



# The Eric Williams Memorial Collection

P.O. Box 561631\* Miami, FL 33256-1631\* USA\* Tel: 305-271-7246\* Fax: 305-271-4160

## Greater London Authority, London Book Fair, and Trinidad & Tobago High Commissioner Honour Eric Williams in Slave Trade Bicentenary Commemorations

**LONDON, England** (April 2, 2007)— In commemoration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the Greater London Authority, the London Book Fair and the Trinidad and Tobago High Commissioner will inaugurate the Mayor of London's Dr. Eric E. Williams Memorial Lecture Series on April 17, 2007. The first lecture will be delivered by Jamaican-born scholar, Colin A. Palmer, Dodge Professor of History, Princeton University. In addition, the event will feature the re-launch of two Eric Williams books Capitalism and Slavery, and Inward Hunger: The Education of a Prime Minister.

**Media Contact:**  
Erica Williams Connell  
305-271-7246  
ewc.sulan@juno.com

The Lecture, Reception and Book Sale will take place at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 17, 2007 in Conference Rooms 4 and 5 of City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London. Admission is by invitation only.

The Mayor's programme aims at highlighting and acknowledging the economic impact of the slave trade on London's prosperity and development as one of the world's leading cities. Its purpose is two-fold: to raise the awareness of Londoners about their history, and to pay tribute to Williams' 63-year-old analysis of this debate, (Capitalism and Slavery), which remains, according to Palmer "the most provocative contribution to the study of the complex relationship between the African slave trade, slavery, the rise of British capitalism, and the emancipation of the slave population in the West Indies." The book has been translated into eight languages, including Russian, Chinese, Japanese and this year for the first time, Korean. Few modern historical works have enjoyed its enduring intellectual influence and appeal, causing the 1997 *New York Times Book Review* to term "The Williams Thesis" as remaining on the "cutting edge of slave trade research in academic circles."

“Capitalism and Slavery, says Palmer, “takes on renewed meaning and relevance today even affecting the naming of a basketball stadium in Brooklyn, New York, for the UK banking giant Barclays. Despite Barclay’s paying US \$300m for the privilege, African-American leaders there vehemently object, citing Williams’ work as evidence of its inappropriateness.

Colin Palmer’s recent highly-acclaimed Eric Williams and the Making of the Modern Caribbean is a scholarly biography of the noted Caribbean statesman and consummate historian. Williams was the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and head of government for a quarter of a century until his death in 1981. He led his country to Independence from Britain in 1962 and onto Republicanism in 1976.

Born and reared in Jamaica, Colin Palmer received his BA at the University College of the West Indies/London and his MA and Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin. He has taught at Oakland University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - serving as Chair of the Department of History and attaining the rank of William Rand Kenan Professor. He also taught at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, where he was named a Distinguished Professor. He has held several fellowships, among them at the National Humanities Center, The Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and the Stanford Humanities Center.

Palmer is the author of numerous books and articles, including Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570 – 1650; Human Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Spanish America, 1700 – 1739; and Passageways: An Interpretive History of Black America (2 vols.). The editor-in-chief of the Encyclopedia of African American Life and Culture (6 vols.), his forthcoming book is entitled The Politics of Power: Cheddi Jagan, Great Britain, the United States, and the Struggle for British Guiana.

“Dr. Palmer combines the analytical depth of a distinguished historian with the breadth of a public intellectual,” says Professor Mary Turner, Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London - also a co-sponsor of the Lecture. “His topic, *Eric Williams: A Profile in Leadership*, promises to marry hitherto unrevealed research about Williams' role and direction in the shaping of the modern Caribbean with a vibrant discussion of the attendant exigencies of the day.”

The Inaugural Lecture is supported in part by the Institute for the Study of the Americas, University of London, and the Eric Williams Memorial Collection (EWMC), University of the

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West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago campus). The Library, Archives and Museum of Dr. Williams, the EWMC was inaugurated by former **U.S. Secretary of State, Colin L. Powell** in 1998. It was named to UNESCO's prestigious *Memory of the World Register* in 1999.

Books by Eric Williams and Colin Palmer will be available for purchase and signing at the Lecture.

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