generalisation between the British African populated colonies: a policy working for one should work for the other. Once confederation was achieved, Benjamin Pine was sent to Africa as Governor of Natal until 1875. The Governor succeeded in the Leewards but failed in South Africa. He thus arrived in Natal with ideas about how to change things, but his policies had worked in the Caribbean it did not mean that it was going to work somewhere else.

The negligence towards the islands could also be perceived in the British press. Between April 1876 and February 1877, articles on confederation were published in British newspapers. Only a few had a title about the Windward Islands. For the London *Times*, the population of Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago were "unanimously in favour" of confederation.⁷⁵ They did not provide any names or accounts from people living in these islands to support this statement. An article from *The Standard* only mentioned the other islands to specify that their Legislatures had evolved from a bicameral system to a single chamber system.⁷⁶

⁷² Confederation, p. 16, Bodleian Library, MSS Brit Emp. S. 409. Box 7/2.

⁷³ Diaries and travel journals and memoranda of Lord Carnarvon Vol. CLI (ff. 179). 1875, (1875), BL, Add MS 60907.

⁷⁴ Diaries and travel journals and memoranda of Lord Carnarvon Vol. CLII (ff. i+138). 1 Jan.; 17 May – 3 June 1876, BL, Add MS 60908.

⁷⁵ "The Windward Islands," *Times*, (Jul. 3, 1876), p. 5.

⁷⁶ "The Confederation of the Windward Islands," *Standard*, (Feb. 20, 1877), p. 3. Gale Historical Newspapers.

This lack of accuracy could confirm the argument that the colonies would gain importance with confederation, after being so relatively insignificant for the British press. Nonetheless, there were no evidence to support this idea and as Berkeley argued, much was to be done before confederation was to increase the Caribbean's and especially the Leeward Islands' importance in the whole Empire.⁷⁷ In the same vein, as the islands were already neglected, what would happen under a confederation whose central government was to be located in Barbados, away from those islands? Would not the islands be drawn in the middle of a greater Caribbean scheme? It is interesting to note that this reasoning did not make the four other islands of the Windwards be against the scheme. The planters of the only colony that was to be the powerful one opposed it, and in Barbados it was countered as being more than a Constitutional conflict.

Hennesy's attempt at mediation

Even though Rawson and acting Governor Freeling had met strong opposition from the Barbadian Legislature, Hennesy was determined to achieve confederation in the Windwards. At first, he participated in the building of a consensus between the members of the House of Assembly and the new imperial policy.

In December 1875, John Sealy suggested that Hennesy organise a conference between the different islands. The conditions were that the conference should gather twelve members: three from the Barbadian Legislative Council, five from the Barbadian House of Assembly, and the other islands were to get one member each. The Committee set up by the conference would only have consultative character, instead of a "permanent character" or legislative power.⁷⁸ Nonetheless, with that Committee, the Barbadian planters were making sure of their prominence with a greater number of participants and would then be a majority to take decisions and to make sure to oppose confederation.

In a speech to the House of Assembly on 7 December 1875, John Sealy explained that the aim of the Committee would be to engage in a discussion about what kind of collaboration each colony was willing to have with the others. Sealy added that he did not

⁷⁷ Berkeley, *The Leeward Islands*, p. 18.

⁷⁸ C. 1539, Enclosure 1 in No. 43, p. 93 (Feb. 9, 1876), Result of a discussion in the House of Assembly on the subject of his messages on Confederation.

doubt the other islands were going to pay for the expenses of sending a delegate to Barbados for the conference. These members, however, were to be members of the existing Executive Councils of the five islands. These members in Barbados had expressed their opposition to confederation; thus, Sealy was not taking many risks. Hennessy also suggested that influential members of the Assemblies should be added to that Committee.⁷⁹ Some members of the House of Assembly in Barbados such as Thomas Graham Briggs and William Brandford Griffith supported the confederation policy, therefore it was to be more useful for the scheme to succeed to add members of the House.

After Carnarvon's approval, the conference was to take place in Barbados. Thus, having a first step towards an agreement, Hennessy travelled to the other Windward Islands over Christmas 1875 and during the following three weeks. He talked to the Lieutenant-Governors of the Windward Islands about reforms that he called the Six Points. These were six reforms that did not concern confederation in itself but it is clear that the scheme was going to result from them. First, he wanted the Auditor of Barbados to become the Auditor-General of the Windward Islands; then, prisoners from other islands could be accepted in Barbados, and the lunatic asylums and lazaretto were to be open to candidates from the other islands. A Chief Justice would be appointed in Barbados for the Windwards, the judicial system remodelled, and the police united throughout the islands.⁸⁰

The conclusions of his travels were that George Dundas, Lieutenant-Governor of St. Vincent, entirely supported Hennessy; he would cooperate and only saw the benefits of the imperial policy.⁸¹ Cyril Graham, Lieutenant-Governor of Grenada, on the contrary, only agreed with some of Hennessy's proposals: he favoured the suggestion of having a single Auditor-General for the five islands and of remodelling the judicial system. He had however more difficulties with the central police. Graham thought that even though it could be beneficial, the officers would also need local knowledge to handle some cases.⁸²

⁷⁹ C. 1539, Enclosure in No. 59, p. 110, (Mar. 4, 1876), Regarding the views of the late Executive Council on the subject of Confederation.

⁸⁰ Pope Hennessy, *Verandah*, pp. 166-167.

⁸¹ C. 1539, No. 40, p. 87, (Feb. 1, 1876), Readiness of Lieut.-Governor Dundas to assist in furthering a scheme of Confederation for the Windward Islands.

⁸² C. 1539, No. 42, p. 88, (Feb. 1, 1876), Transmitting copy of a Despatch from Lieut.-Governor Graham, expressing a hope that the proposed scheme of Confederation may be speedily carried into effect.

Thus, both Lieutenant-Governors agreed with the strengthening of some aspects of a union but some local facets needed to be preserved. What Graham wanted to avoid was officials who were less acquainted with colonies they did not reside in; most of the officials were to be located in Barbados.

After these visits, Hennessy went back to Barbados, but the population felt pressured into confederation and began to oppose it more fiercely for Hennessy was “pregnant with schemes.”⁸³ He had discussed the plan with the Lieutenant-Governors and Administrator of the other Windward Islands who had confirmed their support and had given him other ideas on how to make it work. The Barbadian elite immediately pulled back, agitation had been aroused, and the organisation of a conference was abandoned.

It is striking that there had never been any meetings or assemblies between delegates from the different islands for a motion about a union. What is even more compelling is that Carnarvon stated confederation was not to be forced in the colonies, but, even after the failure of the conference, he did not give up on it.⁸⁴ If St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Tobago and Grenada were to ask for confederation, why did not anyone organise assemblies with delegates from these islands to convince the remaining one?⁸⁵ Planters were the ones opposed to it, but talking to influential people from the other colonies who were not close to the Governor might have been beneficial. There was an unwillingness to make efforts on both sides. The Barbadian press and Legislatures were turning a deaf ear while the government wanted to implement a confederation between islands that were not even able to organise a conference.

Ultimately, the Windward Islands Confederation was part of a greater imperial scheme that spread throughout the British Empire in the 1860s and 1870s, it was not specific to the region. Lowering expenses and consolidation had been the chief goals of the Colonial Office but it failed to take into account the specificities of the different territories. This made members of the Barbadian legislature criticise the comparisons

⁸³ Pope Hennessy, *Verandah*, p. 168.

⁸⁴ HC Deb 04 April 1876 vol 228 c1178.

⁸⁵ C. 1539, No. 63, p. 117, (Mar. 11, 1876), Reporting a general feeling in the Windward Islands in favour of Confederation.

between the various British imperial confederations as irrelevant. They, thus, defended their uniqueness in order to oppose the scheme.

Chapter 2

Challenges to confederation in the Windward Islands: the white elite

The Windward Islands Confederation was designed by the imperial government to make the administration of the colonies more efficient and less expensive. As discussed in the previous chapter, it was not well received by white Barbadians, who opposed it in the press as well as during debates in the House of Assembly and in the Legislative Council. This chapter will look at the different reasons why they saw the imperial policy as incompatible with their island. It will first look at what it meant to be Barbadian in the nineteenth century to then look at how St. Lucia perceived Barbados's views on confederation. In Barbados, people spoke English, whereas in St. Lucia, some still spoke French as a result of different colonisations. Another difference between the colonies of the Windwards that will be looked at is religion: some colonies were predominantly Protestant and other Catholic. What is more, Barbados was a Protestant island while John Pope Hennessy was an Irish Roman Catholic, which provided a basis for suspicions. The following sections of the chapter will examine how the Barbadian elite was attached to the Constitution established in the seventeenth century, and how the other colonies of the Windwards changed theirs. It will also discuss why Barbadian planters wished to retain separate treasuries from the other colonies. It will finally end with demographic issues of the confederation scheme related to emigration, prisons, and asylums.

The white elite dual identity: British allegiances

Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia and Tobago had suffered shifts in government throughout the eighteenth century until the beginning of the nineteenth century. This is relevant to the 1876 confederation issue because these fluctuations between different Empires meant that British planters did not have time to settle for generations in all these colonies. Many of these planters had interests in the West India trade and became absentee owners primarily living in England or Scotland. As a consequence, they remained financially influential, notably in Tobago.¹

¹ Craig James, *The Changing Society of Tobago*, p. 233.

On the contrary, Barbados had not been subject to changes as had the other Windward Islands. A British tobacco-growing settlement was established there by 1627.² About a bit more than a decade later the sugar revolution started in that same island. The colony became important for the Empire and gained a nickname which emphasised the planters' loyalty to the English Crown: "Little England."³ It has not yet been found when the term was first used even if its first written record dates back from 1804. According to David Lambert, it was adopted as a response to anti-slavery by white Barbadians and it appeared in *A Tour through the British West Indies* written by Daniel McKinnen.⁴ He argued that the island had started to be nicknamed Little England as a result of its prominent white population in the 1660s, which rounded up to 50,000. In addition, the island's "flourishing state" also helped for the nickname to persist.⁵ By 1660, the colony had already become the "most populous and congested English colony in America." A contemporary historian, John Oldmixon stated that there were in Barbados "as many good Families as [there were] in any of the Counties of England."⁶ Therefore, since the early ages of English colonisation, white planters were well established and even though they could not exactly replicate English society and they more or less succeeded and gained their Little England nickname.

Some white families had been in Barbados since the seventeenth century and five of them received knighthoods and baronetcies between 1658 and 1665.⁷ By the time of the Confederation Riots in 1876, those families were still present. A document going over the genealogy of the Briggs family lists all its members: the first entry dates back from 1648 in the parish of St. Philip. They were landed proprietors who had settled in Barbados "possibly from the earliest occupation of the island by Great Britain."⁸ Other families had also lived in Barbados for generations. The Alleyne were a prominent family in the

² Higman, *A Concise History of the Caribbean*, p. 95.

³ Lambert, *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire*, p. 2; Levy, *Emancipation, Sugar, and Federalism*, p. 158.

⁴ Lambert, *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire*, p. 13.

⁵ Daniel McKinnen, *A Tour through the British West Indies*, (London: J. White, 1812), p. 23.

⁶ Ibid, pp. 76, 98.

⁷ Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies 1624-1713*, 1972, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), p. 81.

⁸ Briggs, *The Archives of the Briggs Family*, p. 28.

seventeenth century, and Forster M. Alleyne wrote a piece in the London *Times* on 15 April 1876 about the riots.⁹ The strong link between the white elite and their colony is evident and thus very distinct from the four other islands. The island was to remain the “ever-British” colony.¹⁰ This marked the first breaking point among the Windward Islands.

As early as the eighteenth century, there was in Barbados a “creole society of committed settlers.” Andrew O’Shaughnessy made a list of elements which participated in this phenomenon: they had a relatively high proportion of white people, relied less on immigration because their island had a large population, had lower rates of absenteeism and less danger of foreign attack because it had always remained part of the British Empire. Nonetheless, a possible threat from foreign countries also participated in the reinforcement of ties with the Mother country.¹¹ The island is the most eastward of the Windwards, and the further away from rival colonies whereas for instance St. Lucia is directly south of Martinique, Barbados is relatively more isolated. At the same time, it was also the first main Caribbean landfall after a transatlantic crossing in the age of sail, making it doubly important for Britain.

In 1876 some British newspapers such as *The Standard* depicted being a Barbadian as being “an Englishman *par excellence*.”¹² As part of the British Empire they had a right to hold on to their Constitution. *The Standard* in London acknowledged the white elite’s legitimate concern of being seen as disloyal because they were disagreeing with the Colonial Office whereas they only wanted to protect institutions established for them about two hundred years ago.¹³ In Barbados it could be defended through their allegiance to the British Empire. There existed different reasons why Barbados was still attached to Britain. Britain had made the colonies of the Caribbean dependent on it. The islands looked to Britain for protection and as the primary export market for the

⁹ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 30; Viator and Forster M. Alleyne, “Barbadoes,” *Times*, (Apr. 15, 1876), p. 7. Gale Historical Newspapers.

¹⁰ Hamilton, *Barbados & the Confederation Question*, p. 59.

¹¹ O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, pp. 6-31.

¹² “The Confederation of the Windward Islands,” *Standard*, (Feb. 20, 1877), p. 3.

¹³ Ibid.

Caribbean.¹⁴ Here it is more the economic reliance of the colonies on England rather than political allegiance which made them related to it. Barbados needed to remain attached to England, later Britain, while still wanting to stay somewhat politically independent; this was achieved through the self-government they had had for centuries and it thus appears logical that they did not want the system to change.

The white elite dual identity: Barbados identity

Nonetheless, even though the plantocracy had a strong allegiance to the British Empire it was also for reasons of power. Poor whites, on the contrary, did not see any benefits from the imperial system. Prior to the introduction of slavery in the Caribbean, many poor whites had come under indentureship contracts and especially during the Cromwellian Protectorate, many of them from Ireland or Scotland.¹⁵ There were no reasons for the poor whites to feel more British than Barbadian as being descendent of Anglo-Saxons settlers did not secure a higher position, unless their ancestors had one. Thus, the white elite used this loyalty to Britain to ensure they kept their privileges. What is more, poor whites being often descendants of migrants from Ireland had suffered discriminatory laws when they moved to Barbados. Being sent unwillingly to the Caribbean even became known as being “barbadoesed.” Once on the island they were denied religious liberties and were even “blocked from returning to Ireland.” When they migrated, laws had been unsympathetic towards them.¹⁶ This might explain why poor whites did not feel as attached to the British Empire as the oligarchy was. They might have felt more attached to Barbados building a new life there.

The immigration of poor white servants continued into the nineteenth century. However, they were brutally treated, which led Karl Watson to argue that their history has been analogous to that of people of African descent in a postemancipation era: they were poor, marginalised and discriminated. They were not accepted by the white elite as they did not form a strong community, the poor white identity had not been as developed

¹⁴ O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, p. 72.

¹⁵ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 58-70.

¹⁶ Kristen Block and Jenny Shaw, “Subjects without an Empire: The Irish in the Early Modern Caribbean,” *Past & Present* 210 (2011), pp. 33, 35, 41.

as the white planters' one had.¹⁷ However, they are not really included in the debates of the Confederation Riots. In a report of the 1871 census, Governor Rawson wrote that the poor white population had declined and one of the reasons why might have been the cholera epidemic of 1854 they had suffered from. Moreover, by the 1860s, many white migrants seeking a better life were not moving to the Caribbean anymore, British migrants were moving to Australia, New Zealand and North America.¹⁸ Thus, the poor white population in Barbados was declining and not renewed. Throughout the Parliamentary Papers on the disturbances and the debates in London available on *Hansard*, the poor whites are not mentioned.

When working on the white local population in Barbados, David Lambert expanded on the concept of a “‘true Barbadian’ identity.”¹⁹ Throughout his work, he emphasised the fact that although they were Barbadians, the white elite was loyal to the British Empire and to the system they had established. Visitors of the island commented on the Barbadian population at the beginning the nineteenth century. George Pinckard visited the colony as a physician to the army during Commander-in-chief Ralph Abercromby's expedition.²⁰ He wrote *Notes on the West Indies* in 1806 in which he noted that several members of the Barbadian population described themselves as “neither Carib, nor Creole, but true Barbadian.”²¹ He also wrote that even slaves came to depict themselves as such: they felt a “superiority above negros of other islands.”²² Lambert

¹⁷ Karl Watson, “‘Walk and Nyam Buckras’: Poor-White Emigration from Barbados 1834-1900,” *The Journal of Caribbean History* 34.1&2 (2000), pp. 131-135.

¹⁸ Donald Denoon and Marivic Wyndham, “Australia and the West Pacific,” *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III: The Nineteenth Century*, Ed. Andrew Porter, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 546.

¹⁹ Lambert, *White Creole Culture*, p. 103.

²⁰ Norman Moore, “Pinckard, George (1768–1835), physician,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 2004-09-23. Oxford University Press.
www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-22290, Accessed Feb. 13, 2018.

²¹ Lambert, *White Creole Culture*, p. 103.

²² Pinckard, George, *Notes on the West Indies*, (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806), p. 76.

only looked at the white self-description: they saw themselves as different and loyal to England. According to him, this was a token of a “Barbadian embryonic nationalism.”²³

Nationalism can be analysed in different ways. Johann Gottlieb Fichte looked at cultural nationalism as linked to three theories: the first being that each nation has its

own language and culture; [then] that each person owed supreme loyalty to their own nation - that indeed freedom consisted of identifying oneself with the higher cause represented by the nation; and that each nation had its own peculiar mission.²⁴

The fact that Barbadians described themselves as “neither Carib nor Creole” supports Fichte’s argument about their own culture, not related to one already existing. These specificities make it understandable that Barbadians did not want to be driven into a confederation, corroborating the idea that the Barbadians were a proud people and that they felt distinct from the other Caribbean islands and from Europe. *The Agricultural Reporter* talked about a “patriotic spirit” in the Barbadian press.²⁵

It was because they were patriotic that they wanted to retain their Constitution. They retained their allegiance to Britain for safety reasons, but they felt Barbadians first and foremost. The conflicted identities worked in a concentric way, being Barbadian did not exclude maintaining allegiances to England. Barbados was “never able to reconcile their claims to being both equal and subordinate to Britain,” which made the loyalty to the Mother country remain ambivalent.²⁶

²³ Lambert, *White Creole Culture*, p. 103.

²⁴ David Miller, “The Evolution of Nationalism,” *Nation and Nationalism*, 1998, Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Taylor and Francis, n.d. www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/nation-and-nationalism/v-1/sections/the-evolution-of-nationalism, Accessed Jan. 22, 2018.

²⁵ TNA, CO 321/9(22), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (Jan. 25, 1876).

²⁶ O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, p. 248.

St. Lucia and Barbados's views on confederation

Barbados remained solely a British colony, and thus the official language had always been English. In St. Lucia, from the eighteenth century, official languages kept shifting between French and English. This variety of languages was still pertinent in the 1870s. One of the local newspapers, *The St. Lucia Observer*, used to publish in the same issue articles in both languages. It was a common practice as for instance, at the same time, *The Trinidad Chronicle* published advertisements both in Spanish and in English.

In the issues of 8 April and 22 April 1876 *The St. Lucia Observer*, the second page started with "New Advertisement," but what followed were articles in French. In the first one the announcement was related to materials received from France in order to work on silver plating and gilding. The second one was related to a local man from Martinique living in St. Lucia and who was selling his books to repay his debts. Thus, the French language was used in 1876 for subjects related to France or the French local population.

The first issue was published about ten days before the Confederation Riots, and debates on confederation started to increase around March 1876. On 8 April 1876, amid reporting about a local affair related to an attack between a policeman and a citizen, as well as a complaint from Deborah Abrahams to the editor, *The St. Lucia Observer* dedicated a very few lines to synonyms of confederation. It seems that the writers were giving an English lesson to the readers. The passage was as follows:

On dit – "Confederation" "Conglomeration" "Consternation" – in (Hookey)
Walker's Dictionary these words are said to be synonymous terms.²⁷

In 1828 John Walker published *The Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language*. This dictionary gave definitions of words as well as their pronunciations thanks to the phonetic alphabet. The definitions of the three words used in *The St. Lucia Observer* are as follows: a confederation is a league or an alliance, consternation is related to amazement, terror and dread, while a conglomeration is a "collection of matter into a

²⁷ *The St. Lucia Observer*, (Apr. 8, 1876), BL, General Reference Collection Microfilm Microform. MFM.MMISC972.

loose ball.”²⁸ Without any doubts these words are not synonymous, even though both confederation and conglomeration express the idea of joining things together. So why did *The St. Lucia Observer* suggest that they were? It is noteworthy that it specified “(Hookey) Walker’s Dictionary.” The first occurrence of the expression *Hookey Walker* dates back from 1811 in Francis Grose’s *Lexicon Balatronicum* and was defined as “an expression signifying that the story is not true, or that the thing will not occur.”²⁹ Therefore, it can be inferred that the newspaper acknowledged that the words are not synonymous. In *The St. Lucia Observer* the editor did not give any explicit opinion on confederation; most of the articles published were reports from telegrams received or speeches given in Legislative Council and House of Assembly in Barbados. Instead, it used language as a device to transmit messages about its views on confederation.

The fact that, here, *The St. Lucia Observer* dealt with confederation the way it did might mean that English speakers of the Caribbean tried to make people believe those words to be synonymous: confederation was something related to terror and to a “collection of matter into a loose ball,” it was not going to last or even work. The fact that the newspaper started the sentence in French with “On dit” (we say) showed they were going to teach something about language. Ending it in English also implied the historical shift of the colony, which ended being part of the British Empire. It can nonetheless seem odd that they put this segment in the middle of reports, written in English, about the local life, not related to issues of confederation or to other Windward Islands. This passage did not per se express an opposition to confederation but is a token of how differently and not as seriously things were perceived in St. Lucia. There is a political message hidden behind this lesson; a humorous way to depict the Windward Islands Confederation as a random collection of islands.

The local press from St. Lucia also reported on Hennessy’s visit to the island in December 1875. By January they published articles claiming they trusted Hennessy and would welcome him again.³⁰ The Governor had also been praised for his “affability and

²⁸ John Walker, *Walker’s Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language*, (Boston: Charles Ewer, 1828). *Internet Archive*, pp. 101, 105, 102.

www.archive.org/stream/walkerspronounc00unkngoog#page/n108/mode/2up, Accessed Feb. 9, 2018.

²⁹ “Walker, int. (and n.2),” *OED Online*, (Oxford University Press, Jun. 2017). www.oed.com/view/Entry/225250 Accessed Nov. 28, 2017.

³⁰ TNA, CO 321/12(206), *The St Lucia Observer*, (Jan. 3, 1876).

accessibility.”³¹ In comparison, at the time the Barbadian press was already criticising him for concealing his thoughts in his speeches.³²

Things were similar for the Administrator of Grenada and Colonial Secretary of Barbados, Augustus Frederick Gore. *The St. Lucia Observer* republished an article originally in *The St. George's Chronicle and Grenada Gazette* on 8 April 1876 in which it was reported that Gore was unpopular in Barbados while in Grenada they acknowledged that he was aware of the situation of the Windward Islands in general.³³ Even though people from Grenada seemed surprised by his visit to their island, they did not criticise him, although they noticed his unpopularity in Barbados. Thus, officials from the government were not viewed similarly in the different islands and, again, it was in Barbados that people were the most critical. The local Barbadian press was very vocal about the conflict. Newspapers such as *The Barbados Times* or *The Agricultural Reporter* published several pieces in which the Governor-in-chief John Pope Hennessy was criticised, and they denigrated any characteristic of the scheme.

These issues of *The St. Lucia Observer* reveal the atmosphere that was prevailing and that people in the islands had different opinions; as a result, the colonies were not easy to unite and even less under confederation. What is more, Barbados has always been described as a “proud” colony justifying its reluctance to be associated with other islands that had been highly attached to France, England’s historical enemy.³⁴ Questions of allegiances to the Empire were different in the colonies of the Windwards. By the end of the nineteenth century, Grenada and St. Vincent had been integrated while St. Lucia was depicted as having a “local populace [estranged] from the local government.”³⁵ An article published in *The Standard* on 26 April 1876 reported on the difficulties encountered with Barbados and its reluctance to be amalgamated to islands “conquered from foreign

³¹ Pope Hennessy, *Verandah*, p. 168.

³² TNA, CO 321/9(17-21), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (Jan. 21, 1876).

³³ “Grenada,” *The Saint Lucia Observer* (Apr. 15, 1876), BL, General Reference Collection Microfilm Microform. MFM.MMISC972.

³⁴ Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor Versus Slavery in British Emancipation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 215; Hamilton, *Barbados & the Confederation Question*, p. 34.

³⁵ Bonham C. Richardson, *Economy and Environment in the Caribbean: Barbados and the Windwards in the late 1800s*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), p. 48.

powers.”³⁶

Religion as a basis of suspicions

Barbados had some similarities with the Windward Islands but nothing that was enough to unite the five of them. On the islands comprising the Windwards, three of them had a mainly Protestant population while two others had substantial Roman Catholic communities: St. Lucia and Grenada.

The fact that St. Lucia was a Roman Catholic colony was explained by the influence the French Empire had exerted over the island. Religion was something which had been mentioned as a possible issue in Barbados by the Administrator of the colony in 1875, William Des Vœux. Indeed, with Rawson William Rawson, he believed that the fact that Hennessy was a Roman Catholic did not coincide with Protestant Barbados.³⁷ In the biography he wrote about his grandfather, James Pope Hennessy even pointed out that the one time he visited St. Lucia, Hennessy had been “suspected of taking political advice from the *curé* of Castries.”³⁸ In his memoirs, Des Vœux wrote that he had not been invited to their meeting. There were some issues between the Administrator and the priests in St. Lucia as the latter were opposing the Civil Code Des Vœux had implemented. Hennessy was “well aware” of the situation against the Civil Code but still went to the meeting, which vexed Des Vœux.³⁹

In Barbados caution was used in regard to the new Governor’s religious beliefs. John Pope Hennessy arrived there in November 1875, and the Bishop and the Clergy of the Church of England in the island welcomed him with an address. At the beginning of their speech the Lord Bishop and the Reverend stated that they were aware of the difference in religious convictions but expressed their hopes in regard to improvements in education “in all classes”: they shared his desire for cooperation and restated their loyalty to the British Crown. Hennessy’s response clearly indicated that religion was not

³⁶ TNA, CO 321/14(107), *The Standard*, (Apr. 26, 1876), “Deputation to Lord Carnarvon.”

³⁷ George William Des Vœux. *My Colonial Service in British Guiana, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Fiji, Australia, Newfoundland, and Hong Kong, with Interludes*, (London: John Murray, 1903), p. 254.

³⁸ Pope Hennessy, *Verandah*, p. 169.

³⁹ Des Vœux, *My Colonial Service*, p. 269.

going to be an issue. He said he had once voted in the Commons in favour of the Church of England.⁴⁰ During the nineteenth century, a tax was levied to support the Established Church; it had been contested by Dissenters as well as Roman Catholics in Ireland. In 1859, a bill had been introduced in the House of Commons to repeal it and was supported by a coalition formed between the Dissenters and the Low Church and it may be this to which Hennessy referred. He opposed the bill and it was defeated; the Governor had favoured the upkeep of the tax, safeguarding the allowance to the Church of England.⁴¹ Even though religion was not to be an issue, the fact that it had to be mentioned still showed that it was a concern worth talking about and that there still was not any consensus between the two religious groups.

On 23 November 1875, Hennessy had sent a copy of the Bishop's address to Lord Carnarvon. He clarified that this type of paper usually did not have any importance and that it was not necessary to send it to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but here there was a contrast in the tone used by the Bishop in comparison to a deputation in Downing Street in autumn of the same year.⁴² These types of addresses were not forwarded to the Colonial Office but this time Hennessy did it as a way to reassure London that his religious beliefs did not interfere with his future success for his appointment. He was making sure of the legitimacy of his appointment. Although no information is given on the deputation, an article from the *Barbados People* published on 30 May 1876 talked about a deputation of Mr Charlie with members of the National Club of London. The National Club had been founded in 1845 to "maintain the Protestant Principles of the Constitution."⁴³ People protested against Hennessy's appointment because he was a Roman Catholic.⁴⁴ As a matter of fact, an anonymous letter had been sent to Hennessy at Long Bay in St. Phillip's parish:

⁴⁰ TNA, CO 321/5(561), Address presented to John Pope Hennessy by the Bishop and Clergy of the Church of England in Barbados, (Nov. 23, 1875).

⁴¹ HC Deb 13 July 1859 vol 154 cc1129-87.

⁴² TNA, CO 321/5(559), Hennessy to Carnarvon, (Nov. 23, 1875).

⁴³ Advert of *the National Club established June 17, 1845, in support of the Protestant Principles of the Constitution, and for Raising the Moral and Social Condition of the People*, (London: Club House Old Palace Yard, 1848).

⁴⁴ TNA, CO 321/9(445), *The Barbados People*, (May 30, 1876).

What have we to do with confederation, away with it and yourself too for we are Protestants and you are a Catholic and I do not think a Roman Catholic ought to govern a Protestant country.⁴⁵

This letter had been sent to Hennessy in Barbados but there is no information about when it was written and by whom, except that it was written by a Barbadian Protestant. The fact that Hennessy was a Catholic did not work against confederation itself but it marked a breaking point and made it easier for planters to find an excuse to oppose his policies.

Representative assemblies

Barbados had therefore been a British colony for more than two centuries by 1876. Similarly to Grenada and Tobago, it had gained its own representative system, with a House of Assembly being the equivalent of the House of Commons, and a Legislative Council, analogous to the House of Lords. St. Vincent had a unicameral system with only the House of Assembly. St. Lucia, on the other hand, was a Crown colony and did not have a representative assembly. In a letter written to Lord Carnarvon on 28 December 1875, Hennessy told him that the influential people of St. Lucia were in favour of confederation, and that no difficulties with the Legislature were in sight.⁴⁶ An article published by *The St. Lucia Observer* on 3 January 1876 stated that the functions of the Administrator were to be reduced; the Executive Council was to disappear while the Legislative Council was to be maintained. The newspaper prided itself on the “conservation of the nearest approach [they had] to being a represented people.”⁴⁷ However, the members of the Legislative Council were appointed and not elected, and St. Lucia was preserving the system the island had known for about sixty years. Therefore, the influential people whom Hennessy was talking about to Carnarvon could have been members of this Council, and their appointment was to be unchanged with confederation.

⁴⁵ Anonymous letter to PH, Long Bay, St Phillip, p. 113, Bodleian Library, MSS Brit Emp. S. 409. Box 7/2.

⁴⁶ TNA, CO 321/6(687), Hennessy to Carnarvon, (Dec. 28, 1875).

⁴⁷ TNA, CO 321/12(206), *The St. Lucia Observer*, (Jan. 3, 1876).

As early as 1871, Governor Rawson had written to the Earl of Kimberley, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, to tell him the various reasons why he thought confederation in the Windward Islands would fail. He believed that the inhabitants of the islands were not “ready to surrender their Constitutions.”⁴⁸ Confederation meant that the colonies were to lose their representative elected assembly and he thought that, in the Caribbean, it was only achieved through grave circumstances or due to a series of wrongdoings. Jamaica had been turned into a Crown colony after the Morant Bay Rebellion while Rawson argued that St. Vincent agreed to change its Constitution because of “repeated petty abuses.”⁴⁹ He did not explain what he was exactly talking about. However, in 1862 riots broke out in St. Vincent, which “exposed the class and colour divisions.”⁵⁰ Five years later, the Assembly was abolished. In the Windwards, it was the only island which was heavily taxed, notably for indentured labour from India: a system of indenture for Indian citizens looking for a new life abroad.⁵¹ Rawson pointed out that the taxes were not a problem and thus no changes in administration were needed and neither was a confederation.

On 3 March 1876, John Pope Hennessy gave a speech to the Legislative Council of Barbados in which he claimed that confederation would not reduce their powers; instead it was designed to preserve their privileges.⁵² Even so, the Legislative Assemblies were to disappear. In a letter written to Carnarvon on 6 September 1876, Mr Smith, a member of the St. Vincent House of Assembly, wrote a complaint before he was to “cease to be an elected representative of the St. Vincent Assembly.”⁵³ The colony was to have the same status as St. Lucia and therefore only the powers and the privileges of the Council were to be preserved. The Houses of St. Vincent and Grenada had already made changes. On 9 February 1876 Grenada repealed its Constitution and became a single chamber legislature.

⁴⁸ TNA, CO 28/215(61), Rawson to Kimberley, (Sep. 8, 1871).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Craig James, *The Changing Society of Tobago*, p. 236.

⁵¹ TNA, CO 28/215(61), Rawson to Kimberley, (Sep. 8, 1871).

⁵² “The Condition of Barbadoes,” *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* (Apr. 17, 1876), p. 4.

⁵³ TNA, CO 321/13(133), Mr Smith to Carnarvon, (Sep. 8, 1876).

In an article published on 15 April 1876, *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette* dealt with a piece published in *The Barbados Globe*, in which the Barbadian newspapers claimed to have received a letter from Grenada. The letter stated that “Our Government, I am sorry to say, has not benefitted by abolishing the old House.” The Barbadian press was trying to convey the idea that changes undertaken in Grenada did not satisfy its population. However, *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette* did not understand where that information was coming from: “coming from whatever source it may.” Furthermore, according to them another newspaper, *The Barbados Times*, also claimed to have received a letter from Grenada about complaints of the new administration. In that one, acting Governor-in-chief in 1875, Sanford Freeling was accused of having mal-administered Grenada and Barbados, and the Legislative Assembly “should be termed ‘The Legislative Comedy.’” The Grenadian society was also said to be divided between “an Aristocratic and an Anti-Aristocratic party,” and according to this letter, Lieutenant-Governor Graham did not know who to support. Some members of the aristocratic party were in favour of confederation; they were predominantly members of the Executive Council. Out of the eight members, only three of them were against it, but supported by “nine-tenths of the majority community.” Nonetheless, because the aristocratic party supported it, the changes were going to be carried out. There was clearly irony in this supposedly genuine letter making sure that what had happened in Grenada should not occur anywhere else. The Grenadian newspaper was mocking these statements as the letter is signed “Vindex.”⁵⁴ A vindex is a defender or a protector, therefore it was written to protect the sister colonies but the island which published it denied its existence. In that colony, people were not as impacted as in Barbados because they did not have the same history and attachment to their Constitution.

What is more, in an issue published a week later on 29 April, *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette* stated that the Barbadians were

creating a fuss about Confederation – and in the eyes of the world making themselves ridiculous, we are quietly reconciled to the fate of a “Crown

⁵⁴ “Inter-Colonial Intelligence,” *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*, (Apr. 15, 1876), p. 3, BL, General Reference Collection Microform. MFM.MC492.

Colony” or any other form of Government which it may please the Colonial Office to inflict upon us.⁵⁵

Once again, they were mocking the Barbadians and decided to agree with the colonial government. They did however use the verb “to inflict” which shows that they were aware that they did not really have a say in the decision-making process; it was going to be enforced.

On 6 June 1876 Tobago was “following [St. Vincent and Grenada’s] wake.” Indeed, the legislature was to be “simplified” with a single legislative chamber. The landowners were in favour of the changes because they “recognis[ed] their utter insecurity in a crisis,” notably after the Confederation Riots as well as other riots, which broke out in Tobago in May 1876.⁵⁶ The Acting Attorney General, Abbott, believed that the small islands did not have the means to support the kind of government they had, and especially Tobago, because the salaries of the officials were too high.⁵⁷ Rawson believed that to convince people in Tobago, bribery was going to be needed.⁵⁸ In 1874, he sought the support of a member of the Legislative Council, John McCall, and thanks to his influence the act to amend the Tobago Constitution was passed on 23 May 1874.⁵⁹ In 1876 the Constitution Act was abolished.

Despite the government’s argument that the system in the Windward Islands was inefficient, Barbados was still attached to it. *The Barbados Times* published an article on 22 January 1876 in which it was stated that it was a “fundamental principle of the British Constitution to let the people govern themselves, as far as is compatible, through the

⁵⁵ “Summary of the Packet,” *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*, (Apr. 29, 1876), p. 3, BL, General Reference Collection Microform. MFM.MC492.

⁵⁶ Craig James, *The Changing Society of Tobago*, p. 241.

⁵⁷ TNA, CO 321/13(416), Abbott. Report on a Bill entitled “an act to alter and amend the Political Constitution of this island,” (Jun. 6, 1876).

⁵⁸ With Cornelius Hendricksen Kortright, Lieutenant-Governor of Tobago, Rawson chose a few members from both Houses to convince them to form a single chamber. He had to satisfy their expectations: those excluded would retain their title of “Honourable,” the President of the single chamber would have a salary, and the Executive council would be maintained for a while for the members to still receive their salaries. TNA, CO 285/89(231-234), Rawson to Kimberley, (Aug. 26, 1871).

⁵⁹ Craig James, *The Changing Society of Tobago*, pp. 238-239.

medium of their representatives.”⁶⁰ The colonial government was well aware of Barbados’s reluctance because of its history. In the Caribbean, there had been several precedents over colonisation concerning disputes between the Assemblies and the Colonial government represented by the Governor. During the 1760s, a privilege controversy had erupted in Jamaica between the Assembly and the then Governor William Lyttleton. The Assembly had ignored recommendations from the Governor and was determined to set its own privileges as British subjects, “entitled to the laws of England, to its Constitution.”⁶¹ While the Governor prevented them from voting supplies for the troops, the Assembly refused to recognise the authority of the Privy Council and obstructed plans from the Governor. It had ended with a victory for the Assembly as Lyttleton departed Jamaica.⁶² Assemblies in the Caribbean had a long reputation of being obstructive.⁶³

However, in his inaugural address to the House of Assembly, Hennessy claimed he was satisfied “with the existing Legislative Constitution.”⁶⁴ Reforms were however needed but if the system was overall working, it was difficult to justify why the Colonial Office wanted to change it. During his address, he did not explain what he thought was inefficient, he only complimented it and explained his plan to make it even better. He avoided negative things while criticising it saying where it needed to be changed thanks to reforms. As this way of doing was often used in political discourse when addressing opponents, Hennessy unintentionally positioned himself against the Assembly.⁶⁵ The fact that many politicians stated that the system in the Windward Islands was inefficient, without clearly pointing out the reasons why, made oppositions to their arguments self-evident.

⁶⁰ TNA, CO 321/9(50), *The Barbados Times*, (Jan. 22, 1876).

⁶¹ Greene, “The Jamaica Privilege Controversy, 1764-67,” p. 32.

⁶² *Ibid*, pp. 16-53.

⁶³ Harris, “The Constitutional History of the Windwards,” p. 165.

⁶⁴ TNA, CO 321/9(49), *The Barbados Times*, (Jan. 22, 1876).

⁶⁵ Teun A. Van Dijk, “What is Political Discourse Analysis?” *The Pennsylvania State University*. n.d. www.citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=CE35BBCA09EF26C9DB9122D7F5032DA8?doi=10.1.1.452.5209&rep=rep1&type=pdf, Accessed Dec. 23, 2017, p. 32.

Common treasuries in the Windward Islands

When he became Governor-in-chief of the Windward Islands, Hennessy was very cautious with the Barbadian Legislature. He tried to pass reforms in the House of Assembly which were to lead to confederation, but without using the word itself so as not to alarm the Barbadians. *The Agricultural Reporter* prided itself on understanding this trick.⁶⁶ One of the reforms was to make the Auditor-General of Barbados the new Auditor-General of all the Windward Islands. If he was to look over the public accounts of all the islands it seems unlikely that he was not to connect them, which justified Barbadians' reluctance.

An article published in *The Agricultural Reporter* on 21 January 1876 expressed the idea that the only purpose for the Auditor-General to work in the five Windward Islands was to increase his salary.⁶⁷ Barbadians also refused to help the Treasuries from other islands.⁶⁸ Another argument against the fact that the Auditor-General could not work for the five colonies was raised in the *Barbados Globe*, he did not have "spare time for other duties."⁶⁹

Regardless of the issues of salaries, under confederation a Federal Treasury was to be set up.⁷⁰ The Barbadian Assembly feared that the Treasuries were to be combined and wanted to be assured that it would not be the case.⁷¹ In several despatches, Hennessy and Lord Carnarvon had stated that the local treasuries should not be touched.⁷² The Barbadian population did not seem to trust their Governor and the Secretary of State. The latter's aim was to avoid taking on the other islands, by means of reforms or confederation. Reforms were hiding the first step toward the confederation scheme. There were even negative depictions and resentment towards the sister colonies. Indeed, when mentioning the fact that Tobago might not have been able to pay its debt, *The Barbados*

⁶⁶ TNA, CO 321/9(24), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (Jan. 25, 1876).

⁶⁷ TNA, CO 321/9(19), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (Jan. 21, 1876).

⁶⁸ TNA, CO 321/5(562), Colonial Office Minutes, (Nov. 29, 1875).

⁶⁹ TNA, CO 321/9(40), *The Barbados Globe*, (Jan. 24, 1876).

⁷⁰ "The Barbadoes Disturbances," *Pall Mall Gazette*, (Apr. 12, 1876).

⁷¹ TNA, CO 321/5(562), Colonial Office Minutes, (Nov. 29, 1875).

⁷² "The Barbadoes Disturbances," *Pall Mall Gazette*, (Apr. 12, 1876).

Globe depicted it as “Poor little Tobago.”⁷³ Even though the government claimed treasuries were to remain separate, they used similar descriptions; in some Colonial Office minutes, Tobago was called a “miserable little colony,” which showed their hypocrisy.⁷⁴ There was a kind of disdain towards the other islands; Barbados was not ready to join forces as they did not see in what ways they were similar.

What is more, in a speech at the House of Assembly on 7 December 1875, John Sealy stated that he did not doubt the other islands were going to pay for the expenses of sending a delegate to Barbados for the conference.⁷⁵ A few months later, after they turned chiefly against confederation, the Barbadian people and especially the press, were suddenly concerned by the debts of the other islands and the fact that they are not able to pay.⁷⁶ When they were willing to participate in a discussion with the islands it did not matter, but as soon as the idea of having a common treasury was brought up the other islands supposedly could not afford it being part of the confederation and financially contribute to the scheme as much as Barbados was going to. It underlines the lack of concern for the other colonies.

In 1875, the government revenue of Tobago and Barbados reflected the difference between the two islands’ economic situations. In that year, it amounted to £11,594 for Tobago while it reached £132,122 for Barbados, that is to say ten times more.⁷⁷ Therefore, Barbados had more money to contribute in the confederation than Tobago had. Furthermore, in 1876, a statement was released in the British press about the fact that among the five islands, Barbados was the one that was not semi-bankrupt.⁷⁸ It could thus be inferred that St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Grenada and Tobago were to benefit from Barbados. The only colony that had a bankruptcy law was Barbados.⁷⁹ In 1854, the British

⁷³ TNA, CO 321/9(51), *The Barbados Times*, (Jan. 22, 1876).

⁷⁴ Craig James, *The Changing Society of Tobago*, p. 238.

⁷⁵ C. 1539, No. 59, p. 110. (Mar. 4, 1876), Regarding the views of the late Executive Council on the subject of Confederation.

⁷⁶ TNA, CO 321/9(41), *Barbados Globe*, (Jan. 24, 1876).

⁷⁷ Craig James, *The Changing Society of Tobago*, p. 250; Levy, *Emancipation, Sugar, and Federalism*, p. 142.

⁷⁸ “The Barbadoes Disturbances,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, (Apr. 12, 1876).

⁷⁹ “The Windward Islands,” *Times*, (Jul. 3, 1876), p. 5.

government had passed the Encumbered Estates Act in the colonies of the Caribbean and under this law, bankrupt estates were to be sold to the London market. Barbados managed to avoid the act and with the approval of the Colonial Office created its own Chancery Court: indebted estates were “resold to (white) locals.”⁸⁰ Thus, the Legislation had already managed to make its economy less dependent on London and being part of a Federal Council or having a common Auditor with other colonies did not align with their previous manoeuvres.

Both the British press and the local Barbadian press talked about the Windward Islands’ debts. *The Barbados Globe* interpreted them as a problem, whereas the *London Times* tried to ease the situation. The author of an article published on 3 July 1876 gave an account of the public debts of St. Lucia and Grenada, which respectively were of £4,000 and £7,000. The *London Times* wrote that the islands were not “prosperous” but still remained “sound and healthy.”⁸¹ It also believed that because Barbados was to be the centre of the confederation, public money expenditure was to increase in the island. There was confusion about what exactly confederation was to bring about, and moral anxiety was exerted around the issue of finances, even though it had been openly asserted that “a community of financial arrangements would not be a feature of a confederation” and that the islands were not “responsible for the debts or the financial management of any of the others.”⁸² It looks like the local Barbadian press had played a great role in showcasing opposition to the project through arguments supporting the idea that a political union between the five islands was not desired and would not contribute to improvements in their colony. Its nationalistic perspective was thus making confederation unachievable.

Demographic circumstances: emigration

More than the common treasury, the Barbadian white elite rejected another component of the confederation scheme; they were against free emigration. Barbados was the most populous island of the Windwards. However, its size did not make it easy for agricultural workers, mainly of African descent, to find employment on the plantations

⁸⁰ Beckles, *Great House Rules*, p. 121.

⁸¹ “The Windward Islands,” *Times*, (Jul. 3, 1876), p. 5.

⁸² “The Barbadoes Disturbances,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, (Apr. 12, 1876).

and the labour market was quickly overflowed.⁸³ What is more, it had enabled the planters to maintain low wages, that kept falling in the 1860s and 1870s, and the surplus of labour supply also meant that wage rates were the lowest in the Caribbean.⁸⁴ Free emigration would give more opportunities to these workers but irritated the planters. They could face a labour shortage having the labourers moving to the other colonies. The most important aspect is that because the labour market was to grow with more opportunities for workers, wages would have had to be increased.

Granting free emigration to the people of Barbados across the Windward Islands was, on the contrary, a strong argument to convince agricultural workers. Emigration had been perceived as a solution to the labour market for decades. To avoid a bigger number fleeing the island, the Barbadian Legislature passed anti-emigration laws and restrictions on migration in 1836. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, the government under Governor Hincks tried to find solutions for the poor whites and emigration was one of them. The idea was they would facilitate migration to the other Windward Islands and especially to St. Vincent, which is only 96 miles from Barbados and where there was Crown land available for agriculture. St Vincent rejected the scheme as “poor whites were not suited to agricultural labour,” and considered themselves superior to African-Caribbean labourers.⁸⁵ Similarly, Jamaica was also seen as a possible host country but on 4 January 1860 *The Jamaican Standard* published the following statement “let Barbados keep her useless white people. If they were really valuable, Barbados would not give them to us. Why does not Barbados offer us a few thousand of her black people? No, they are valuable.”⁸⁶ Even before confederation was discussed in Parliament either for the Windwards or the Leewards, emigration was perceived as the solution to limits of the Caribbean society: lack of employment and poverty. Between 1860 and 1870 around 600

⁸³ *The Saint Lucia Observer* (Apr. 15, 1876).

⁸⁴ Woodville K. Marshall, “‘We be wise to many more tings’: Blacks’ Hopes and Expectations of Emancipation,” *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present: A Student Reader*, Ed. Hilary McD.Beckles and Verene Shepherd, (Princeton: M. Wiener Publishers, 1993), p. 20; Taylor, “Black Labor and White Power in Post-Emancipation Barbados,” p. 190.

⁸⁵ Karl Watson, “‘Walk and Nyam Buckras’: Poor-White Emigration from Barbados 1834-1900,” pp. 138-141; Jill Sheppard. *The “Redlegs” of Barbados: Their Origins and History*, (New York: KTO. Press, 1977), pp. 73-77.

⁸⁶ Watson, “‘Walk and Nyam Buckras’,” p. 142.

and 700 Barbadian poor whites emigrated to the other colonies of the Windwards.⁸⁷ By the 1870s there still existed impediments to emigration on the island even though the Legislative Council would deny it.⁸⁸ However, in the 1870s, African-Caribbean agricultural labourers were the ones who would benefit the most from free emigration.

In 1863, *The Barbados Times* had stated that the solution to low wages and to the hopelessness that it brought was emigration. Even if it was a planter-supporting paper, emigration was the solution because no land reform could create a peasantry. For Hilary Beckles, it was not really to support emigration itself but it was a cry “for an action of compassion from those who monopolised the land and have the power of government with their grasp.”⁸⁹

One of the problems was that most of the Barbadian emigration did not take place between the Windward Islands. In 1875, 63% of emigrants went to British Guiana, while only 17% emigrated to Tobago, 5% to St. Lucia and Grenada, and 3% to St. Vincent.⁹⁰ Even if many emigrated without being registered, the government used the numbers of the *Blue Books*, and these numbers were not supporting their argument. As British Guiana was not to be part of the confederation, the emigration argument fell through. Nevertheless, the idea of confederating the Windward Islands was a discussion that prevailed in Parliament in London in the 1870s, and, as a consequence, Carnarvon supposedly instructed Hennessy to introduce into the home Parliament a bill to federate the Windward Islands with Demerara, British Guiana, and Trinidad. The information came from *The St. Lucia Observer* and stated that Carnarvon told Hennessy “to trouble

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 147.

⁸⁸ C. 1539, Enclosure 1 in No. 81, p. 150, (Mar. 24, 1876), Address of Legislative Council and his reply thereto, and desirability of obtaining information from Governor Berkeley’s respecting the Leeward Islands Confederacy.

⁸⁹ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 167.

⁹⁰ *Barbadian Blue Books*, (1873), p. 474. BOA. 73235C-02.

www.microform.digital/boa/collections/73/volumes/498/barbados-1839-1947, Accessed Dec. 3, 2017. The *Blue Books* were used for every colony and comprised “a variety of commercial, financial, ecclesiastical, and general information,” Robert Montgomery Martin, *History of the Colonies of the British Empire in the West Indies, South America, North America, Asia, Austral-Asia, Africa, and Europe*, (London: WM. H. Allen & Co., 1843), p. xvii.

no longer with the Barbadians.”⁹¹ This, however, is not verified. On the contrary, in a debate in the House of Commons, he argued that confederation was not to be achieved without a request from each Legislature.⁹² Subsequently, the fact that he told Hennessy to overrule the local legislature and to focus on the home Parliament seems a bit odd. The way *The St. Lucia Observer* collected information must be put into perspective. Several of their reports on the confederation issues and Barbados came from telegrams and the source for this one was a “narrow circle.” It might also have been a discussion overheard between people or someone who would want to arouse fears. This could be a characteristic of the Barbadian press, which strongly opposed the confederation scheme.

Workers also migrated to colonies that were not part of the British Empire. Some went to Dutch Suriname. Pedro Welch has described how the working conditions in Barbados made labourers seek better places to work. He also showed that the numbers of Barbadian workers who came to Suriname were underrated. According to the statistics of the *Blue Books*, they were not significant, which is why scholars have to look at British Guiana – Welch thought that workers would transit through this colony first and then move to Suriname.⁹³ Suriname, however, was not a safe haven for workers. Welch noted several disturbances and resistances by workers, and notably Barbadian workers. In the 1870s there were also some formerly enslaved Barbadian migrants in Danish St. Croix. In the 1870 Census, Barbadians represented 65% of the Caribbean immigrants of the island. The rate of Barbadian migration was higher than any other colony because of overpopulation in Barbados.⁹⁴ Making free emigration between the Windward Islands a characteristic of the confederation scheme can be perceived as a solution to the loss of these workers for other Empires. It was to facilitate the movement of labourers within the British Empire.

Barbadians were the majority among migrant groups in the other islands and because working and living conditions were still poor and not evolving, they rebelled.

⁹¹ *The Saint Lucia Observer* (Apr. 15, 1876).

⁹² HC Deb 04 April 1876 vol 228 c1178.

⁹³ Pedro L. V. Welch, “An Overlooked Dimension: The Emigration of Barbadian Labourers to Suriname in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 43.2 (2009), p. 253.

⁹⁴ George F. Tyson, “‘Our Side’: Caribbean Immigrant Labourers and the Transition to Free Labour on St. Croix, 1849-79,” *Small Islands, Large Questions: Society, Culture and Resistance in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean*. Ed. Karen Fog Olwig, (London: F. Cass, 1995), p. 142.

Even though workers could be offered wages twice as high as what they had in Barbados, resistance showed that grievances remained the same; workers who migrated only “exchanged one colonial prison for another.”⁹⁵ Working conditions remained similar throughout the islands; and as a result, many people from Barbados preferred to remain there rather than re-settle. Many of those who had emigrated were coming back; between 1872 and 1875, 9,523 Barbadians left the island and 10,288 returned.⁹⁶ These numbers are also a token of the population’s attachment to its territory. Historians including David Lambert and Bruce Hamilton or even James Pope Hennessy, have emphasised the white Barbadians’ affection for their colony, but they overlooked the light-skinned.⁹⁷ Labourers were mainly light-skinned and African-Caribbean people, and the fact that they came back means they did not perceive the other islands as home or similar to it. Therefore, they could have been against confederation but decided to support it as factors such as taking away power from planters influenced them more.

Emigration, and therefore Confederation, were not a solution. Even though the government might have relied on it as an argument to convince most of the population that it was beneficial to them it could easily be challenged.

Demographic circumstances: prisons and asylums

Shortly after he was appointed, Hennessy thought about reforms with his six points. One of them was the opening of asylums to patients of the other colonies. The idea of having a common asylum had already originated in 1869 when Rawson had suggested to “build a central lunatic asylum in Grenada to which all the British Caribbean colonies would send their mentally ill.” However, the colonies refused to pay for it, and Rawson finally decided to build it in Barbados, for £25,000 for a capacity of 250

⁹⁵ Welch, “The Emigration of Barbadian Labourers,” pp. 250, 262.

⁹⁶ Davis, *Cross & Crown in Barbados*, p. 6.

⁹⁷ As the name of his work *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity during the Age of Abolition* indicated, David Lambert focused on white Barbadians. When he talked about the “ever-British” colony Bruce Hamilton referred to white planters. James Pope Hennessy talked about the “jealous character of white Barbadian planters.” Lambert, *White Creole Culture*; Hamilton, *Barbados & the Confederation Question*, p. 59; Pope Hennessy, *Verandah*, p. 163.

patients.⁹⁸ Barbadians were not to accept to have their asylum open to other colonies, while they were the ones who had paid for it in the past.

The main problem of Barbados was that the island was already overpopulated and here Hennessy welcomed prisoners and pensioners of lunatic asylums and lazarettos. Confederation implied free emigration but Barbados was not to receive new workers. Therefore, opening asylums and lazarettos was a way to participate in the movement of people without influencing the labour market. They only welcomed people with restricted liberties, making it forced migration. After the end of the slave trade and of slavery in 1838, in order to replace the slaves, other types of unfree labour increased in the Caribbean. During slavery, British Caribbean colonies exchanged their prisoners with Spanish islands, after abolition this came to an end as Spain, had not abolished slavery, thus they began to do it “intra-colonially.” Clare Anderson analysed this method as

not solely a means for outward metropolitan expansion, but a way of managing Empire and occupying and developing new lands, thus consolidating and pushing back imperial borders.⁹⁹

Although the word confederation was not used, the reform was undoubtedly bringing the colonies closer together. Furthermore, because it was forced migration, the diversity of people from different islands was to be achieved, regardless of people’s opinions and choices. On 27 January 1876, Cyril Graham had written to Hennessy and raised that issue. He would agree with “the transfer of prisoners and lunatics ... provided that the transportation of them should not be obligatory.”¹⁰⁰ Islands and ships could not be forced to take them.

The Windward Islands were to benefit from facilities available throughout their territories. The asylums were a medical accommodation accessible to more people; confederation was to benefit the many. Even though John Pope-Hennessy’s reforms did

⁹⁸ CO 28/209(948). Rawson to Granville, September 4, 1869; CO 28/218(18). Rawson to Kimberley (Mar. 4, 1873). quoted by Dane Morton-Gittens, “Sir Rawson William Rawson: Governor of Barbados, 1869-1875,” p. 186.

⁹⁹ Clare Anderson, “Transnational Histories of Penal Transportation: Punishment, Labour and Governance in the British Imperial World, 1788–1939,” *Australian Historical Studies* 4.3 (2016), pp. 387-397.

¹⁰⁰ C. 1539, No. 42, p.88, (Feb. 1, 1876), Transmitting copy of a Despatch from Lieut.- Governor Graham, expressing a hope that the proposed scheme of Confederation may be speedily carried into effect.

not claim confederation on their own they had already been used in the Empire and confederation had followed. A temporary asylum had been established in Toronto in 1841 when Upper and Lower Canada had been united. It was the “first major step towards Confederation” there.¹⁰¹ *The Barbados Globe* believed that other islands should benefit from accommodations such as the asylums but they also conveyed their fears regarding the prisoners: “are they to remain here to swell our population and to assist in demoralizing it?”¹⁰² Barbadians did not want to agree with confederation and found a perfect way to oppose it: being against immigration. In 1871 in Victoria, Australia, 96% of the population in the institutions for the insane were foreign born.¹⁰³ There were already cases in the British Empire in which some colonies had seen their population increased by immigrants who had possibly not even asked to be moved there. There was a genuine fear of turning into a penal colony but also from welcoming people they considered as foreigners who would be admitted in the new institutions.

The white Barbadian elite was not convinced that they should share a stronger government with the other Windward Islands, first for reasons related to their history and allegiances to different Empires, but mainly for a desire of autonomy — autonomy they had acquired with their self-government in the early age of British colonisation in the Caribbean. They were, thus, not ready to yield and resisted until the scheme failed. Likewise, the British government was persistent and not dissuaded to abandon the scheme and carried out its effort to enforce it.

¹⁰¹ David Wright and Tom Themeles, “Migration, Madness, and the Celtic Fringe: A Comparison of Irish and Scottish Admissions to Four Canadian Mental Hospitals, c. 1841-91,” *Migration, Ethnicity, and Mental Health: International Perspectives, 1840-2010*, Ed. Angela McCarthy, (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 45.

¹⁰² TNA, CO 321/9(41), *The Barbados Globe*, (Jan. 24, 1876).

¹⁰³ Catharine Coleborne, “Locating Ethnicity in the Hospitals for the Insane: Revisiting Case Books as Sites of Knowledge Production about Colonial Identities in Victoria, Australia, 1873-1910,” *Migration, Ethnicity, and Mental Health: International Perspectives, 1840-2010*, p. 77.

Chapter 3

The Confederation Riots: debates and aftermath

John Pope Hennessy was careful not to rush members of the Barbadian legislature or to impose confederation on them. However, by March 1876, he had been governor for about three months and was ready to discuss confederation more candidly. On the other hand, a major part of the African-Barbadian population, the agricultural labourers, rose in support of the governor and of his imperial policy. Tensions escalated between virulent planters and an African-Barbadian population that resented them for the supremacy they still exerted about forty years after the abolition of slavery. A brief summary of the Confederation Riots will be given in this chapter. It will look at how they were, in a way, the result of postemancipation struggles for the African-Barbadian population. It will then look at the response of the elite who organised themselves to defeat confederation thanks to the creation of the Barbadian Defence Association and the coordination of anti-confederation meetings, as well as what role the clergy played. Finally, the last sections will examine the aftermath of the riots and how both the planters and the Governor were blamed for the events. It will also discuss the impact the riots had in the other colonies of the Windwards.

The Confederation Riots

The aim of this chapter is not to look at how the riots unfolded, as it has been thoroughly scrutinised by historians such as Hilary Beckles, Charles Clarke, and George Belle. A brief summary of the events is however necessary for the better understanding of this thesis.¹

¹ A summary of the riots has been written by Hilary Beckles in *A History of Barbados*, by Charles Clarke in *The Constitutional Crisis of 1876 in Barbados* and by George Belle in “The Abortive Revolution of 1876 in Barbados.” Different accounts sent to Governor Hennessy and Lord Carnarvon are available in House of Commons. *Papers relating to the Late Disturbances in Barbados*, Parl Paper No. 1539, 1559, (London: George Edward Eyre & William Spottiswoode, 1876) and House of Commons, *Further Papers relating to the Late Disturbances in Barbados*, Parl Paper No. 1679, 1687, (London: George Edward Eyre & William

Violence broke out on 17 April 1876 with isolated incidents, which prompted the rebellion. Throughout the island workers started to dig up potatoes and set fires.² At Bye Mill estate, in St. Phillip's parish, nine miles away from Bridgetown, some labourers had complained they were starving and had been paid less. The call to revolt was made by the use of conch shells, a practise already used to rally labourers during slavery to the plantation fields to revolt.³ Here, labourers were complaining about slave-like conditions. A crowd gathered at the estate and the police was called. Mr Sealy, police magistrate, read the Riot Act, which is read to a crowd to make them disperse within an hour before being considered as felons.⁴ Sealy then left and, while he was gone, labourers "cleared out" the potato fields. The following day, arrests were made but fires and plundering of other estates spread throughout the island.⁵ African-Barbadian labourers were acting under the belief that they were allowed to take possession of the land by John Pope Hennessy who claimed confederation was to help them. However, they fought with stones while the planters had guns. When the Governor heard that some white people were threatened by execution, he sent troops and the rebellion was suppressed within a week.⁶ Plunderers were tried in the following October, with 131 cases and 450 prisoners. The results of these trials were that 296 prisoners were discharged, 45 liberated, 17 sentenced to penal servitude for seven years, 30 imprisoned with hard labour for three months, and 12 cases were ignored, while 15 people failed to surrender.⁷ More than half of the rioters had been freed; the imperial government had learned from the Jamaican controversy

Spottiswoode, 1877).

² Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 183.

³ "The Barbados Riots," *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*, (May 6, 1876), p.3, BL, General Reference Collection Microform. MFM.MC492; Michael Craton, "The Passion to Exist: Slave Rebellions in the British West Indies 1650-1832," *The Journal of Caribbean History* 13 (1980), p. 13; Craton, "Continuity Not Change," p. 153.

⁴ "Riot Act, n," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/275380, Accessed Jun. 5, 2018.

⁵ C. 1559, No. 16, pp. 35-40, (May 1, 1876), Disturbances at Bye Mill on the 18th instant.

⁶ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, pp. 184-187.

⁷ "The Disturbances in Barbadoes," *The Bristol Mercury*, (Nov. 18, 1876). Gale Historical Newspapers.

during which repression had been severe, more than 430 people had been shot or sentenced to death.⁸

Postemancipation struggle

The riots are rooted in deeper issues. As a matter of fact, emancipation in the Caribbean and in the rest of the British Empire had not really been a success for African-Caribbean labourers. A few decades after abolition, former slaves had low pay, were suffering from irregular payments and arbitrary work stoppage. They also desired more land.⁹ At the same time, white planters were still trying to retain their power and their supremacy over the rest of the population. They were a small minority who was not ready to make any more concessions; indeed, by the end of the nineteenth century, in the Caribbean, 90% of the population was of African descent.¹⁰ What is more, in the 1860s, the American Civil War enhanced the debates about slavery and about the position of people of African descent in the society. The Civil War also had economic impact in the Caribbean; it created a decline in the importations of American food and raised the prices of basic provisions.¹¹ The living and working conditions in the colonies of the Caribbean produced a context of unrest and uprisings.

In 1862, labour strikes erupted in St. Vincent; four people were killed and three hundred arrested. Originally a labour strike, freed people plundered estates, the conflict exposed the class and colour divisions in the colony.¹² In 1865 the famous Morant Bay rebellion broke out, leading to the death of two planters, and “430 men and women were shot down or put to death after trial.” As a result, Crown rule was established in Jamaica.¹³ In 1868

⁸ Craton, “Continuity not Change,” p. 154.

⁹ Gad Heuman, “The British West Indies,” *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III: The Nineteenth Century*, Ed. Andrew Porter, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 486; Beckles, *Great House Rules*; Craton, “Continuity Not Change.”

¹⁰ Price, “Steppingstones to Imperial Unity?,” p. 246.

¹¹ Carter, *Labour Pains*, p. 106.

¹² Heuman, “Post-Emancipation Resistance in the Caribbean: An Overview,” p. 126; Craig James, *The Changing Society of Tobago*, p. 236.

¹³ Craton, “Continuity Not Change,” p. 197; Heuman, “The British West Indies,” p. 486; Heuman, “*The Killing Time*”: *The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica*.

in Cuba, small scale planters declared immediate abolition, and a rebellion broke out marking the starting point of the Ten Years' War opposing Spain to the Cuban's fight for independence. By 1870, only slaves born after 1868 and being over sixty were freed.¹⁴ In 1878 there were disturbances in the island of St. Croix and one of the instigators was from Barbados.¹⁵ All these uprisings were a result of grievances of unchanging societies.

Just as in the other islands, outcries occurred in Barbados in the 1860s and throughout the 1870s. In 1863 workers protested against measures taken by planters such as the rising of prices and shortages.¹⁶ On 28 July 1863, Governor James Walker sent a proclamation for the punishment of the rioters and later, he had given the order to fire to disperse the crowd, no one was injured.

About a decade later, in 1872, a ship with a cargo of textiles sank and the goods were only sold to white merchants and traders in Bridgetown. A "mob" of African-Barbadian people amassed on the wharf to request access to these goods and, when they were denied, they attacked the police force. Governor Rawson used volunteers to monitor the events but refused to allow them to bear firearms. As a result, *The Agricultural Reporter* deplored the "utter incompetence of the police force."¹⁷ These Bridgetown Riots were put down after only two days. They, again, were a token of the resentment of privileges retained by the white population. Finally, in August 1875, labourers stole potatoes at Brewsters and Foursquare estates in the parish of St. Phillip. Henderson Carter argued that these riots showed organising skills among the workers who gathered as large mobs because they had common grievances.¹⁸

These various riots were all related to the working situation of the labourers and to the inequalities linked to the privileges exerted by the white elite. In *The Agricultural Reporter* published on 25 January 1876, it was stated that Barbadians "were injured by a

¹⁴ Rebecca J. Scott, "Gradual Abolition and the Dynamics of Slave Emancipation in Cuba, 1868-86," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 63.3 (1983), pp. 449-477.

¹⁵ Tyson, "Caribbean Immigrant Labourers," p. 142.

¹⁶ Carter, *Labour Pains*. pp. 106-107.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 118-127.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 131.

WALKER, a RAWSON, a FREELING.”¹⁹ The three of them had successively been Governor of Barbados during these riots. After the 1863 riots, planters became alarmed and sanctions followed on the labourers, such as a restriction on emigration. It kept labourers away from other job markets and further enraged them. Walker supported by the Colonial Office, concluded that the decrease of wages was the problem, while the elite thought the rioters were lawless.²⁰

Tensions and resentments built up between the white planters and African-Barbadian labourers, which made violent opposition unavoidable. In 1875, John Pope Hennessy blamed Walker and Rawson for having “perpetrated the ‘worst horrors of slavery.’”²¹ This was a major characteristic of the Barbadian society; it had transitioned into an emancipated society but remained largely unchanged – the franchise had not been extended since 1842. The main part of the African-Barbadian population was still working on the plantations, had barely access to public offices or even franchise.²² Hennessy claimed he would change things through confederation.²³ It seems that giving power to what white people still considered as the “enslaved” was one of the main reasons they did not want to yield to Confederation.

However, on 16 April 1876, Mr Herbert, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State of the Colonies, stated that “confederation would make extremely little difference in any way.”²⁴ In Barbados, even forty years after emancipation, the colour and class divide still prevailed, which made it difficult to clearly define the conflict as more of a class than race issue. *The Guardian* talked about “oppression of the masses” and about a “need for

¹⁹ TNA, CO 321(22-29), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (Jan. 25, 1876).

²⁰ Carter, *Labour Pains*, p. 113.

²¹ Clarke, *The Constitutional Crisis of 1876 in Barbados*, p. 22.

²² Belle, “The Abortive Revolution of 1876 in Barbados,” p. 1; Downes, *Barbados 1880-1914*; Carter, *Labour Pains*; Beckles, *Great House Rules*; Marshall, “Post Emancipation Adjustments in Barbados 1838-1876,” pp. 88-108.

²³ “Confederation will benefit every class in the community ... It will provide larger field for your redundant population, and thus check poverty and crime at its sources;” labourers could find work in the other Windward Islands, “The Condition of Barbadoes,” *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* (Apr. 17, 1876), p. 4.

²⁴ Opinions on confederation, p. 24, Bodleian Library, MSS Brit Emp. S. 409. Box 7/2.

reforms,”²⁵ thus depicting the conflict as a class issue. In a piece published in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* on 14 April 1876, the editor called people of European descent and light-skinned Barbadians the “respectable classes” and the issue of confederation opposed the “Have Nothings” to the “Have Somethings.”²⁶ Thus, light-skinned Barbadians were considered as “Have Somethings.” On the same day, the *Birmingham Daily Post* also mentioned the “respectable classes,” who were supposedly on lockdown, to protect themselves from the crowd.²⁷ Therefore, race line was blurred because of class, light-skinned Barbadians being higher in the class system than African-Barbadians.

Nonetheless, white racism against the African-Barbadian population was exerted towards the troops. When Rawson was still in office, he wrote about the Military Defence of Barbados that the white population would rather have no troops than the West Indian regiment only.²⁸ In 1869, Mr Chester, a clergyman, claimed that the white population thought that if English troops left the island the West Indian regiment, composed of African-Caribbean troops, would fraternise with the African-Barbadians and endanger the Europeans. On the contrary, in 1876, Hennessy thought that the Confederation Riots revealed how disciplined they could be. The police force was able to encounter the rioters because the West Indian regiments helped dispersing the mobs.²⁹ During the conflict, Hennessy called for reinforcement from troops from Demerara. On 29 April 1876, another detachment from the 2nd West India Regiment with troops from Jamaica had also arrived.³⁰ To contain the insurrection, Hennessy used the African-Caribbean population, although the recognition of their helpfulness did not prevent the British press from criticising them on the basis of racist prejudices. On 8 December 1876, eight months after the riots, the London *Times* stated that the majority of the African-Barbadian population

²⁵ “Mr Pope Hennessy on the State Affairs in Barbadoes,” *The Manchester Guardian*, (Mar. 5, 1877), p. 8.

²⁶ “The State Barbadoes,” *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, (Apr. 14, 1876). Gale Historical Newspapers.

²⁷ “Alarming Excitement in Barbadoes,” *Birmingham Daily Post*, (Apr. 14, 1876). Gale Historical Newspapers.

²⁸ TNA, CO 321/9(306), Prevalent distrust of the laboring class by the planters and merchants, (May 8, 1876).

²⁹ Ibid, (307).

³⁰ C. 1559, No. 53, p. 156 (June 10, 1876), Report of the Commanding Officer of H.M.S, “Rover” of his proceedings.

did not even understand what confederation meant.³¹ These negative comments were paralleled by the fact that emancipation had not been a success in the region in the sense that it did not give more liberties to the African-Barbadian population.

The white population was aware of the precariousness of the labourers' freedom, thus an argument that came about to convince them that they should not support confederation was it meant re-enslavement. As a matter of fact, in the Atlantic there had been several instances where abolition had been ambiguous. In the colonies of the French Empire slavery had been abolished in 1794 until it was re-established by Napoléon Bonaparte in 1802. The proclamation of the Second Republic finally banned it in 1848. Thus, some people had experienced freedom and a return to slavery. Then, in 1861, the Dominican Republic was re-occupied by the Spanish Empire, and two years later an insurrection broke out around the idea that they were going to re-establish slavery, which had ended there in 1822. The American Civil War had also broken out on the issue of slavery. Emancipation was not steady in South America either. For instance, in Brazil, planters would sometimes petition to re-enslave freed people.³² Any decision could be overruled, underlining the lack of agency of the African-Caribbean population over significant debates.³³

Thus, re-enslavement was a perfect argument for the planters. Nonetheless, these rumours first came from the confederation side. Sir Thomas Graham Briggs admitted that the spreading of this rumour had been his fault. The government was made aware of this during the meeting of the Executive Council of 24 July 1875. Briggs suggested to Mr Foderingham that wages should be lowered to 15 cents, to which the latter replied he would not "consent to that, it [was] hardly possible for a man to feed and clothe himself

³¹ "Governor Pope Hennessy," *Times*, (Dec. 8, 1876), p. 3. Gale Historical Newspapers.

³² Anne Eller, "Rumors of Slavery: Defending Emancipation in a Hostile Caribbean," *The American Historical Review* 122.3 (2017), pp. 653, 660.

³³ Drescher. *The Mighty Experiment.*; Robin Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights*, (New York: Verso, 2011); Eller, "Rumors of Slavery: Defending Emancipation in a Hostile Caribbean," pp. 653-679; Donald Meyers, *And the War Came: The Slavery Quarrel and the American Civil War*, (New York: Algora, 2005); Scott, "Abolition and the Dynamics of Slave Emancipation in Cuba," pp. 449-477.

on 20 cents.”³⁴ Thus a member of the Council, Foderingham, had acknowledged the difficulties of the living conditions of the labourers. The argument of lowering the wages gave way to a paranoia about slavery. Hennessy reported that a shopkeeper told African-Barbadian labourers: “I shall be able to buy you as slaves to-morrow at 12 o’clock.”³⁵ However, it seems hard to believe that workers were going to trust these rumours. The new Governor was famous for his willingness to give more power to local populations notably indigenous representation in Labuan and administrative positions to non-white people in the West African Settlements.³⁶ He was not to re-establish slavery and was even perceived as a “champion of negro rights.”³⁷

The birth of the Barbados Defence Association

The previous chapter focused on how the confederation scheme did not work from a political point of view for the planters, who did not want to be joined with other colonies and to lose their representative assemblies. After Hennessy’s speech on 3 March 1876, during which he pronounced the word *confederation* for the first time, they became active in expressing their opinion and in trying to challenge the colonial government. Their first step was to create the Barbados Defence Association in Bridgetown. At the first general meeting, Sir Charles Trollope was elected president, and Sir Thomas H. Sealy became the secretary of the Association. He was the son of Sir John Sealy, who suggested a conference between the colonies in 1875. Mr J. A. Lynch, a merchant in Bridgetown, became the treasurer. The objectives of the BDA were “the preservation of their ‘Constitution,’ the protection of their interests, and the maintenance of order, and a good understanding between the different classes of the population.”³⁸

³⁴ C. 1539, Enclosure in No. 10, p. 23, (Jul. 24, 1875), Circulation of rumour of the intention of Government to change the Constitution and to introduce slavery.

³⁵ C. 1539, No. 63, p. 117, (March 11, 1876), Reporting a general feeling in the Windward Islands in favour of Confederation.

³⁶ Lambert and Howell, “John Pope Hennessy and the Translation of ‘Slavery.’” p. 4.

³⁷ “The Outbreak in Barbadoes,” *Liverpool Mercury*, (Apr. 25, 1876). Gale Historical Newspapers.

³⁸ C. 1539, Enclosure in No. 64, p. 122, (Mar. 11, 1876), Respecting the formation of an association by Mr T. H. Sealy and others to oppose “the policy of the Colonial Office,”

The group only started with about ten people and attracted more when it was properly established. Thanks to the Parliamentary Papers, about twenty names of members can be recovered. Among them, there were prominent planter families such as the Alleynes or the Sealys. Most of them were members of the Legislative and Executive Councils of the island. They were politicians, highly educated and conservatives.³⁹ They also had strong connections in London with some member of their family being an absentee landlord in England, or members of the West India Committee.

The WIC had been established in London during the eighteenth century. Members were agents, merchants and planters residing in Britain as well as members of Parliament who had “West Indian connections and interests.” The group had emerged in the 1760s when planters realised they needed an organisation with merchants, and later included members of Parliament to have more leeway. Indeed, the latter were the only ones who could bring a petition before the House of Commons. However, it has to be noted that, at first, members were not numerous enough in Parliament to have a real impact but they were taken into consideration because other MPs were predisposed to listen to them.⁴⁰ This association in England made it easier for planters to manage their island from the Mother Country. They were not in the islands, and thus were not members of the House of Assemblies or Legislative Councils in the Caribbean. Thus, the West India Lobby enabled them to send MPs to Parliament who would defend their rights in Britain. The confederation scheme meant that planters would not have any say in their legislation; there was to be a greater control from the Colonial Office with the dissolution of the Houses of Assemblies. In the 1870s in Barbados, influential planters were the most virulently opposed to the project.

On 15 April 1876, absentee proprietor Forster M. Alleyne expressed his opinion on the growing tensions on the island in the British press. Alleyne wrote that Hennessy himself, who had appealed to the love of the island, could not “find an ‘isle of Eden’ in Barbados anymore.” African-Caribbean people there saw the Governor as their protector, and white locals had declared war.⁴¹ As a response to this letter, the *Barbados People and*

³⁹ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, pp. 54-55.

⁴⁰ O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, p. 11; Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, “The Formation of a Commercial Lobby: The West India Interest, British Colonial Policy and the American Revolution,” *The Historical Journal* 40.1 (1997), pp. 72, 75, 93.

⁴¹ Viator and Alleyne, “Barbadoes,” *Times*, (Apr. 15, 1876), p. 7.

Windward Island Gazette published a lengthy piece in which they objected to Alleyne's attack on the Governor and accused him of being blinded, warning him he should not make assumptions as not being in Barbados.⁴²

Even though it is difficult to have an estimate of the members of the BDA, the importance of the group lies in the names of the members, who were influential members in the Barbadian society. They were mainly landed proprietors or leading merchants from Bridgetown.⁴³ The reasons why merchants rallied with planters are not clear but they were also white people, thus wanting to safeguard their privileges. Several merchants were also advancing money for the cultivation of estates.⁴⁴ With confederation, rumours were that African-Barbadian people could claim lands: "they shall have as much land as they wish to plant."⁴⁵ Merchants whose trade relied on the cultivation had to oppose that scheme.

Nonetheless, in a letter to Lord Carnarvon written on 8 August 1876, the Committee of the BDA claimed that their members were not only white planters but more diverse: "our society consists of persons belonging to every class, colour, and condition in life, representing the owners of property in contra-distinction to those not possessed of any property."⁴⁶ However, a list of the members is not provided and the only names that can be found are those of planters and merchants.

Anti-confederation meetings

As early as 24 June 1875, a public meeting was held in the Assembly Room of the Public Buildings in Barbados to argue against Confederation. It was presided by Mr Foderingham. 1,500 Barbadians are said to have attended; many were future members of the BDA. While they discussed how the scheme had already failed in the Leewards,

⁴² TNA, CO 321/10(3-5), *The Barbados People and Windward Islands Gazette*, (May 11, 1876).

⁴³ C. 1539, Enclosure in No. 64, p. 122, (Mar. 11, 1876), Respecting the formation of an association by Mr T. H. Scaly and others to oppose "the policy of the Colonial Office,"

⁴⁴ Clarke, *The Constitutional Crisis of 1876 in Barbados*, p. 56.

⁴⁵ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 180.

⁴⁶ C. 1687, Enclosure 1 in No. 28, p. 29, (Aug. 10, 1876), Transmitting a communication to the Earl of Carnarvon from the Defence Association, and commenting thereon.

Briggs took the floor to defend the policy: it would bring about a uniform administration of Justice and had provided the Leewards a decent government.⁴⁷

In order to spread their ideas and convince most of the population that confederation was not to be beneficial for them, the BDA started to organise anti-confederation meetings. The first one was held on 14 March 1876 at Black Rock, in the parish of St. Michael, and by the 22nd of the same month, three other meetings had been held in that parish. The aims of these meetings were to explain “to the shopkeepers and labourers of the district the meaning of Confederation,” and “to constitutionally discuss the Governor’s dangerous policy.”⁴⁸ They mainly needed to convince shopkeepers and labourers, as most members of the BDA were merchants and planters and thus were not the targets. It is interesting to note that shopkeepers in Barbados tended to be light-skinned and African-Caribbean people. They were the middle classes and bourgeoisie of African descent. In the early nineteenth century “there was a concentration of free black traders in the shopkeeping business.”⁴⁹ It can be argued that African-Barbadian people likely retained those jobs in the 1870s. Indeed, at the time most of the poor white population from Britain was emigrating to colonies such as New Zealand and Australia, thus African-Barbadian people were filling these jobs.⁵⁰

During those meetings, the white elite was trying to convince the African-Barbadian bourgeoisie. The line between the races was disappearing – at least in this instance – as it was more targeted towards classes. It shows the complexity of the Barbadian society in which white planters felt superiors but had to side with middle class African-Barbadian people. It was also a time of a fear of mob violence, and siding with another part of the population was soothing and a way to prevent disturbances. All the previous riots had shown the power of the mobs and the violence of Morant Bay had had

⁴⁷ C. 1539, Enclosure in No. 9, pp. 16-17, (Jul 1, 1875), Public meeting held on the 24th ultimo protesting against Federation.

⁴⁸ C. 1539, Enclosure 4 in No. 80, pp. 147-148, (Mar. 24, 1876), Report of Inspector-General of Police on the course pursued by the Barbados Defence Association in promoting agitation against Confederation.

⁴⁹ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 122.

⁵⁰ Denoon and Wyndham, “Australia and the West Pacific,” p. 546.

consequences. After the Confederation Riots, the BDA telegraphed the WIC saying, “Repetition of Jamaica tragedy likely to follow any moment.”⁵¹

The extent of the African-Barbadian population’s involvement on the anti-confederation was studied in the 1980s by George Belle. According to him, middle class African-Barbadian and light-skinned people rejected the idea of confederation and a Crown colony, because they thought it was undemocratic, while having a small group of people controlling the country in an oligarchy was an “embryonic democracy.”⁵² The African-Barbadian and light-skinned middle class likewise wanted to preserve the political system that had been established for centuries. One of the reasons might be, just as it had been argued by Beckles, that an African-Barbadian elite had also emerged in Barbados. During slavery, they even perceived themselves as “more free than slaves.”⁵³ The first person of colour to enter the Barbadian Parliament was Samuel Jackman Prescod in 1843, thirty-three years before the riots. During the conflict, the Solicitor-General was William Conrad Reeves. He was a light-skinned man, employed by Prescod for the newspaper *The Liberal*. In 1874, he had been elected at the House of Assembly for St. Thomas and a year later was appointed Solicitor-General before he resigned right after the Confederation Riots in April 1876. He was against the scheme as he wanted to preserve the “sacred constitution,” but he supported three out of the six points.⁵⁴ Thus, Reeves and the white elite both wanted to defend the Constitution and that could be linked to status reasons. They both had gained a certain power and wanted to keep it; they both participated in the Legislature and refused to have the British government interfere.

Most of the African-Barbadian population the white elite tended to side with were people they had come to trust as senior figures. In the 1840s, “none of the men appointed or elected to political office had any strong association with the more progressive wing of antiracist and abolitionist politics in Barbados.” What is more, light-skinned members of the government, such as stipendiary magistrates, were also accused of being “greatly controlled by the planters.” Although this statement is a characteristic from thirty years before the Confederation Riots, it can be implied that things remained more or less the

⁵¹ Pope Hennessy, *Verandah*, p. 177.

⁵² Belle, “The Abortive Revolution of 1876 in Barbados,” p. 26.

⁵³ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 81.

⁵⁴ Hamilton, *Barbados & the Confederation Question*, pp. 38-41, 75-76.

same; the planters being the elite would influence other members of the government and especially light-skinned people who could have felt compelled to follow their lead.⁵⁵

At most of the meetings, one of the speakers was Mr Shannon, a light-skinned lighterman. In the study of the Confederation Riots, Mr Shannon has been omitted by historians. He was from in the parish of St. Michael, where he was acquainted with several planters and merchants. As one of the speakers at the anti-confederation meetings, he was siding with the members of the BDA. He supported their cause and the reasons why confederation should not be achieved. Comparisons are thus drawn between the motives of the white planters and merchants and this African-Barbadian man. Nevertheless, the nineteenth century society of the Caribbean was highly racialised and class was prominent, therefore the agency of Mr Shannon can be questioned. As a matter of fact, on 5 May 1876, Mr Cleaver, a Wesleyan missionary, wrote a letter to Hennessy in which he told him that he thought Mr Shannon was “hardly a free agent in this political context,” and that he was “constrained to act contrary to his better convictions” because he was financially obliged to one of the members of the BDA.⁵⁶ Having him on their side, made the BDA look more inclusive and representative of the Barbadian society.

Nonetheless, these meetings participated in the exacerbation of tensions between labourers and planters. The speeches delivered emphasised why confederation should be resented, to a crowd that was mainly in favour of it, and especially to a crowd that saw an opportunity to oppose the elite. These meetings also showed that the white population was not willing to let go of its supremacy. Hilary Beckles puts it clearly: “war was declared by a post-slavery generation not willing to accept slave-like conditions and opting for the revolutionary cause.”⁵⁷

During the conflict, African-Barbadian people were discriminated against in the way they could fight, which highlighted the fact that they were not on the same side as the oligarchy. As a matter of fact, when planters were getting ready and buying firearms, African-Barbadian and light-skinned people were denied that purchase, and merchants in Bridgetown did not give any credit or employment to confederation members, most of

⁵⁵ Melanie J. Newton, *The Children of Africa in the Colonies: Free People of Color in Barbados in the Age of Emancipation*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), pp.187-188.

⁵⁶ TNA, CO 321/9(364), Rev. Cleaver to the Governor, (May 6, 1876).

⁵⁷ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 177.

them being African-Barbadian labourers.⁵⁸ James Lloyd, a student from Codrington College, told Lord Carnarvon that the riots had actually been instigated by merchants in Bridgetown.⁵⁹ It can be compared to Hilary Beckles's argument that some MPs thought the riots had been promoted by planters to oppose Crown rule, while people from the BDA thought that supporters of the confederation sponsored the riots to have repression by Crown rule.⁶⁰ Although there is no evidence to support any of these claims, in the end, the riots did lead to the planters and merchants' success; debates about confederation in Barbados had resulted in violent confrontations, which made the government reconsider their policy.

The role of the Clergy

The riots opposed the white to the African-Barbadian population, the elite to the labourers. Members of the clergy seemed to generally remain silent during the crisis and not advocate for or against confederation. Before the Confederation Riots, they however lamented the state of the colony and on how prevalent poverty was in Barbados. In his speech to the House of Assembly on 3 March 1876, Hennessy claimed that the head of the Anglican Church, the chief Ministers of the Wesleyan and Moravian Bodies, said to him: "[i]n all our experience we have never seen a community in which there existed 'such intense and apparently hopeless poverty as in this.'"⁶¹

Their role is barely mentioned in the studies of the crisis even though it is clear that members of the BDA had strong links with the Church of England clergy both in Barbados and in London. Thus, a distinction needs to be made between the Anglican clergy and the Wesleyans during the riots. According to Hennessy, the latter helped him disperse the crowds and their influence was of great value for him, although it cannot be said whether they did it more for the wish to restore order rather than for the sake of

⁵⁸ TNA, CO 321/9(317-319), Real feeling of the People with regard to the Disturbances. Forward copy of a letter on the subject from Mr James S. Lloyd a colored gentleman, (May 9, 1876).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 190.

⁶¹ *The Barbados People and Windward Islands Gazette*, (Mar. 23, 1876), p. 1.

confederation itself.⁶² What is more, it also has to be noted that Mr Shannon, fervent advocate of anti-confederation, was also a Wesleyan. The Superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission in Sierra Leone had “heralded Mr Hennessy’s virtues.”⁶³ Overall, Wesleyans respected Hennessy as a politician and for his previous work in other colonies. Moravians also helped the Governor during the riots. In the colony, they were known to be church of the underprivileged and many African-Barbadian people were part of dissenting churches rather than the Church of England.⁶⁴ What is more, when Rawson was appointed Governor-in-chief of the Windwards, he was instructed to disestablish the Church of England. He, however, came to oppose this policy, he thought it was to lead to “severe opposition from the legislature.”⁶⁵ Thus, dissenting churches in Barbados during the confederation crisis supported the governor and the cause of the African-Barbadian population, which they had been educating since before abolition.⁶⁶

Things were more ambiguous for the Church of England during the crisis. In April 1876, George Sealy, the secretary of the BDA, sent Reverend W. J. Bullock, who was based in London, a circular against confederation, to which the latter replied that he would lay it before the Committee, supposedly a committee of his church, and that confederation was a “subject which [they] there, of course, only imperfectly understand.”⁶⁷ This suggests that the problem was only partially understood in England, and the information that was forwarded to important factions only conveyed the point of view of the planters.

⁶² TNA, CO 321/9(359), Valuable aid of Wesleyan Ministers in preventing further agitation and reverse conduct on part of clergy of Church of England, (May 16, 1876).

⁶³ TNA, CO 321/9(443), Causes of Governor’s popularity, (May 30, 1876).

⁶⁴ Davis, *Cross & Crown in Barbados*, pp. 91, 52; Salmon, *The Caribbean Confederation*, p. 104; Jean Besson, “Missionaries, Planters and Slaves in the Age of Abolition,” *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and Its Peoples*. Ed. Scarano Palmié et al., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 317-329; Gad Heuman, “Peasants, Immigrants, and Workers: The British and French Caribbean after Emancipation,” *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and Its Peoples*, pp. 347-360.

⁶⁵ ‘Windward Islands and Trinidad - Ecclesiastical Policy,’ *Hansard-Common Sitting* quoted by Dane Morton-Gittens, “Sir Rawson William Rawson: Governor of Barbados, 1869-1875,” p. 184.

⁶⁶ James A. Thome and J. Horace Kimball. *Emancipation in the West Indies*, (New York: The American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839), p. 224.

⁶⁷ W. J. Bullock to George Sealy (Apr. 13, 1876), p. 131, BOA, 72276clr-189.

www.microform.digital/boa/collections/22/volumes/114/copies-of-letters-received, Accessed Dec. 3, 2017.

A few days after his letter on 28 April, Bullock wrote back to Sealy that “every effort [was] required to keep the misguided populace from breaches of peace and law.”⁶⁸ Bullock acknowledged not being familiar enough with the situation to judge, but did articulate his support for the planters.

Things were more or less similar in Barbados. Only members of the Church of England seem to have given their opinions on the subject. On 20 June, the *Morning Post* published a letter written by clergymen and missionaries in Barbados on 26 May 1876, in which they recognised that some church members participated in plundering, and that people in the rural districts had been implicated, affirming that the trouble had mainly been centralised in Bridgetown, and had expanded from there.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, other statements provided different information. For the *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette* published on 29 April 1876, Bridgetown was spared by the disturbances but business was suspended.⁷⁰ Thus, ideas fomented in the capital city and actions spread in the rest of St. Michael and other parishes.

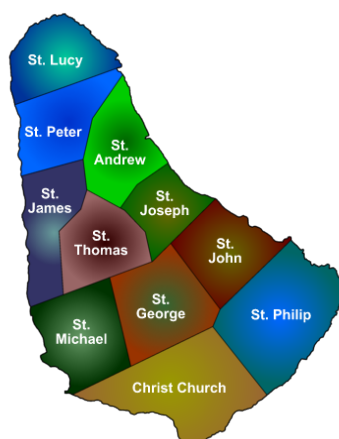


Figure 2: Barbados Parishes.

“Our Parishes,” www.barbados.org/barbados-parishes.htm, Accessed May 26, 2018.

According to a table organised by Henderson Carter, the biggest value of damages was observed in the south of the island: the damages caused to William Cooke, a

⁶⁸ W. J. Bullock to George Sealy (Apr. 28, 1876), p.131, BOA, 72276clr-189.

www.microform.digital/boa/collections/22/volumes/114/copies-of-letters-received, Accessed Dec. 3, 2017.

⁶⁹ “The Disturbances at Barbados,” *Morning Post* (Jun. 20, 1876). Gale Historical Newspapers.

⁷⁰ *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*, (Apr. 29, 1876), p. 3.

shopkeeper in St. Phillip, amounted to \$1,001, and the damages on the Applewaites plantation in St. George and to its owner, Hinckson, amounted to \$2,099 and the loss of manager to \$3,400.⁷¹ Most of the riots took place in the south of the island, and many anti-confederate meetings before April occurred in the south too.

In a letter to Lord Carnarvon on 12 May 1876, Hennessy told him that “rectors and curates of the Church of England in Barbados were either active members of the Defence Association or openly sympathised with it.”⁷² As a matter of fact, Rev. Preston Bruce Austin, member of the Anglican clergy, was a leading member of the BDA. Austin was also the vice-president of the Barbados General Agricultural Society, but above all, he was the proprietor and the editor of *The Agricultural Reporter*.⁷³ It is therefore more complicated to disassociate the Anglican Clergy from anti-confederation actions. Anti-confederation papers took pride in claiming that the Clergy encouraged parish meetings against it.⁷⁴ However, before the riots, on 14 March 1876, *The West Indian* published an article claiming that the clergy would actually refuse to do such a thing:

A CORRESPONDENT proposes to call upon the clergy to lecture the people on the evils of Confederation on some Sunday or other day in Lent. The clergy would probably decline to use their pulpits for such a purpose, and the Bishop to sanction it.⁷⁵

This goes with the argument that the clergy was not involved in the riots, which is itself supported by the fact that, during the disturbances, members of the Church were spared in the plundering of their provisions and livestock.⁷⁶ Kortright Davis argued that the

⁷¹ Carter, *Labour Pains*, p. 153.

⁷² TNA, CO 321/9(360-361), Valuable aid of Wesleyan Ministers in preventing further agitation and reverse conduct on part of clergy of Church of England, (May 16, 1876).

⁷³ Davis, *Cross & Crown in Barbados*, p. 76.

⁷⁴ TNA, CO 321/9(360-361), Valuable aid of Wesleyan Ministers in preventing further agitation and reverse conduct on part of clergy of Church of England, (May 16, 1876).

⁷⁵ C.1539, Enclosure 1 in No. 80, p. 144, (Mar. 24, 1876). Report of Inspector-General of Police on the course pursued by the Barbados Defence Association in promoting agitation against Confederation.

⁷⁶ W. J. Webb to Rev. W. J. Bullock, (May 29, 1876), p.257. BOA. 72276clr-189. www.microform.digital/boa/collections/22/volumes/114/copies-of-letters-received, Accessed Dec. 3, 2017.

clergy would not be associated with people suspected of being pro-confederation. Indeed, Mr Thomas Kerr, a member of the Legislative Council and of St. Leonard Church's choir, was regarded as in favour of confederation and thus, during the hearings which followed the disturbances, the choir refused to be associated with him.⁷⁷ There was a similar case with Rev. J.W. Greenidge. He had been involved in a fight with an African-Barbadian man at a meeting of the BDA, and had encouraged anti-confederationists to use firearms. Greenidge promoted violence but he later blamed it on illness, being "possessed of demons."⁷⁸

The clergy had an ambiguous relationship to confederation. They did not officially support it and rumours of their support for it circulated around the island. For the Anglican Church, confederation was not going to change things. The Bishop of Barbados was already the head of the Anglican Church in the Windward Islands, and they had no reasons to publicly advocate for or against it. Whether they encouraged parish meetings is not supported with evidence, but if they did so, it might have been a link to oligarchy, in support to the planters.

The aftermath: a critique of the planters and of the Governor

The end of the riots did not mean the end of the debates about confederation in the Windward Islands. After April 1876, members of the BDA were still active in their defence of the Constitution and used several newspapers to achieve their aims and to criticise the scheme. The government thought that these reports were exaggerated. On 30 May 1876, *The Agricultural Reporter* published a letter addressed to the editor, written on 24 May by John Clements, Inspector General of Police. Clements accused the newspaper of calling him a liar and of writing other lies about Mr W. P. Leacock and Mr George H. Alleyne, both merchants. He called the editor's attention to an "untruth published in [his] paper," about the fact that he supposedly hid himself at Government House. Clements concluded his letter by saying: "it is a pity you allow your pen to write the unjust and base concoctions which better sense, and a more manly heart and feeling,

⁷⁷ Davis, *Cross & Crown in Barbados*, p. 91.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 80.

must unhesitatingly condemn.”⁷⁹ *The Agricultural Reporter* attacked Clements because he was following Hennessy’s orders. However, it also criticised Leacock and Alleyne, who were members of the BDA. They might have been less fervent defenders of the cause, which can only so far be asserted without the extract from the edition in which they were reprehended. More than their articles, the owners of anti-confederate newspapers also acted against the Governor. The *Times* reported about an attack on Hennessy on 11 May by Mr Samuel E. Brewster, a managing clerk, who

hurled a bundle of newspapers into the governor’s carriage. The parcel grazed Mrs. Hennessy’s face, and struck the child; it then glanced in and struck the governor in the side. The papers thrown into the carriage consisted of a bundle of a weekly publication called the *Barbados Saturday Review*, of which Mr Brewster is the proprietor.⁸⁰

The *Saturday Review* was another anti-confederation paper but, soon after the events, its publication ceased. After the attack, Brewster was condemned to a two-month imprisonment with hard labour. His lawyers were members of the BDA: Mr Carrington and Mr Reeves. Hennessy pardoned him and, as a gesture, Brewster “at once stopped the further publication” of his newspaper.⁸¹

The Agricultural Reporter also noted that Hennessy’s language was “not only extremely guarded: it [was] redolent of the very quintessence of politic courtesy.”⁸² Thus, the Barbadian press criticised Hennessy for being too much of a politician. On the contrary, the British press, and especially the *Bristol Mercury* thought the Governor’s language was “inflammatory.”⁸³ That was also supported by MPs in London. In a debate in the House of Commons on 5 May 1876, William Charley likewise claimed that the riots were the result of the “inflammatory language of the Governor,” and he added that

⁷⁹ TNA, CO 321/9(440), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (May 30, 1876).

⁸⁰ *The Times*. Governor’s attitude and behavior: IV, p. 106, Bodleian Library, MSS Brit Emp. S. 409. Box 7/2.

⁸¹ C. 1687, No. 29, p.46 (Aug. 24, 1876). Reporting the circumstance under which the Governor remitted a sentence of imprisonment and hard labour on one of the leading members of the Defence Association.

⁸² TNA, CO 312/9(27), *The Agricultural Reporter*, (Jan. 25, 1876).

⁸³ “News of the week,” *The Bristol Mercury*, (May 13, 1876).

his language had “been imprudent and unconstitutional.”⁸⁴ The editor of the *Barbados Times* qualified his speeches as being related to “political charlatanism” and they stated that what was happening was comparable to when “the vampire lulls his victims to sleep.”⁸⁵ They thought the Governor was manipulating them while he had been cautious about not throwing the word confederation at them from the beginning, which in a way is political manoeuvring.

Members of the BDA operated against confederation in Barbados with their British counterpart, the WIC, in London. Landowners sent deputations to Lord Carnarvon to discuss issues as well as how they wished the colony to be governed. A deputation met Lord Carnarvon on 31 March 1876, which was introduced by MP Thomas Thornhill, who claimed that confederation would make strong measures necessary and would lead to a bloodshed comparable to Jamaica.⁸⁶ They feared violence from the African-Barbadian population, whereas on 28 March 1876, Edward Parris, who was the son of a member of the House of Assembly, shot John E. Boyce, an African-Barbadian person. It is a token of a white violence they later denied.⁸⁷ On 25 April 1876, both a motion in the House of Assembly in Barbados and a deputation in London were sent, the former requesting a memorial for her Majesty, while the latter asked for Hennessy’s recall. The motion in Barbados was introduced by Mr Carrington, while the deputation was sent from the Chamber of Commerce, whose chairman was Mr Jones.⁸⁸ It was presented by MP Thomas Hankey, but Daniel Hill, the chairman of the WIC, was present too, with Mr Phillips and Mr Bruce, members of the BDA.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ HC Deb 05 May 1876 vol 229 cc144-65.

⁸⁵ TNA, CO 321/9(56-57), *The Times*, (Jan. 26, 1876).

⁸⁶ TNA, CO 321/14(90), “The Negro Population of Barbadoes,” *The Daily News*, (Apr. 1, 1876).

⁸⁷ C. 1559, No. 19, p. 77, (May 1, 1876), The committal for trial of E. Parris for shooting J. E. Boyce. In other reports, John E. Boyce is also called Moses Boyce. See. C. 1539, Appendix No. 5, p. 137 (Mar. 29, 1876), Five Hundred Dollars Reward.

⁸⁸ C. 1679, No. 7, p. 10 (Jun. 30, 1876). As to proceedings of the Assembly and Legislative Council respecting the Governor’s recall, and to petitions on the subject.

⁸⁹ TNA, CO 321/14(107), “Deputation to Lord Carnarvon,” *The Standard*, (Apr. 26, 1876); TNA, CO 321/14(108-109), “The Disturbances at Barbadoes,” *The Daily News*, (Apr. 26, 1876).

On 22 April 1876, the BDA sent a telegram to *The Guardian* in which they explained that Hennessy's "recall [was] requisite to save [the] colony."⁹⁰ The telegram was read in the House of Commons on 27 April and made Disraeli laugh, indicating that he did not take these information as seriously as the sender expected him to.⁹¹ It suggests that the BDA was not significantly powerful in London and not perceived as a threat. As a response, *The Barbados Times*, stated on 6 May 1876 that if Hennessy was not recalled, the ministry would fall.⁹² On 11 July 1876, the Barbados House of Assembly eventually sent a petition to the Queen asking for the Governor's recall.⁹³ By 31 July 1876, *The Guardian* acknowledged that the attempts made by planters and merchants in Bridgetown to recall the Governor had failed: "Public opinion will endorse the conclusion arrived at by the Government, that the Barbados planters and their allies in this country have failed to make a sufficient case for the recall of Governor Hennessy."⁹⁴

What is more, in a debate in the House of Lords on 1 August, Lord Carnarvon argued about the violent language that had been used by and against Hennessy: one can read "he addressed violent and intemperate language to the House of Assembly on the 3 March," "[e]ven before Governor Hennessy arrived there a public meeting had been held at which very violent language had been used," and "[t]here has been a great deal of violent language used in public meetings and otherwise with respect to it."⁹⁵ The way planters acted in Barbados irritated the Colonial Office to the point that Carnarvon stated that if the planters failed, it was their own fault. Mrs Carrington, whose husband was a prominent lawyer and came from a leading family established in Barbados since the eighteenth century, sent a letter to Carnarvon on 17 April 1876, in which she claimed that

⁹⁰ "The Disturbances in Barbados," *The Manchester Guardian*, (Apr. 25, 1876), p. 5. ProQuest.

⁹¹ Hamilton, *Barbados and the Confederations Question*, pp. 79-82.

⁹² *Ibid*, p. 79.

⁹³ TNA, CO321/11(412-442), Memoriam from the House of Assembly of Barbados to Her Majesty the Queen Relative to the Conduct of His Excellency John Pope Hennessy ESQ., CMG. Governor of Barbados, and Certain Members of the Executive Council with Appendices, (Jul. 11, 1876).

⁹⁴ "Summary of News," *The Manchester Guardian*, (Jul. 31, 1876), p. 5. ProQuest.

⁹⁵ HL Deb 01 August 1876 vol 231 cc236-53.

confederation was “simply ruin to us all.”⁹⁶ Carnarvon wrote to Disraeli, the Prime Minister, on 21 April 1876:

Planters will not be ruined by Downing St. – but if they are ruined it will be by their own violence & obstinacy combining as they do all the vices of an ignorant middle class, absentee landlords, pettifogging attorneys and small local oligarchs.⁹⁷

After the riots, planters were criticised by officials in Barbados but also by the Colonial Office. Their statements about the Governor and about the events were very extreme, and even after heavy tensions, they persevered in their fight against confederation in Barbados and London.

What is more, rioters were only tried by October of the same year because the Chief Justice, Mr Charles Packer, had imprisoned plunderers for a period that exceeded the legal time for minor offenses. In October, Mr Lushington Phillips, a special judge from London, was sent to Barbados to fix the issue. Bail that was refused by Packer was immediately accepted by Phillips. Repression had been too severe for plunderers, and Phillips had been sent to regulate the proceedings. However according to the *Bristol Mercury*, white people who had shot African-Barbadian people were not prosecuted, which marked a victory for them.⁹⁸ This prejudice in the law also emphasised their supremacy as the elite. Although they had been criticised by the Colonial Office, they retained their influence.

Impact in the other colonies of the Windward Islands

While Barbados had been a troublesome island, John Pope Hennessy and the Colonial Office believed that the other colonies were not going to obstruct the plan. They appeared to be right as no other strong hostility evolved around that conflict elsewhere. Nonetheless in some cases, Barbadian people, who lived in other colonies of the

⁹⁶ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 55; Lord Carnarvon Speaks Strongly about Barbados Planters, p. 91. Bodleian Library. MSS Brit Emp. S. 409, Box 7/2.

⁹⁷ Lord Carnarvon Speaks Strongly about Barbados Planters, p. 91.

⁹⁸ “The Disturbances in Barbadoes,” *The Bristol Mercury*, (Nov. 18, 1876).

Caribbean, arranged meetings during which they articulated their support against the scheme. On 21 March 1876, an anti-confederation meeting was organised in Demerara by locals of Barbados, with Mr Thomas Partridge acting as chair. The overall characteristics of the gathering were that they were supportive of the opposition to the Colonial Office. Just as their fellow countrymen, they did not understand why a constitution that had been successful needed to be altered.⁹⁹

It is not known when these persons had emigrated to British Guiana. In the nineteenth century, a lot of Barbadian workers had moved to other colonies and had established themselves there. It is difficult to identify whether these persons were white or African-Barbadian people; the only information which is given is that they met in a private house. They wholeheartedly supported the resistance which means that they sided with the Barbadian elite, thus they might have been planters too, even though, this cannot be affirmed. One of them was Alfred Smith and he was Solicitor in British Guiana and later Chief Justice, thus not a planter but he was still holding a public office, making his position relatively important in the society. He could also be an African-Barbadian man, such as Mr Reeves, Solicitor General of Barbados. This meeting was not reported in the Parliamentary papers or in Hennessy's correspondence to Carnarvon, thus it can be inferred that it did not have any impact although its goal had been to send an address to the BDA to acknowledge the legitimacy of their actions.

Other arrests and disturbances however led to correspondences between Governor Hennessy and Lieutenant-Governors of some other Windward colonies. On 14 April 1876, an African-Barbadian man disturbed a service at Church in Vieux-Fort, in St. Lucia, and later hid into a house and some people tried to prevent the police from entering it. They were later arrested. An article published in *The St. Lucia Observer* recounted the events but also stated that there had been much exaggeration about it just as the government claimed.¹⁰⁰ However, fearing more disturbances the Executive Council of Barbados sent a supply of arms and ammunitions to the island. At the time, some spread rumours about it being another uprising by the African-Barbadian population,

⁹⁹ "Government House, Barbados, 21st March 1876. Anti-Confederation meeting in Demerara," *The Saint Lucia Observer* (Apr. 15, 1876), BL, General Reference Collection Microfilm Microform. MFM.MMISC972.

¹⁰⁰ "The Disturbances at Vieux-Fort," *The Saint Lucia Observer* (Apr. 22, 1876), BL, General Reference Collection Microfilm Microform. MFM.MMISC972.

Administrator William Des Voeux did not believe it was the case and claimed not to have been alarmed.¹⁰¹ In a despatch sent to Hennessy on 17 April 1876, Des Voeux affirmed that the event was more due to drunkenness than to ill-feeling and that the alarm had been unnecessary. On the previous day, the Administrator had encouraged Lynch, the stipendiary magistrate of the third district, to “abstain from threats and irritating gestures.”¹⁰² The disturbance was not related to confederation but in the context of postemancipation in the Caribbean, there were fears of African-Caribbean uprisings and this event showed palpable tensions in the region.

Frustration was also perceived from the other islands in regard to the attention drawn to Barbados. Troops from Demerara had been sent there because of the riots, leaving the other colonies without proper defence for their own territory. *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette* published an excerpt from the *Royal Gazette*, in which Ferris Grant, secretary of the British Guiana Planters’ Association, claimed that “the garrisons of the surrounding colonies are being denuded of their scant proportion of troops to assist in putting down this *emeute* of unarmed men” which was going to leave British Guiana with only 70 to 80 men.¹⁰³ The attention brought by the island of Barbados seem to have irritated planters in British Guiana. This colony was also not going to be concerned with the Confederation of the Windward Islands, being irrelevant for them to help Barbados, although the West India Regiment was an armed force of the British Empire.

Troops were nonetheless needed as disturbances occurred in other colonies of the Windwards. On 1 May 1876, the owner of Roxborough Estate in Tobago, Mr Pile, reported that some of his cane fields had been set on fire. The following day policemen were sent to make some arrests, they were met with opposition and corporal Belmanna killed Jane Thomas, a Barbadian woman. Seven men were arrested, but a mob gathered in front of the Court of House to ask for their release and Belmanna’s arrest. He was arrested but when taken as a prisoner the mob attacked him and he died from his injuries on 5 May. Following the outbreak, Mr Pile opined that rioters claimed to be acting under

¹⁰¹ Des Voeux, *My Colonial Service*, p. 271.

¹⁰² TNA, CO 321/12(244, 248), Disturbances at Vieux-Fort and measures taken to suppress same.

¹⁰³ *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*, (Apr. 29, 1876), p. 3, BL, General Reference Collection Microform. MFM.MC492.

Hennessy's name. For the Lieutenant-Governor of Tobago, Robert William Harley, this statement was inaccurate, but Pile was the cousin of two members of the BDA which gave him reason enough to undermine the Governor-in-chief.¹⁰⁴ In this undertaking, the goal of the BDA was to keep on working in favour of Hennessy's recall. What is more, in *The News*, a newspaper published in Scarborough in Tobago, the editor claimed that among the people who had been arrested, two had made a clear link with Barbados. Two Barbadian migrants, James Beckles and Thomas Grant respectively desired to "go and see the war that was going on in Barbados," and that "they been having War at Barbados and we must have one here too." The article then went on to the awful condition of Belmanna's death.¹⁰⁵ Contrary to most of the Barbadian press that was opposed to confederation and criticising the Colonial government, the press in Tobago enhanced it, portrayed Belmanna as a victim, and criticised the violence perpetuated by the "mob." *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette* had also pictured the Barbadians as reckless. The strong hostility was indeed a feature pertaining to Barbados.

A few years before the riots, some Barbadian emigrants had already been tried for conspiracy in Tobago. It could have contributed to a tendency of the government to be wary of Barbadian workers. Bridget Brereton addressed the possible link between the Confederation Riots and the Belmanna Riots, and she did not support the connection between the two. Lieutenant-Governor Harley thought that the Belmanna Riots were chiefly an attack against the white population. The latter group seeing what had happened in Jamaica and in Barbados feared for their interests and sought for the protection of the "Imperial Power," and took a step further to be a Crown colony, which was achieved in 1877.¹⁰⁶

There is not a lot of information on this conflict; therefore, it is complicated to clearly set the rioters' goals.¹⁰⁷ It has to be admitted that the British press such as the *Times*, and *The Guardian*, did not mention the Belmanna Riots or at least it is more difficult to find any occurrences of the event compared to the "disturbances in Barbados." Brereton concluded by saying that the main issue was resentment from the labourers,

¹⁰⁴ TNA, CO 321/13(445-446), Use of Governor's name by Rioters, (Aug. 10, 1876).

¹⁰⁵ *The News*, (Aug. 18, 1876), pp. 2-3, BL, Newspapers: vol.2.no.57.

¹⁰⁶ Brereton, "Post-Emancipation Protest in the Caribbean," p. 124.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 122.

mainly African-Barbadians and immigrants, against the oppressions of the planters. Immigrants were chiefly from Barbados making the riots an opposition between Barbadian migrants and local planters. Thus, Hennessy's name came in the discussion.

A few days after the riots, on 6 May 1876, Frederick Augustus Gore, Administrator of Grenada, wrote to Hennessy about it. Gore noted in a despatch that there was an important Barbadian population in Grenada and he feared a snowball effect in his island. He had summoned a board to examine the situation. The latter was optimistic because cultivation "g[ave] the labourers a direct interest in property," which was different from Barbados where lands were not available to the former enslaved population. There were no valid reasons for disturbances to occur in Grenada. Members of the board also concluded that not much had to be feared in Grenada but they also could not be of any help to Tobago and could only supply the island with arms and ammunitions. Gore thus had telegraphed Hennessy as to how much he should send but did not get any answer. He concluded that the Governor-in-chief had already done what was necessary.¹⁰⁸ There was a general fear among the members of the colonial government in the Caribbean about Barbadian migrants as they had been involved in multiple disturbances throughout the islands.

The Confederation Riots broke out as a strong antagonism between white planters and agricultural labourers. It raised questions about race but also about class, both being ultimately intricate and interlinked. As part of the oligarchy, the Anglican Clergy sided with the planters. The Colonial Office only aligned with them after the riots and after other disturbances in Tobago. They acknowledged Hennessy's failure and after thirteen months in office he was transferred to Hong-Kong, indicating victory for the BDA.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Grenada, Despatches to Lieutenant Governor Barbados [1873-1877], pp. 341-342. *Endangered Archives Programme*.

[www.eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP295-1-1-](http://www.eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP295-1-1-11#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=340&xywh=2653%2C357%2C592%2C934&r=270)

[11#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=340&xywh=2653%2C357%2C592%2C934&r=270](http://www.eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP295-1-1-11#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=340&xywh=2653%2C357%2C592%2C934&r=270), Accessed Nov. 24, 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Lambert and Howell, "John Pope Hennessy and the Translation of 'Slavery,'" p. 1.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate how the Confederation Riots were a consequential effect of a society divided by a class and race barrier. While the existing scholarship on the uprising tends to focus on one aspect and one perspective – either the constitutional crisis or the postemancipation struggle – this thesis showed that the arguments used by the Government, the planters or the labourers, together represented Barbadian society's shift from an enslaved to an emancipated society in the nineteenth century. It also drew attention to the fact that confederation was part of a broader imperial policy of the Colonial Office and had not been put forward for the sole case of the Windward Islands, which many scholars have failed to underline. It showed that the violence that erupted in Barbados had consequences in the other colonies of the Windwards, stirring up paranoia for the officials and showcasing a form of irritation from the newspapers of the different colonies, especially from Grenada with *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*. It also highlights the difficulties of introducing a single imperial policy across a diverse empire.

Barbados and Confederation after the riots

The Confederation Riots were therefore both a postemancipation struggle and a constitutional issue. In the first case, it mainly set the white elite in opposition to African-Barbadian labourers, even though the thesis has demonstrated that things were more complex. The Riots also evolved around changes in the Constitution that the planters resisted. In both cases, the white elite turned out to be successful; rioters had been imprisoned for a period that exceeded the legal time for minor offenses and white people were not prosecuted, although they also resisted Crown rule.¹ It emphasised their supremacy as the elite. The African-Barbadian population did not gain more rights from the uprising and white Barbadian people did not lose any.

After the riots, the project of confederation in the Windward Islands was abandoned; nonetheless the legislature of the other islands, which were in favour of confederation, made provisions to change their Constitutions and become Crown colonies

¹ "The Disturbances in Barbadoes," *The Bristol Mercury*, (Nov. 18, 1876).

– with the exception of St. Lucia, directly ruled by the Crown since 1815. The change for the Constitution of St. Vincent, Grenada and Tobago was passed in Parliament in July 1876. The Legislative Assembly of Grenada was summoned on 21 November 1876 and passed an act to dissolve their own assemblies. Each request was submitted by the Lieutenant-Governor and Legislative Assembly of each island.² Lord Carnarvon stated that any measures towards confederation would only be achieved if it was requested by each legislature.³ A change to a Crown colony was a pre-requisite of confederation. Thus, confederation failed in the Windward Islands, but three out of four colonies eventually came to be ruled directly by the Crown and, in that sense, the Colonial Office achieved one of its goals and secured white power there. In the rest of the Empire, confederation had only succeeded in settler colonies whose population reflected Britain's.⁴

Likewise, the Barbadian elite was successful as they preserved their Constitution. Barbadian planters had successfully resisted becoming a Crown colony and retained their House of Assembly and their Legislative Council. Of the British colonies in the Caribbean, Barbados was the only one in which Crown colony had not been established by the mid-1870s.⁵ Hennessy's successor, Captain George Strahan, attempted to discuss Crown colony status with the legislature without the confederation scheme. He also failed.⁶

The white elite

Both the postemancipation struggle and the constitutional issue have shown that, in the 1870s, the white supremacy could be challenged by the Colonial Office and by the African-Barbadian population. The Colonial Office tried to argue against the planters for them to yield and accept a confederation that was going to deprive them of their rights in the assemblies, while the labourers rebelled against their situation when they saw that the

² Bill 253, (Jul. 18, 1876), A Bill intituled An Act to make provision for the Government of the Islands of Saint Vincent, Tobago, and Grenada and their Dependencies.

³ HC Deb 04 April 1876 vol 228 c1178.

⁴ Dilke, *Greater Britain*, pp. 77, 98.

⁵ Heuman, "The British West Indies," p. 487.

⁶ Beckles, *Great House Rules*, p. 156.

existing system could be disputed and that they could enhance a racial consciousness; Hennessy symbolised the belief that their voice mattered. As a matter of fact, the crisis pinpointed the “collapse in moral leadership of the local white ruling class.”⁷ The white elite had succeeded in resisting Crown rule but their dominance in the society had been questioned by the Colonial Office, ready to deprive them of their representative system. Although the crisis strengthened the hegemony of the white elite – they prevented confederation and Crown colony status – their leadership role had been undermined; to have more impact they had to seek the help of the African-Barbadian bourgeoisie, making the conflict less of a race issue and giving it a class characteristic. What is more their arguments provided inconsistencies and setbacks: they claimed they did not impede emigration while they did, they denied claims about the state of their island and exaggerated their reports to the WIC trying to recall the Governor, which was not supported by Carnarvon; three successive governors had failed to find a middle ground with the white elite. They however succeeded in this endeavour as Hennessy was sent to Hong-Kong. They also tried to cancel elections when Sanford Freeling was acting Governor which led him to dissolve the Assembly. When difficulties were emerging, Sir John Sealy, Dr. Thomas, Mr. Foderingham, and Mr. J. A. Haynes even resigned as an act of protest when Hennessy appointed new members to the Legislative Council.⁸

On 15 April 1876, two days before the riots, *The St. Lucia Observer* published an article in which they explained that the Bridgetown Young Men’s Association, founded in 1873 by Wesleyan Reverend Genge, had been dissolved.⁹ The Association organised readings, lectures, and debates, and one of its patrons was Sir Thomas Briggs. He had aroused agitation in the island during the debates on confederation, advocating in its favour and ultimately, although unintentionally, leading labourers to believe that slavery was going to be re-established. As a consequence, he received several threats against his life from members of the African-Barbadian community.¹⁰ Thus, even before the riots broke out, Briggs was already a controversial figure in the Barbadian society. In May

⁷ Downes, *Barbados 1880-1914*, p. 274.

⁸ C.1559, No. 123, p. 211, (Jun. 6, 1876), Reporting the resignation of Sir John Sealy, Dr. Thomas, Mr. Foderingham, and Mr. Haynes as members of the Legislative Council.

⁹ “Barbados,” *The Saint Lucia Observer* (Apr. 15, 1876).

¹⁰ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 179.

1876, he left the colony and moved to England.¹¹ The Briggs family had settled in Barbados in the seventeenth century and the riots made one of its leading members leave.¹² One of the reasons explaining his departure might have been his political failure and his too strong involvement in the debates on confederation. This showed how important the conflict had been and how it had divided the white elite.

Hennessy's legacy

John Pope Hennessy left Barbados on 1 December 1876, and his successor, Captain George Strahan, Governor of the Gold Coast, arrived on 19 December 1876. In the meantime, the colonies were to be administered by George Dundas, Lieutenant-Governor of St. Vincent, who had supported Hennessy and his ideas of reforms through the six points. However, no more work on confederation was undertaken by the acting Governor.

Before leaving, Hennessy telegraphed Carnarvon to inform him that some disturbances might occur on his departure, but it was not the case. Some members of the Legislative Council did, however, write him a farewell note:

Be assured for years to come your name will be a household word here, and in whatever part of the Empire your duty to our beloved Sovereign may call you, your distinguished career will be watched with the deepest and most affectionate interest by the people of Barbados, in whose name we bid you farewell.

It was signed by the Administrator, Mr Gore, by the Attorney General, Mr Semper, by Mr Griffith, Mr Kerr and a gentleman who had "received the honour of appointment from Mr Hennessy two days before."¹³ Thomas Briggs did not sign it, for he had already left the Caribbean. Thus, Hennessy was only bid farewell by people who had supported him in the debates in favour of the Confederation. Planters had finally succeeded in asking for his recall and in opposing Crown rule. Hennessy was sent to Hong-Kong from 1877 to

¹¹ Briggs, *The Archives of the Briggs Family*, p. 28.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Clarke, *The Constitutional Crisis of 1876 in Barbados*, pp. 131-133.

1882 and then to Mauritius from 1883 to 1889. He was welcomed there “as an antidote to the maladies associated with alien administration of a conquered people.”¹⁴ When Hennessy’s grandson visited Barbados in 1939, he was told by the Attorney General that his grandfather “was remembered by the white community of Barbadoes as having caused the worst riots that had occurred in the island by making a speech on federation.” On the contrary, a light-skinned man told him that his name was “very well-known in the West Indies and much remembered” implying it was in a good way.¹⁵ About sixty years after the Confederation Riots, Governor Hennessy’s name was remembered by the white Barbadian as being the cause of all the troubles whereas it had, as argued in this thesis, erupted from much deeper issues rooted in the abolition of slavery and on the stagnancy of the social order in the community.

The riots’ legacy

The Confederation Riots have a strong significance in postemancipation Barbados. During the uprising, labourers used conch shells as a signal to rally on the plantations.¹⁶ Aviston Downes argued that the sound of conch shells and the word ‘Federation’ became a signal that something was going to happen.¹⁷ By the end of the nineteenth century, “‘Federation’ had become rooted firmly in the social vocabulary of Barbadians, and its connotations were clear.”¹⁸ Trevor Marshall also opined that the word Federation became part of the folklore and was associated to “any noisy gathering of people.”¹⁹ The 1876 debates on Confederation had gathered people with the anti-

¹⁴ David Lambert and Phillip Howell, “Sir John Pope Hennessy and colonial government: humanitarianism and the translation of slavery in the imperial network,” *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Ed. David Lambert and Alan Lester, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 228.

¹⁵ James Pope Hennessy to his father, (May 30, 1939), p.115, Bodleian Library, MSS Brit Emp. S. 409. Box 7/2.

¹⁶ “The Barbados Riots,” *The St. George Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*, (May 6, 1876), p. 3, BL, General Reference Collection Microform. MFM.MC492.

¹⁷ Downes, *Barbados 1880-1914*, p. 42.

¹⁸ Frank A. Collymore, *Notes for a Glossary of Words and Phrases of Barbadian Dialect*, (Bridgetown: Barbados National Trust, 1970), p. 40 quoted by Downes, *Barbados 1880-1914*, p. 42.

¹⁹ Marshall, “Post Emancipation Adjustments in Barbados 1838-1876,” p. 96.

confederation meetings as well as during the plundering of estates. The word had become a symbol, and its significance had evolved. Let us remember that during the events, *The St. Lucia Observer*, mocking the Barbadian elite, had associated confederation to a “loose gathering.”²⁰ Confederation had been criticised by the planters and endorsed by the labourers, as for the latter confederation could indicate that things were about to change, or at least that there was a possibility of it.

Debates on confederation in the Windward Islands died down after the crisis. Members of the assemblies in Barbados had no wish to be joined to other islands, and even less when they had all turned into Crown colonies. Lord Carnarvon and his successor, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, worked on how to administer the colony without irritating members of the Barbados House of Assembly and Legislative Council. No solution was found as the legislature rejected any proposal.²¹ Eventually, in 1884, Barbados came to be separated from the Windward Islands, and the Governor of Grenada became its Governor-in-chief, reduced to four territories. As accurately put by Bruce Hamilton, “the end of the story was separation instead of closer association.”²² It is also interesting to note that, in 1956, Hamilton thought that there was “every likelihood that within a decade Confederation will be a working reality” in the British Caribbean.²³ Nonetheless, exactly ten years after the publication of his work, Barbados became an independent country, although a Federation of the Caribbean ran from 1958 to 1962, comprised Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands, Barbados, the Leewards Islands and the Windward Islands. The greater Caribbean Confederation that the Colonial Office had wished to establish when drafting the Leeward Islands Confederation bill in 1871 took place but was short-lived.

²⁰ *The St. Lucia Observer*, (Apr. 8, 1876).

²¹ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 191; Hamilton, *Barbados & the Confederation Question*, pp. 96-114.

²² Hamilton, *Barbados & the Confederation Question*, pp. 112-113.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 114.

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