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# IS JAMAICA READY

## WILL JAMAICA BECOME A REPUBLIC

*Exploring Jamaica's journey from a monarchy to a republic and the cultural impact of this historic change*

A Documentary by  
**CLAUDINE BOOTHE**





## Logline

An introduction to Jamaica's reputation and scepticism about constitutional reform.

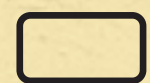
**JAMAICA IS FAMOUS FOR ITS NATURAL BEAUTY,** captivating music, athletic prowess, and vibrant spirit. However, it also faces significant disparities in wealth, inadequate infrastructure, and environmental challenges. After three and a half centuries as a colony and six decades of independence, a constitutional reform has been launched with the objective of abolishing the monarchy and establishing a republic. However, constitutional reform is not a popular subject among the public, and many citizens are sceptical.

### COMMON QUESTIONS INCLUDE:

- Will constitutional reform improve my standard of living?
- Will it curb the high crime wave?
- Will it reduce corruption among officials?
- Will getting rid of the monarchy alleviate my hardships?
- Will a republic bring a better quality of life?



Duration  
**25 min**



Format  
**16:9**



Language  
**English**





**Jamaica's bobsleigh** team stunned the world by competing in the 1988 Winter Olympics, defying all expectations for a tropical nation.



**Jamaicans Celebrate Independence Day**  
A vibrant crowd marks Jamaica's Independence Day with music, culture, and a strong sense of national pride.



**Bob Marley**, known as the "King of Reggae," became a global symbol of Jamaican culture and the movement for peace and social justice.

Jamaica was  
the first  
Caribbean  
country to gain  
independence  
in 1962.



**Social Reality in Jamaica**  
Some Jamaican families face challenging living conditions, highlighting social inequalities on the island.





## Background

A historical look at Jamaican political leaders and past attempts at republicanism.

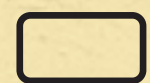
In the early 1960s, when Jamaica left the West Indian Federation and moved quickly towards independence, political leaders did not consider republicanism to be feasible or desirable. National Hero Norman Manley believed that the British Government would resist any call to abolish the monarchy, which could delay Jamaica's path to independence.

In the following decade, during the mid-1970s, his son, Michael Manley, declared his support for Jamaica to remove the trappings of British colonialism and adopt a republican form of government. However, his proposal had little chance of success, as it became associated with fears of radical socialism.

In 2012, Prime Minister Portia Simpson announced at her inauguration that she would move Jamaica towards replacing the monarchy with a republic. However, no such change materialised.



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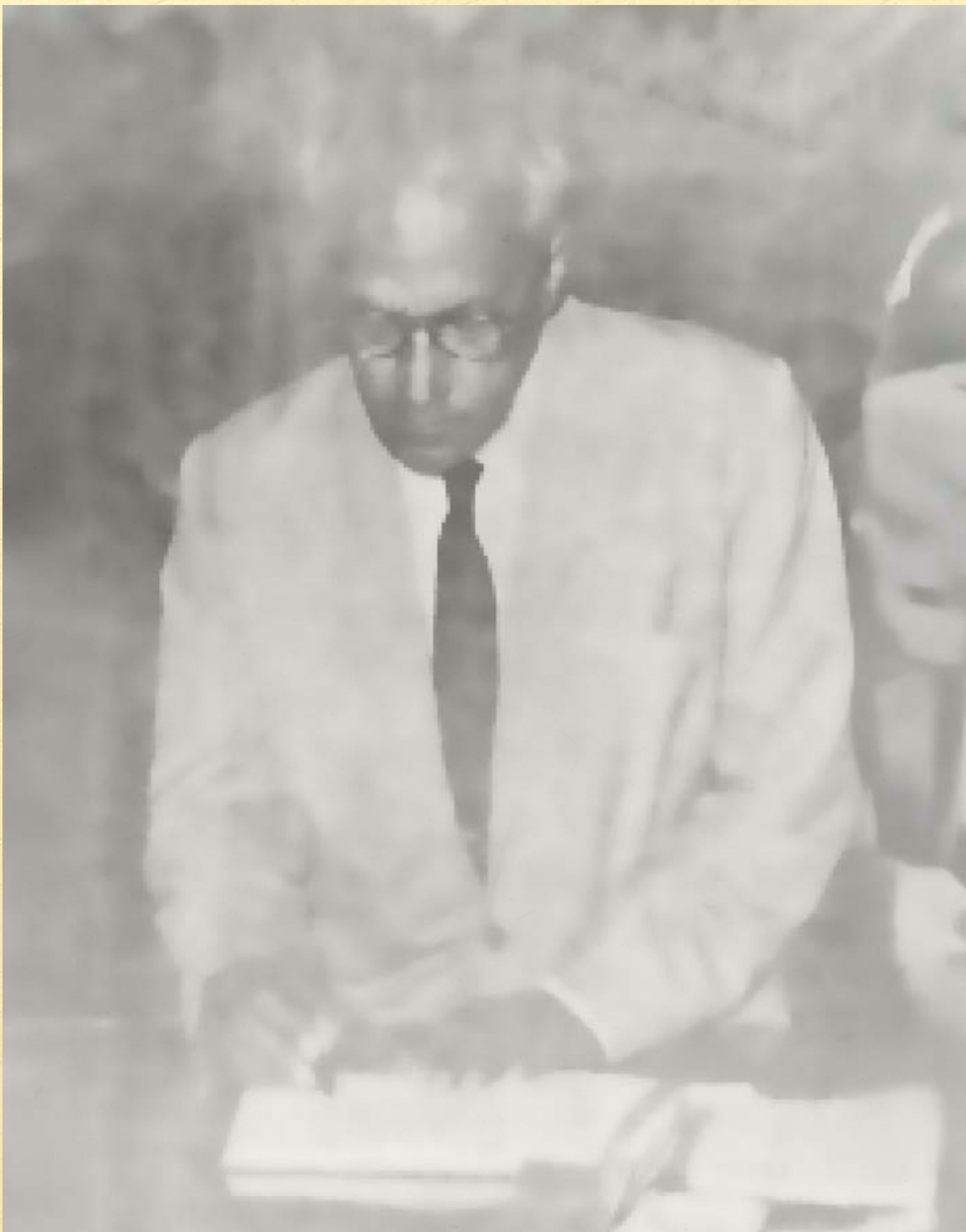


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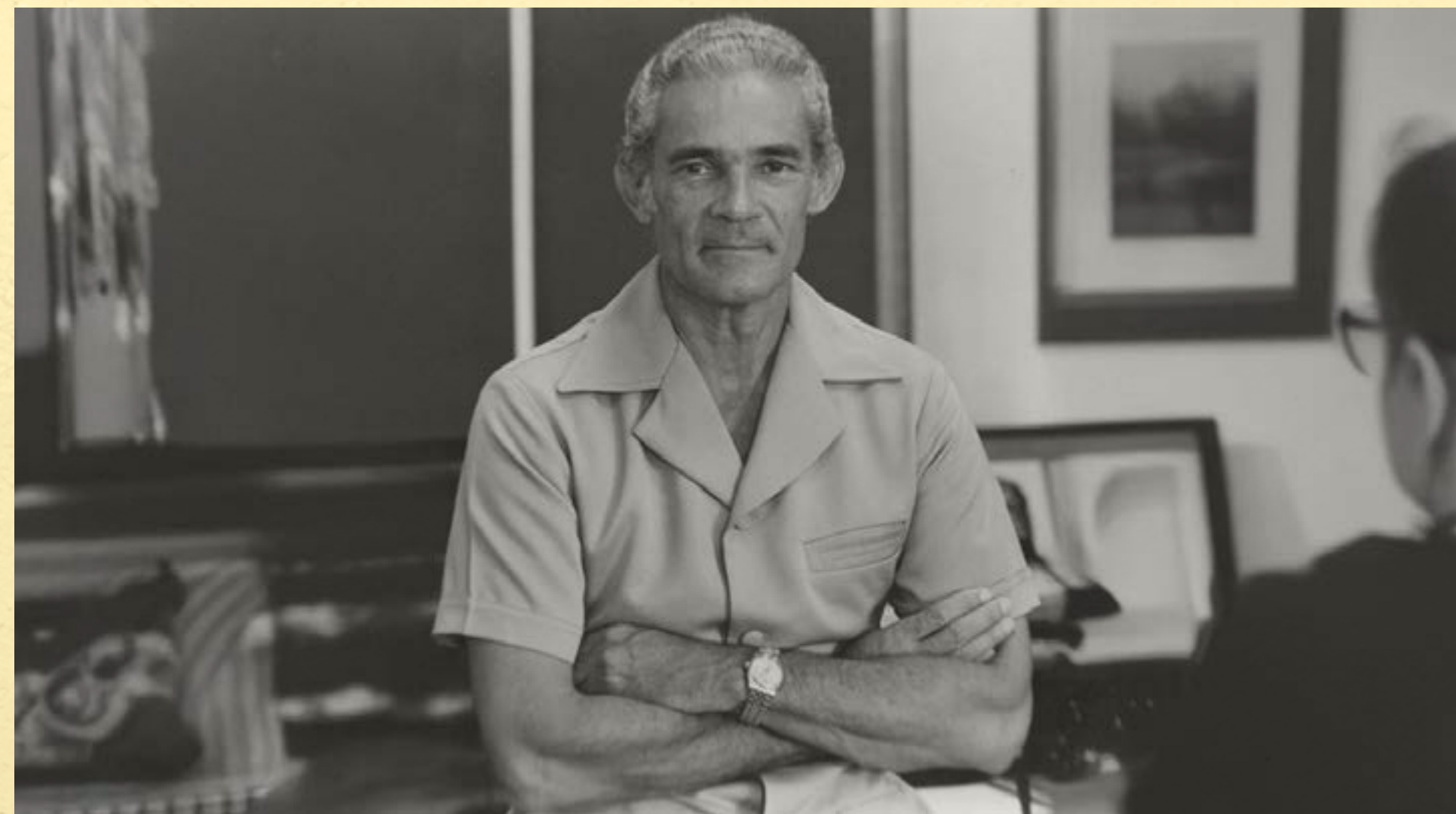


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A historic moment as **Norman Manley**, a pivotal figure in Jamaica's history, signs the colonial constitution that paved the way for the island's independence.



Former Prime Minister of Jamaica and a pivotal figure in Caribbean politics, **Michael Manley** championed social reforms and advocated for the island's economic and political independence. His leadership defined a transformative era in Jamaica's history.

Jamaica's  
leaders have  
shaped its path  
to indepen-  
dence and  
social progress.



The first woman to serve as Prime Minister of Jamaica, **Portia Simpson-Miller** is celebrated for her historic leadership and dedication to social justice and the island's progress.



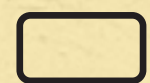


## Consensus or Conflict

Analysing public opinion and the possible lack of consensus on abolishing the monarchy.



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Caribbean Court of Justice headquarters

Republicanisation is now at the forefront of the current constitutional reform project. Reputable opinion polls indicate that a substantial majority of Jamaicans favour adopting a republican form of government. However, some people are asking, “How will this change impact my quality of life?”



Jamaica's flag: symbol of hope and strength.

There is also no consensus on what form this republic should take or what additional changes should accompany it. Without full consensus, there is a risk that the abolition of the monarchy—requiring two thirds voter approval in a referendum—may not be achieved.



Chambers of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council

The Leader of the Opposition has stated that his party will not support constitutional reform measures that do not also include removing His Majesty's Privy Council as Jamaica's final Court of Appeal and replacing it with the Caribbean Court of Justice. By contrast, the governing party has made no such commitment.





## Risks vs. Expectations

Examining whether a republic would meet Jamaicans' expectations in key areas of concern.

### □ POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

Will republicanism make politicians more responsible? Many feel that adopting a republican framework will not change politicians' attitudes or their perceived neglect of the people they represent.

### □ INTEGRITY AND CORRUPTION

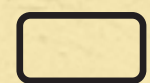
There is widespread perception that politicians lack integrity and engage in corrupt practices. Will adopting a republican form of government change this?

### □ CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS

Will abolishing the monarchy strengthen cultural and religious freedoms, and ensure that all creeds and cultures are treated with equal respect?



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□ **REPARATIONS AND COMMONWEALTH POSITION**

Could abolishing the monarchy harm Jamaica's chances of obtaining reparations for slavery or its standing within the Commonwealth?

□ **CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

Should Jamaica consider a more radical shift in its constitutional system by replacing the parliamentary cabinet system with an executive presidential system?

□ **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Will republicanism aid in protecting our environment and preserving our ecological heritage? Or will it empower foreign hotel owners to continue excluding ordinary Jamaicans from beaches and allow foreign industrialists to deposit waste in our rivers and coastal waters?

□ **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT**

Will republicanism foster greater public participation in government? Many fear that constitutional reform and republicanism alone will not make government more participatory or responsive. If this is the case, true republican status will not be achieved, as it would lack government "of the people, by the people, for the people." executive presidential system?

□ **ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY**

Will abolishing the monarchy eliminate economic and social inequalities in society? This is a pressing question. Many ask, "If we keep the same political system and the same politicians, what difference will republicanism make?" Additionally, how will the local business class and multinationals be made more responsive to the needs of poorer and marginalised communities?





# Regional Context and History

Contrasting Jamaica’s journey. What have neighbouring Caribbean Republics achieved



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## 1844–1861

**First Republic.**  
The Dominican Republic gained independence from Haiti in 1844, marking the establishment of its First Republic. This period was defined by efforts to consolidate sovereignty and build a new national identity amidst regional instability and external threats.

## 1865–1916

**Second Republic.**  
After years of political unrest and reoccupation by Spain, the Second Republic emerged in 1865. This era was characterized by efforts to rebuild national governance and economic development, despite ongoing internal divisions.

## 1924–1965

**Third Republic.**  
The Third Republic began in 1924 following the end of the United States occupation. This period saw significant modernization efforts but was overshadowed by the authoritarian rule of Rafael Trujillo, which lasted until 1961.

## 1966–present

**Fourth Republic.**  
The Fourth Republic began in 1966 after a period of civil war. Since then, the Dominican Republic has focused on democracy, economic growth, and social reform, despite challenges like inequality.

### EARLY REPUBLICS AND MULTIPLE TRANSITIONS

- **Haiti:** Became a republic over 220 years ago following a successful revolution in 1804.
- **Dominican Republic:** has experienced four successive republics since gaining independence from Haiti in 1844.

### RAPID REPUBLIC TRANSITIONS

- **Trinidad and Tobago:** Achieved the transition in only 14 years.
- **Barbados:** Transformed its colonial constitution into a republican one in just 52 years.





Leader of the Haitian Revolution, **Toussaint Louverture** abolished slavery and paved the way for Haiti's independence in 1804.



**Caribbean Flags.** A vibrant display of flags representing the diversity and unity of Caribbean nations, symbols of their rich history and shared culture.

In 1804  
Haiti became  
the first  
republic to be  
founded by  
enslaved people who freed  
themselves.



The first President of Barbados, **Sandra Prunella Mason** played a key role in leading the nation's historic transition from a constitutional monarchy to a republic, embodying progress and national pride.



**Christine Carla Kangaloo**, the current President of Trinidad and Tobago, is a symbol of leadership and progress in the Caribbean, advocating for unity and development across the nation.





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## CLAUDINE BOOTHE

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### DIRECTOR'S CREDENTIALS

Producer-Director-Writer Claudine Boothe's film credits include: **No Nationality, No Virginity (a short drama); Skin and Coal, African History of Sport**, a two-part documentary series; and several hours of current affairs television produced for **Channel Four in the 1980s**. Claudine's work is considered a trendsetter in the industry, both in content and style. Her short drama **No Virginity, No Nationality** is highly acclaimed as a one-of-a-kind short film, distributed by the British Film Institute (BFI), and available to watch on BFI iPlayer in the UK.

Claudine began her media career as an award-winning journalist at Jamaica Daily Gleaner. Since then, she has produced and directed several hours of prime-time current affairs programming for both television and BBC Radio Four (Woman's Hour).

Claudine is also a prolific writer and blogger, with some of her trendsetting published work available and on academic sites. She is an active member of the BECTU industrial trade union, serving on the Writer, Director, and Producer (WPD) Committee. She is also one of the founders of **Best UK Images Production Company**, a member of PACT.



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## KEY PARTICIPANTS

- At least one former Prime Minister
- At least one eminent Jamaican journalist and political activist
- At least one prominent academic in a relevant discipline
- At least one member of the Jamaican ruling elite from the “21 Families”
- Representatives from the hotel and hospitality industry
- Bauxite industry leaders
- Figures from the sports and arts sectors
- Representatives from religious organisations
- Ordinary Jamaicans

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## CO-PRODUCTION AND FINANCE INFORMATION

### Funding Sources

- UK Global Screen Fund
- BBC Acquisition
- Netflix Caribbean
- Canada

### Exhibition and Distribution

This film will be exhibited in theatres and shown at Film Festivals. It will also be broadcast and streamed.

### Production Company

Best UK Images Production Ltd



Shooting must start **May 2025**, to capture historic electoral processes of Jamaica becoming a republic. If the vote goes against changing the monarchy, then the documentary will examine factors resulting in failure to win the two thirds majority required to do so; and the history and implications of Jamaica’s persistent failure to republicanise.



