THE FAILURE OF THE POLITICAL STATUS PROCESS
IN THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

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"We have neither the inclination, nor the power to rise up and shake off the existing government, and therefore, as we do not possess the necessary conditions, we must fain forego the exercise of the 'most sacred right'.”

Thomas Mackay Hughes

Introduction

On October 11, 1993, Virgin Islanders were given the opportunity to change the political status and federal relations of the United States controlled segment of the Virgin Islands/U.S. Virgin Islands. A commission on political status and federal relations had been organized since July 1988 with a mandate to prepare the Virgin Islands people for an eventual referendum on the political status question. Two intensive education campaigns were subsequently implemented from December 1988 to September 1989 and again from March to October 1993. The latter campaign was held throughout the two districts of St. Thomas-St. John and St. Croix by a highly motivated staff. Judging from the level of controversy and discussion on popular radio and television programs, political status was the most talked about topic in the Islands in the months approaching the October 11th referendum. However, at the conclusion of referendum day, it became tragically obvious that the vast majority of the electorate had stayed away from the polls. Hence, the political status process collapsed.

This paper will be the first public explanation of the failure of the status process in the Virgin Islands from the standpoint of a former staff person in an international conference. Unfortunately, the U.S. Virgin Islands Commission on Political Status and Federal Relation also collapsed with the referendum, and it has yet to produce an evaluation on what occurred, or rather what didn’t. Since I was one of the main actors in the status education process from 1992-1993, I will have to depart a little from standard scholarly procedure and mention some subjective experiences during the mass education campaign in order to supplement an otherwise objective paper. My approach will be mainly descriptive due to the historical aspects of this presentation and the very questions I intend to answer.

Nonetheless, the task of explaining and predicting political behavior falls on the political scientist(s). We must scrutinize the events, trends, and/or factors that led to the failed referendum. As the title of this paper suggests, I intend to answer the following questions: 1) what factors led the failure of the status process; 2) what is to be done in order to improve the status debate. To a large extent, the current behaviour of the Virgin Islands is a continuance of historical trends in the political development of the Islands. The present milieu in which Virgin Islanders act within have been changed by new international and local realities that may very well place the society in another
stream of political development in the 21st century. Certain major trends and political tendencies in Virgin Islands society must be examined in order to place the status failure in its proper context. I must begin my presentation by analyzing the lasting impact of precolonial societies and three centuries of European colonialism (1492-1917) on the present Virgin Islands.

**Brief Historical Overview**

**Precolonial Era**

The Virgin Islands was inhabited by Aboriginal peoples such as the Siboney, Tainos and Caribs from approximately 400 B.C. to 1500 A.D. Although written records about these groups are difficult to obtain, conventional history posits that all three groups maintained distinct socio-political structures and economic activities. Eventually, two groups emerged that appeared to have been in perpetual conflict—Tainos and Caribs. The Tainos were the dominant ethnic group in the Greater Antilles; they held sway over the entire region from say the birth of Christ to 1000 A.D. Due to their earlier presence throughout the Caribbean archipelago, the Caribs met Tainos in the Lesser Antilles. Through a steady pattern of raiding Taino settlements and intermarriage with the survivors, the Caribs eventually overwhelmed and absorbed their rivals.

The Carib movement up the Caribbean chain was interrupted at the Virgin Islands by Spanish colonialism in the early 1500’s. Even though our current records are not clear on this phase of European colonialism in the Virgin Islands, the Aboriginal population "disappeared" by the 1620’s. Unlike the Spanish colonists who enslaved remnants of the Indigenous Taino population and created a latifundist system to exploit the labor of other Aboriginal peoples in the region, the Western European colonists usually destroyed the Indigenous groups that they found in the Caribbean. As in the case of the majority of the Lesser Antilles, the Carib population was decimated due to genocidal policies, wars, disease, and to lesser degree, absorption into the transplanted African population. Thus, unlike Pacific Islanders, we are not the first inhabitants of the land.

**European Colonial Era**

The Virgin Islands was contested by the Netherlands, France, Britain, and Knights of Malta throughout most of the 1600’s until Denmark entered the area in the 1670’s. By 1733, Denmark consolidated its colonial holdings to include St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix. Britain maintained control of Tortola, Jost Van Dyke, Virgin Gorda, and Anegada. Except for intermittent occupations by Britain in the early 1800’s, the area we call the U.S. Virgin Islands was a Danish colony from 1733 until 1917. The socio-political imprint of Danish colonialism has been deep (albeit from a superficial view it may not appear so).

Similar to other European imperialists operating in the Caribbean, Denmark used its Caribbean colonies to assist in the
accumulation of surplus capital. However, due to its location in
Northern Europe and consistent focus on expansion in Scandinavia,
Denmark never obtained world empires as in the tradition of major
western European states--Portugal, Spain, France, Britain, and the
Netherlands. Danish expansionism reached its apogee in the early
1700's with: 1) colonies in Greenland, Iceland, Faroe Islands,
and Danish West Indies/Virgin Islands; b) vassal states in the
Baltic region. The intra-hegemonic pressures in Europe and
nationalist stirrings within Scandinavia kept the Danish imperial
overlords busy trying to maintain their position(s) in the European
international system from 1600-1900.

Furthermore, Denmark formulated a unique strategy for
accumulating surplus capital in the Virgin Islands. The Danish
colonists recruited other Europeans to serve as merchants,
planters, overseers, bankers, and in other entrepreneurial roles.
As other Caribbean societies, enslaved Africans were assigned to
the proletarian classes. The Danes reserved official roles for
themselves. Unlike, however, in Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroe
Islands, Danes did not immigrate to the Virgin Islands in
substantial numbers.

The Danish colonial regime never sought to scandinavize the
African population as in the cases of other European colonists
throughout the Caribbean. The Danish Caribbean colony was ruled by
the Danish West India and Guinea Company from 1671 until 1852, and
throughout much of this period, very few attempts were made to
democratize the colony. The local elite or bourgeois was usually
of western European background. This stratum was transient, and
it did not establish deep roots into the society. Early in the
Danish phase two distinct economic activities dominated the
economy: commerce and sugarcane plantations.

St. Thomas served as a major entrepot for the Caribbean during
the entire 18th and early 19th centuries. St. Croix and St. John
were based on sugarcane plantations. This merchants-versus-
planters dichotomy continued into the 20th century, but its
importance exceeds the obvious class cleavages such contradictions
produce. It led to the formation of two types of political
cultures on the two districts.

Denmark did not utilize mercantilist structures to accumulate
wealth in the Caribbean because most of the external trade was with
the United States, Western Europe and other Caribbean societies.
Denmark accrued most of its income through the taxation of
commercial activities and agricultural products. Clearly, without
a mercantilist structure in place, profits were only possible when
the colony was riding an economic boom. However, when the colony
failed to provide handsome treasures to the metropole, the
discussions to sever ties became attractive to Denmark.

Before concluding an overview of the Danish phase, I must
mention the developments within the African population. Most of
the African population originated in Western Africa, but this
segment of the Danish colonial society was somewhat heterogenous in
nature. The Africans brought into the Virgin Islands came from
different West African societies which were at different levels of
development. However, we can surmise that since West Africa had relatively well developed states, kingdoms, and transitional structures moving towards feudalism, Africans were quite aware of hierarchical systems. It is therefore easy to extrapolate that the work ethics, discipline, culture, and physical qualities of Africans were important factors for the profuse usage of African labor in the Danish colony. Africans were exploited for their labor and skills. The African population in the Virgin Islands constituted the bedrock of the "native" population for most of this European colonial era.

Consequently, African labor was utilized in two ways: 1) chattel slavery which was chiefly found on plantations in St. Croix and St. John; 2) wage labor which coexisted with the abovementioned form of servitude in St. Thomas for much of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Chattel slavery on plantations always placed great levels of stress on the working classes on the plantation, and in the Caribbean, the level of exploitation on sugar plantations always exceeded other forms of slave labor in terms of brutality, inhumanity, and working conditions.

In St. John and St. Croix, we find Africans using insurrectionary means to rid the society of the plantation system. In St. Thomas, Africans used the reformist approach to ameliorate their conditions; there was no strong tradition of insurrections in the Island. Therefore, the progressive strain of Virgin Islands political culture has been heavily influenced by the African masses utilizing insurrectionary tactics and reformism when the contexts were suitable.

During the 19th century, the major objectives of the African masses were to destroy chattel slavery and then ameliorate the living conditions of former slaves and their offsprings. Parallel to this movement, the economy of the Islands began to decline. Foreseeing the emergence of a militaristic American state in the region, Denmark began consultations on the sale of the Islands to the United States at the end of the Civil War in 1865. For the next 50 years, Denmark did not make substantial investments in its Caribbean colony nor did it attempt to assist the socio-political and economic development of its colony on decline. During this period, attempts were made to reform the Islands' colonial structures, but this was done only by the elites for the elites. Unlike the cases of neighboring Puerto Rico, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, this upper class was never rooted in the society. This class did not evolve nationalist positions to include the masses nor even quasi-nationalism for its own class interests. At best, we saw an autonomist position being etched out by the liberal segments of the electorate.

Here, I must state that the Virgin Islands has been a Caribbean colony with similar traditions to those of the neighboring Eastern Caribbean societies. Until the 20th century, the Virgin Islands was at the same position as the rest of the region in terms of colonial underdevelopment. The differences that I highlighted have had some lasting impacts on the political development of the society. However, it is the United States'
acquisition of the Islands that led to a break with the rest of the region.

American Colonial Era

The Transfer of Danish colonial rule to U.S. territorial status added another dimension to the Virgin Islands political culture. Until the Spanish-Cuban-American War in 1898, U.S. territorial development ended with statehood and full integration into the Union. However, U.S. acquisition of the Philippines, Guam, Cuba, and Puerto Rico as war booty in the previously mentioned war, led to the emergence of classic colonialism. These areas were never intended to be states; they belonged to and were possessions of the United States. In this vain, territorial expansion in the 20th century was fundamentally different from that of the 19th century.

The Virgin Islands were bought for $25 million in bullion from Denmark in 1916 in order to forestall a German takeover and assist in U.S. national defense. Although no referendums were taken to ascertain popular opinion on U.S. acquisition, some evidence exists that a sizeable amount of Islanders supported the Transfer. As soon as the colony became a U.S. unincorporated territory, contradictions emerged between the new Navy Administrators and the Virgin Islands people. Instead of acquiring automatic U.S. citizenship and healthy investments into the Islands economy, the federal and local governments kept the Danish colonial laws intact, and the economic conditions did not improve.

Local progressive figures such as Rothschild Francis in St. Thomas and David Hamilton Jackson in St. Croix rallied the people in seeking the extension of democratic rights and privileges in the Islands. They led militant reformist movements that sought to get rid of military rule and immediately tackle the economic woes of the territory. Although close to the Universal Negro Improvement Association-African Communities League, none of these reformers formed Virgin Islands nationalist parties.

The Naval regime was removed in 1931 and the territory came under the auspices of the Department of Interior. Civilian governors were appointed by the U.S. President and gradually they began to reflect the ethnic composition of the Virgin Islands society. Congress also drafted an organic act for the territory--The Organic Act of 1936. Beginning from 1936 until 1969, the Virgin Islands made steady reforms that allowed greater levels of self government within the unincorporated territorial status. The Organic Act of 1936 was revised in 1954, thereby providing for a unicameral legislature and more authority for the executive branch.

During the period of 1964-65, the first Constitutional Convention proposed a Second Revised Organic Act that would allow an elective governor and lieutenant governor for a four year term, congressional representation, the presidential vote, abolition of the presidential veto of local laws, and other expansions of local authority. Congress accepted the 1965 proposals but allowed their
implementation in an incremental manner. In 1968, the Elective Governor Act provided: 1) abolition of the presidential veto of local laws; 2) the Legislature could override the governor's veto by a two-thirds majority; 3) extension of certain parts of the Constitution;\(^\text{18}\) 4) an elective governor and lieutenant governor to serve a four term.

During the 1960's, the Virgin Islands made a big economic leap forward\(^\text{19}\), and it became a tourist mecca. A relatively large number of Eastern Caribbean people immigrated to the Islands during this period of expansion. This injection of more African-Caribbean people strengthened the socio-cultural ties of the Islands to the Eastern Caribbean, but it also raised questions on controlling immigration policy and creating safeguards for "native" Virgin Islanders. (Native means the segment of the population that is born or is of Virgin Islands parentage). Even more, the Black Power movement was swiftly growing as a new trend in the Virgin Islands from 1968-1970. Younger African Virgin Islanders had formed a popular political organization, the United Caribbean Association, and they were poised to be a significant force in local politics until the colonial state moved to suppress it.

By 1970, the Virgin Islands had appeared to have reached modernity; it had many resemblances to states in the U.S. As glowing as this overview may seem thus far, the Virgin Islands was fraught with political problems as it became more self-governing. It is important that we view the status problem.

The Status Issue Emerges

Throughout the 1970's, the Virgin Islands reformist path allowed additional significant advances. Congress authorized the election of a non-voting Delegate to Congress, and Public Law 94-584 authorized a locally drafted constitution, subject to congressional approval. Political status and federal relations were excluded from this constitution.

In 1977-78 and 1980-81, two constitutional conventions were held in order to formulate local constitutions. In each case, issues relating to status emerged, and they created serious problems in the constitutional conventions.\(^\text{20}\) Hence, in 1980 pursuant to Act No. 4462, the V.I. Legislature created the first Status Commission which approved a list of ten proposals for negotiation with the federal government. This commission highlighted the reality that the V.I. had not had an act of self-determination.

Further, the V.I. Legislature passed Act No. 4747 to provide a referendum on whether the Islands should address political status before drafting another constitution. In 1982, the voters decided to address the political status and federal relations first. In 1984, the Select Committee on Status and Federal Relations was formed by the V.I. legislature due to Resolution 1132. Its tasks were to seek input on status and submit a report to the Legislature. The report included: 1) a proposed Compact of Federal Relations; 2) A recommendation on a status referendum;
3) An outline of a public information program. The Select Committee Reported was presented to the Legislature in 1985, and it served as a foundation for the creation of the Second Status Commission in 1988.

The Second Status Commission actually carried the status education process to its logical conclusion: it educated the masses in two phases from 1988-89 and 1992-93. The Status Commission hired fairly competent staff persons and produced adequate printed materials for the general public as well as elected officials. In fact, the 1993 campaign utilized the greatest amount of media coverage ever given to a political status issue. The Associate Directors did the following:

1) Hosted a six month television series, dubbed "Choose or Lose" on the local Public Broadcasting Service channel;
2) Wrote articles to periodicals and provided interviews/information to the major newspaper "The Daily News" on a frequent basis;
3) Made presentations to schools, churches, clubs, government officials, political parties, labor unions, community organizations, tenants' councils, parent-teachers associations, public rallies, individuals in bars and the streets, and anyone who was willing to listen;
4) Used a historical slide series, charts, brochures, and other educational aids to simplify the concepts;
5) Played a status kaiso and aired commercials in Virgin Islands dialect everyday for 3 months;
6) Appeared on the most popular radio stations at least three times weekly for 3 months.

With scant resources, the staff did the unimaginable—touch virtually every household in the territory. Yet the status process failed. Why?

Factors for Failure

Based on the Virgin Islands political traditions, it is clear (especially now in retrospect) that V.I. nationalism has not been the driving force for change within the last three centuries. V.I. nationalism is a recent phenomenon that is still grappling with identity questions. Although militant reformers have walked the land and made important contributions to improving the living conditions of the Islands, reformism has bred a degree of conservatism with regards to status change. Unlike neighboring Puerto Rico, V.I. political parties have never formed platforms on set status formulas, and worse they have degenerated into poor, sloppy duplicates of the stateside Democrat and Republican Parties.

The identity question is a serious problem for the Virgin Islands. Unlike its sister U.S. territories in the Pacific Ocean, the Virgin Islands have difficulty making claims for indigenous rights. In deed the obvious African-Caribbean origin of the vast majority of population can not be disguised as is sometimes done in Puerto Rico due to mestiṣaże. Even more, the "native" Virgin Islands population has historically intermarried with immigrants.
readily to the point that very few families can trace four generations on both sides without encountering a relative who is born in another Caribbean society. A liberal policy of exogamous ties, intra-island marriages, and no rigid rules for group inclusion has created difficulties in using strict insular definitions for "native." (This is a negative consequence for an otherwise very progressive trait). The vast majority of the population has been staunchly pro-American and any discussions that have involved losing or questioning U.S. citizenship have not been very fruitful.

A key issue was classifying a "Virgin Islander," and greater concern was voter eligibility. The Virgin Islands did not have a legal/working definition for the former and used an unacceptable criterion for the latter. The hysteria induced by the ultra-rightwing, poor timing for public hearings (they were too close to referendum), some of the definitions presented by many independence activists, and lack of leadership by government officials turned off a major segment of the electorate.

Actually, none of the high ranking government officials played meaningful roles during the campaign. Until a month before the proposed September 1993 referendum, the legislators, governor and lieutenant-governor, major judicial figures, delegate to Congress, and other influential political figures were "playin' pelinki burd" or acting in an erratically mindless manner. With a political culture that is heavily imbued with representative democracy, it was ludicrous to hear Legislators mutter that the status issues must come from the people. The lack of interest by virtually the entire top leadership of Virgin Islands society dealt status a death blow.

Moreover, within the Status Commission, a few key members had embarked on a rugged campaign of publicly insulting, undermining, and bullying staff members in order to make sure that their status options won. This internal strife only caused the work of the Commission to lose its credibility and importance to a society that found the debates both abstract and overly personalized. Along with the staff, certain well respected Commission members were labelled (actually one was even silenced by his benefactors in the executive branch) in the "internationalist" grouping which meant they we anti-American, independence activists...21

The atmosphere had become poisoned at the very end of the status education campaign due to the manner in which the debate had degenerated. To worsen the situation or "to put cocobay on tap ah yaws" a boycott was organized--mainly by independence activists--who sought the demise of the entire project.

In hindsight, this boycott was not a bad idea after all: the entire process was being imposed from the top down and the masses did not have a chance to have a meaningful input. The Status Commission staff members were naive to think that the status question could be jumpstarted by a few well-meaning educators with a fistful of brochures. The Commission staff was not aware of how disgusted that the public had gotten with the entire enterprise and chicanery of the Status Commission. The Status staff can use its
experience and counsel others in this type of activity.

Conclusion

The question any serious person has when confronted with a bruising defeat or an apparently insurmountable obstacle is to ponder what is to be done. In the political status process, I have often times reflected on numerous ways that I could have improved my lectures, presentations, and programs during the education campaign. However, I have also realized the obvious: political status discussions must be long-term, political education processes. A population can not be expected to digest vast amounts of information in a few month just in time for a major vote, one that has such profound repercussions.

Political leaders must be involved in the debate. All key people in government must participate in the discussions, and no dissident should be left out due to his/her ideas. Sensitive topics such as voter eligibility must be discussed first and foremost and not left for the last minute stampede of ideas. No political figure should be allowed to monopolize the process.

Greater resources will have to be readily available in order to increase manpower as the campaign reaches its highest point of activity. International bodies such as the United Nations and the Organization of American States should be contacted and worked with closely. Sister territories as well as Caribbean neighbors should be contacted in order to compare notes on how they resolved some of their more vexing status problems. Finally, the V.I. Government needs to allow some space to manoeuvre for a new Status Commission and implement creative means of educating the public.

Notes

1. This Status Commission was formed in 1988 by Act No. 5332. It basically accepted the report of the Select Committee on Status and Federal Relations, a Senatorial committee of the Fifteenth Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

2. In September 1989, Hurricane Hugo devastated the U.S. Virgin Islands. The V.I. Status Commission and the entire status process were recessed until reconstruction was completed in 1991. Act No. 5469 postponed the referendum indefinitely. Act No. 5712 revived the status process, and the Nineteenth Legislature selected new dates: September 7, October 5, November 2, and November 16, 1993. The break in the education process was tied to this period: two different staffs implemented two status education processes.

3. Only 27% of the electorate participated in the election. V.I. electoral laws require that 50% plus 1 must participate in referendum, initiative, and recall in order for them to be valid.
4. Incidentally, as this paper is being presented here in Mexico, "The 2nd National Conference On Relations Between The United States and American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, The Northern Mariana, Puerto Rico And The United States Virgin Islands" is being held from May 24-28, 1994 at George Washington University, Washington, D.C. No former Status Commission member nor staffperson will be there providing an official evaluation/analysis of the reasons for the status referendum's failure.

5. Recently, an ancient Taino village was found in the Tutu area. According to preliminary archeological findings, this group settled there around 100 A.D. In They Came Before Columbus, Ivan Van Sertima has unearthed evidence to suggest that pre-Columbian contacts existed between these early, insular Tainos with West African traders, but clearly Africans did not stay as conquerors.

6. Most of the records that we have today point to nomadic, bellicose Carib groups incessantly fighting sedentary Tainos. The traditional perception of the Caribs' relish for human cuisine and their mercurial temperament have been called to question nowadays as serious scholarship examine the cultural traits of remaining Caribs and related groups in South America. Nonetheless, we can accept the possibility that Lesser Antillean Caribs possessed the technology, organization, discipline, and will to displace their Taino rivals over a period of centuries. This is based on similar occurrences in the hemisphere. See Isaac Dookhan A History of the Virgin Islands of the United States pp. 15-30.

7. In The Caribbean Mission, Oldendorp claims that the last Virgin Islands' Carib died in the early 1600's. Proximity to Spanish slavers in Puerto Rico and consistent conflict with the Tainos there led to Carib retreat towards the Eastern Caribbean.

8. The issue of "indigenous rights" was stressed by certain segments of the Virgin Islands population, but since the overwhelming majority is of African heritage, the argument was somewhat problematic. The indigenous peoples in North America lay claim to their lands by stressing their ancient presence on the continent. In the Pacific region, U.S. territories contain peoples that are aboriginal to the area. In the Caribbean, most of the people are transplanted Africans who claim "native" rights, belonger status, etc. because of birth and consistent residence in the region. These distinctions led to serious debates on: Who are Virgin Islanders? What are Natives or Indigenous Virgin Islanders? This debate continues.

9. In this presentation, I do not use "Creoles" to be local whites; instead I use European, European-Caribbean, or European American where appropriate.

10. The Danes were involved in the slave trade, and their key area for trading was in West Africa and in particular Ghana.
11. Around the mid eighteenth century, a sizeable percentage of the African population had regain their freedom through self-purchase and manumission. See Neville Hall Slave Society in the Danish West Indies, pp. 139-156.

12. See George F. Tyson, Jr. A Slave Island: Robert Mackay Hughes and the Origins of Independence Sentiment in St. Thomas, Danish West Indies 1865-75.

13. The consolidation of the U.S. state occurred at the conclusion of the nineteenth century. The war against Spain was a shift in the international system: a semiperipheral state in ascension, the U.S., displaced a core state in decline, Spain. See Robert Ferrell America as a World Power, 1872-1945.

14. This a contentious topic, partly because very little research has been done here. For more details on the attitudes of Virgin Islanders who supported the transfer, see Gregory LaMotta, "Working People and the Transfer of the Danish West Indies to the United States, 1916-1917," The Journal of Caribbean History Volume 23:2. Even more, what has been written needs examination because many Virgin Islanders immigrated to the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Panama during this period. Thus, although one group did support the transfer, another group did not by their behavior--they went to foreign countries.


16. This is a fundamental difference between the Virgin Islands experience to the rest of the Caribbean. The reformism of the progressive movement led to a path of steady short-term improvements within the unincorporated territorial status. Even more, the possibilities of nationalist consolidation during the American colonial era was undermined through the retrograde position of the mestizo/mulatto and white elites: they never sought to formulate a distinct identity that would include the African masses and exclude American colonists. They did the reverse; the elites became extremely Americanized first and maintained an anti-African/Black posture until far into the 1970's! In the Virgin Islands, all progressive and nationalist positions have developed from the mass level and then up to the middle and upper classes.

17. The first governors were European-Americans then African-Americans followed suit. Eventually, local European-Caribbean governors were appointed; the last appointed governor was an African-Caribbean. The U.S. had an "affirmative action" program in the Virgin Islands for quite sometime before the idea became "popular" in the United States.
18. These Constitutional extensions included: 1) Article 4, sections 1 & 2, clause 1—the full faith and credit provisions; 2) Article 1, section 9, clause 2 & 3, guaranteeing the writ of habeas corpus and prohibiting bills of attainder and ex-post facto laws; 3) the First through the Ninth Amendments—Bill of Rights; 4) the Thirteenth Amendment—abolishing slavery; 5) the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments—prohibiting the denial to vote on account of race, color, previous conditions of servitude, or sex; and 6) the second sentence of section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment—the equal protection clause. See United States Virgin Islands Progression to Self-Determination: The Status Referendum 1993 pp. 11.

19. This "leap forward" does not necessarily mean progressive development; it means growth and the expansion of external capital in the local economy. This form of growth gives many of the traditional signals of robust growth, but in the process of the transformation, the "leap forward" has disrupted the evolution of internal forces of capital accumulation. Here, we see a classic example of massive growth without development.


21. A powerful senator used dirty tricks to silence fellow Commission member(s) who disagreed with the status process.
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