FOOTPRINTS THROUGH HISTORY: AN INTERVIEW WITH SIR ROY AUGIER

by DALEA BEAN and NICOLE PLUMMER*

ABSTRACT

This article presents an oral history interview with the late Professor Sir Roy Augier, tracing his intellectual development and his contributions to the emergence and institutionalisation of Caribbean history as a field of study. Augier describes an education initially shaped by imperial approaches to history, before his studies at the University of St Andrews introduced him to African and Caribbean history through W. M. Macmillan. The interview explores his subsequent academic career at the University College of the West Indies, where he worked with scholars including Elsa Goveia, Douglas Hall, and Shirley Gordon to develop Caribbean history curricula and teaching materials. Particular attention is given to the production of *The Making of the West Indies*, his involvement with the Cambridge examinations, and his later role in the Caribbean Examinations Council and the development of Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE). Augier also reflects on his research in Jamaican political and constitutional history, his interdisciplinary engagement with

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the social sciences, his work on Rastafari, and his advocacy of the West Indian Federation. His account offers insight into the intellectual and institutional processes through which Caribbean scholars challenged inherited colonial curricula and established regional perspectives within historical scholarship. The interview provides a valuable first-hand perspective on the development of Caribbean historical education and the wider project of Caribbean intellectual decolonisation.

Introduction

It was a warm afternoon, in the early 2000s, when we received the response we had been waiting for. We were two young historians who had grown up hearing the name Sir Roy Augier in hushed tones of reverence, who read his books for CXC and A level history, and who caught glimpses of him walking the courtyard in the Faculty of Humanities and Education at the University of the West Indies, Mona, and we had been approved for an interview with Sir Roy. We divvied up the tasks and Nicole with her focus on the region's nuanced business culture conceptualised the questions. Dalea, who was researching Jamaican women's involvement in the First and Second World Wars, interviewed him on his wartime experience and his wider contribution to a grateful Caribbean region.

We were excited, humbled, and terrified. But perhaps the first lesson we learned from the encounter was that Sir Roy was the gentlest giant. We marvelled at how this stalwart cared about his students and worked under the ethos of leaving the discipline he loved better than he found it. Better in terms of centring Caribbean perspectives, being more student friendly, and becoming more accessible to the average person on the street. He functioned at highest levels of policy development and operated with the same deference to the man on the corner who expressed passionate opinions on his history.

This article traces Sir Roy's intellectual development and contribution to the development of Caribbean history as a discrete area of study. The interview reveals Sir Augier as a trailblazer whose presence continues to loom over the secondary and tertiary Caribbean history syllabus today. His contributions to the Caribbean and Jamaica were not relegated to the realm of academia. Born in Castries, Saint Lucia, in 1924, he was an air gunner in the British Royal Air Force (RAF), later acting as a liaison officer for the West Indian ground crews in Staffordshire whose delicate role was to improve relations between racist English RAF officers and Caribbean military volunteers. Following the Second World War, Sir Augier would study history at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, earning an MA in History and Politics in 1949. Further education followed with a Diploma in Education from the Institute of Education, University of London. Later, he earned his PhD in history from the University of St Andrews in 1954 for his thesis entitled, 'Crown colony government in Jamaica, 1865–1885.' After returning to the Caribbean, Augier would be hired first as a Junior Research Fellow at the Institute of Social and Economic Studies (now the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies), University College of the West Indies (now the University of the West Indies) and later Lecturer in the Department of History where he worked alongside such Caribbean history luminaries such as Elsa Goveia and Douglas Hall. Together, they developed and championed teaching and research in Caribbean history, producing a new set of scholars in the field.

This enthusiasm, earlier, led the Cambridge Examinations Council to choose Augier to spearhead the O level syllabus in West Indian history. Later, he spearheaded the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) A level syllabus in history. His leadership of UNESCO's *General History of the Caribbean* series is also discussed in this interview. This important series continues to be seminal read for scholars in Caribbean history. Augier's scholarship also demonstrated the University of the West Indies' role as an activist institution. Together with Rex Nettleford and M. G. Smith, he produced a report on the emerging Rastafari movement that would become the catalyst for research on the Rastafari

brethren. Their report also helped the wider population better understand Rastafari who faced regular acts of violence from state sanctioned forces, the most notable being the Coral Gardens atrocity in April 1963.

A key theme from the conversation was his reliance on partnership. None of his achievements were a solo act. His professional relationship and friendship with Rex Nettleford, M. G. Smith, Elsa Goviea, Douglas Hall, and so many others, buoyed him in his quest to reform Caribbean history. For us, two sisters conjoined by a love of history, this has guided our own paths through scholar activism at the university. A Caribbeanist to his bones, Augier's interview illustrates his positive attitude towards the West Indies Federation. One can intuit from the interview as well, his strident anti-colonial and decolonial thought. This interview captures the essence of Roy Augier and his pioneering work that continues to shape Caribbean scholarship and it is also hoped that it will capture our own personal gratitude to Sir Roy – for the interview, scholarship, sacrifice and for his faith in the power of history to change the future.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little of your background? Birth, parents, siblings, and upbringing.

Augier: I was born in Castries on 17 December 1924.[1] My parents were Frank Augier and Lucie Augier. I was the eldest of three boys. My second brother is Leonard and my third brother was Kenneth.

Interviewer: What was the nature of your relationship with your family?

Augier: Normal. My father died when I was ten years old; I was brought up by my mother. I have no complaints about that.

[1] Castries, the capital of Saint Lucia, was originally a French settlement called Carénage. It was renamed Castries after the marques de Castries in 1756. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the island was contested between France and Britain, until the latter finally secured control in the Treaty of Paris in 1814. In 1979, Saint Lucia achieved independence from the United Kingdom.

Interviewer: Please tell me a bit about your educational training: elementary or primary school, high or secondary school, and university or tertiary education.

Augier: I began in a basic school, Castries Roman Catholic Elementary Boys' School, and from there I went to secondary school, St Mary's College. From there, I worked as a clerk in the post office, and then applied to join the RAF.[2] I was accepted. I trained in Canada at Nova Scotia, which was a Commonwealth training base. I graduated as an air gunner to British Columbia, where I trained on American bombers, and I went to Halifax and I boarded the *Queen Mary* to Liverpool and began training again on another bomber, the Lancaster, again as an air gunner, and eventually flew in what was then described as the 'thousand bomber raids' until the war in Europe came to an end.[3] After I ceased to fly, I became a liaison officer for the West Indian ground crew in Staffordshire. My task was to improve relations between the Caribbean and English ground crews who were at that time in conflict over the use of racial epithets by the English RAF members against the Caribbean. From Staffordshire I went to university in St Andrews from 1946 to 1949.

Interviewer: How was history taught when you attended high school? What were the main themes?

Augier: At St Mary's College, history was taught by the headmaster, an Englishman, Terence Fox-Hawes, affectionately called 'Foxy'.[4] We were taught empire history and this did not contain specifics of West Indian history. We were not without some notion of West Indian history, but this was information we acquired informally through the West Indians who were teachers at the school. Most significant of those was a Barbadian, Herman Boxill. He taught English, French, and Latin, and

[2] The Royal Air Force was the air force of Britain in the Second World War. It was formed in 1918 from the merger of the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps.

[3] The 'thousand bomber raids' referred, especially, to three raids in summer 1942 against the German cities of Cologne, Essen, and Bremen. Augier discussed his career in the Royal Air Force in more detail in an interview with the International Bomber Command Centre Digital Archive in 2017, available online, accessed 4 Oct. 2026, https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/collections/document/3333.

[4] Terence Edward Fox-Hawes was born in 1901 and died in 1991 in Bournemouth, England.

was also the games master, so he taught cricket and football. Fox-Hawes was the only Englishman at the college, his predecessor was also an Englishman, and also before that a man whose name was known over the Caribbean, B. H. Easter.[5] He was one of those who was involved in informal propagating of West Indian history. The other staff was all Caribbean and if I remember rightly all of them were Saint Lucian, apart from Herman Boxill, who was Barbadian. Boxill had a first class degree in French from the University of London.

In those days, you sat the Junior Cambridge in the fourth form, the senior school certificate in fifth form, and the London matriculation in the sixth form. I think that's it about the school.

Interviewer: Along with Douglas Hall, Elsa Goveia, and Shirley Gordon, you pioneered the teaching of West Indian history in high schools, even going so far as to co-author books including *The Making of the West Indies* (1960) and *Sources of West Indian History* (1964). Would you say that this was a result of your own educational background and the limitations of history then, or something else?

Augier: Well, when I got to university after the war, my principal study at St Andrews was a combination of history and politics, history of political thought, and moral philosophy and politics. And I had as one of my professors W. M. Macmillan, who was a South African Rhodes Scholar, who had been a professor at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa.[6] He had established a reputation for prescience, that is foreseeing the circumstances of labour in the Caribbean and of crown colony politics, and he had indicated the status quo could not be sustained. The University of St Andrews wanted to extend the history courses, [and so] had appointed him to the history department, and I had the good fortune to be his only student in the first year of his

[5] Bertie Harry (B. H.) Michael Easter (1893–1976) was headmaster of St Mary's College in the 1920s, and went on to several director of education roles across the British West Indies, as part of the Colonial Office, in the 1930s.

[6] William Miller Macmillan (1885–1974) was director of colonial studies at the University of St Andrews from 1947 to 1954. He published *Warning from the West Indies,* a critique of Britain's neglect of the Caribbean, in 1936, and is remembered particularly for his impact on South African historiography.

appointment. I took the courses that he taught in African history – South African history, so I learned about politics and the history of West Africa, East Africa, and South Africa from him. There was no Caribbean history in the courses at St Andrews, but naturally with Macmillan I did Caribbean history, and so that was my first exposure to academic work in Caribbean history.

W. L. Burn, who wrote on the apprenticeship system, was the external examiner for St Andrews' history, and in fact he was the person who recommended me on the basis of my final exam for what St Andrews called a studentship, which is their postgraduate award, so it was on his recommendation that I got the money to do my PhD.[7] So that was the beginning, Macmillan became my supervisor. Initially, I started working on the conflict over sugar from beet and what it did to cane sugar, but after reading through some of the papers on the various conventions, I realised that this had more to do with international trade than it had to do with specifically the history of the Caribbean, so I changed this to dealing with Jamaica and naturally started with the matters that led up to Morant Bay and the changing of the constitution in 1865. And so I wrote the thesis on the first phase of crown colony government in 1866.[8]

Well, I had to work in the Record Office in London, where I met Elsa Goveia and Douglas Hall later.[9] But independently of both for them, for some reason, Cambridge had sent me, or I can't remember how I got hold of the proposals... Cambridge was making plans for the teaching of West Indian history in secondary schools, and those proposals consisted

[7] William Laurence Burn (1904–1966) was, at the time, Professor of Modern History at the University of Durham in northern England. He published *Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies* in 1937.

[8] Augier's thesis was titled 'Crown colony government in Jamaica, 1865–1885' and he was awarded his PhD in 1954.

[9] The Public Record Office, now known as The National Archives. Elsa Goveia (1925–1980) was Professor of West Indian History at the University (College) of the West Indies from 1961 to 1980, and Douglas Hall (1920–1999) was Professor of History at UCWI/UWI from 1963 to 1981, when he retired.

of two parts called A and B.[10] And Part A was titled 'the background to Caribbean history', and really consisted of the principal elements of European history: reformation, renaissance, industrial revolution, and things of that kind, so I wrote to Cambridge saying that this was really not West Indian history, and ought not to be a part of teaching and examination of what is called West Indian history. Cambridge invited me to draft a syllabus, and this was the initial stimulus for what happened when I came to Mona in 1954. Here I joined Parry, who was Head of History.[11] During my first year here, Macmillan was also here, and so naturally he was involved in the discussions about teaching Caribbean history, then Shirley Gordon, who had been a tutor at the Institute of Education at the University of London, came on secondment the following year.[12] Shirley Gordon had been my tutor in the Diploma of Education. She was responsible for history, so that is the way she got involved, and one of the things we then did was to organise a conference, a workshop of history teachers in Jamaica here on the campus. There were a scattering of teachers from the eastern Caribbean, but the workshop was overwhelmingly Jamaican teachers, and we produced out of that the rudiments of what was called a sourcebook for the use of teachers, which we printed in some form, and then drafted the syllabus that was to become the Cambridge offering in Caribbean history.

So out of that initial work we then organised, in the next two years, more workshops in Barbados, and Trinidad the next time, in which again the proportion of history teachers form the eastern Caribbean then increased. And we then canvassed the various headmasters and headmistresses of schools who said, of course, they were in favour but

[10] Cambridge, here, refers to the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which administered the school leaving exams in the British West Indies during the 1950s.

[11] John Horace (J.H.) Parry (1914–1982) was Professor of Modern History at the University College of the West Indies from 1949 to 1956. He was the university's first professor of history and head of department during his tenure.

[12] Later in her career, Shirley Gordon (1920–2006) was a professor of education at the University of Pernambuco in Brazil, and was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of the West Indies in 1998 for her contributions to teacher education in the region.

they needed the assurance of a textbook before they could teach Caribbean history for the school certificate or the O levels. So that's how *The Making of the West Indies* got to be written and completed in 1959 and published in 1960. In the meantime, Mona was the only campus, so students who were going to teach and do the diploma were from the eastern Caribbean as well as from Jamaica, and Shirley Gordon was looking after that, so before the book came out we were being tutored in the teaching of Caribbean history because those from the Eastern Caribbean were doing their practical training, their practicum in schools in Jamaica.

Interviewer: Did you have any problems or face any obstacles in publishing these texts for the study of West Indian history?

Augier: Oh no, because Longmans themselves were the principal publisher, they had the commanding position for supplying texts to Caribbean secondary schools and adding a book on Caribbean history was right up their street. History was not alone, in fact. When CXC started, it had five subjects: history, English, geography, and mathematics, and the fifth one was integrated sciences. Before Cambridge brought history on, teachers in these subjects had already been making preparations to 'Caribbeanise' the teaching of English language and literature, the teaching of geography, so history was part of that, and the mathematicians, the Institute of Education, were preparing changes in the syllabuses for these subjects.[13] So, history doesn't sit alone, it sits in the general context that teachers in other subjects had been complaining. There was no difficulty because the movement clearly existed and the publishers therefore saw a market.

Interviewer: Your main area of research, academically, has been political, administrative, and constitutional history. Can you tell me what influenced this interest?

Augier: Professor Macmillan had spoken about the Morant Bay rebellion, or riot, when I was an undergraduate, so I remember that, and

[13] Meaning here the University of the West Indies' Institute of Education, which in the 1960s became the School of Education.

there was an argument that this had influenced the politics in the other islands. That seemed to be a good subject. At about this time I was at the Institute of Historical Research.[14] Although I was writing on political history, I was not seeing it simply as dry as bones constitutional history, but as a combination of social and economic. Political and constitutional really was the icing on the cake (although crown colony government is the one that is attached to my name). Also, one of the combinations of history that I did at St Andrews was philosophy and moral philosophy, and out of that political thought, so I had the combination of history and political thought.

Interviewer: You were involved in the earlier years of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER).[15] Can you tell me about your early participation with ISER?

Augier: Well, yes, I mean it was not so much participation as an apprenticeship in the company of Lloyd Brathwaite and Ray Smith in particular, one an anthropologist and the other a sociologist.[16] I really learned what academic life was about and what one's responsibilities were. There were other people, George Cumper was an economist, and his wife, and Mike Smith, who was the other prominent anthropologist, and Willy Demas.[17] He went to went to Trinidad to be Eric Williams' chief economist, he was also a member of staff. So my period in the Institute was really a learning period more than anything else.

Interviewer: You were very involved with the Caribbean Examination Council, CXC, can you shed some light on your involvement with CXC

[14] Part of the University of London, now under the School of Advanced Study based at Senate House.

[15] At the University College of the West Indies, ISER was founded in 1948 and merged with the Consortium Graduate School of Social Sciences to become the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) in 1999.

[16] Brathwaite (1919–1995) and Smith (1925–2015) were research fellows at ISER in the 1950s.

[17] Cumper (1925–1993) was appointed a research fellow in economics in 1949, and was made professor in 1966. His wife, Gloria, taught law and was dean of women. Michael Garfield (M. G.) Smith (1921–1993) was a social anthropologist, and was senior lecturer in sociology at UWI before taking up an appointment at the University of California, Los Angeles in 1961. Demas (1929–1998) worked in the civil service of Trinidad and Tobago from 1959 to 1970, becoming economic adviser to the Prime Minister.

and what changes if any have you made to the teaching of history through this body.

Augier: My involvement with CXC began when I attended one of the two meetings before CXC came into existence. There were the various territories working out the arrangements for CXC. Lloyd Braithwaite, Reg Murray, and I began there as university nominees to these meetings.[18] My involvement came because of the work that I had been doing with Cambridge on the West Indian history paper and by then I had also persuaded Cambridge to develop [the] paper in post emancipation history for the A level and I both set and examined that special paper. I was convener of the CXC history panel, and I succeeded Zach Preston as the fourth chairman for CXC.[19]

Interviewer: So, that was specifically CXC. Later, though, you were also involved with the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE).

Augier: Oh, well yes, at some point early in the discussion it was understood that as soon as we got the equivalent of the O level under our belt we would then turn our attention to the A level. When we had in fact got the O level and the numbers of subjects had increased, the time came to push for the A level replacement and we had in fact got some support. For instance, Pantin was Minister of Education in Trinidad, and he persuaded other ministers of education to fund the replacement for A level.[20] It wasn't very much, but it was a start. But the significant change came when the European Union agreed to give us a large amount of Euros and that was the basis on which we started. I think, without dislocating my shoulder or patting myself on the back too obviously, I really spearheaded this, because there was a great deal of inertia about A level. The English teachers of leading independent public schools had been highly critical of A level for some years, and in fact it was because

[18] Reginald N. Murray was the last director of education in colonial Jamaica and the first chief education officer in the new Ministry of Education.
[19] Aston Zachariah Preston (1925–1986) was Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies from 1974 to 1986.
[20] Clive Pantin (1933–2017) served as Minister of Education in Trinidad and Tobago from 1987 to 1990.

I was very knowledgeable of all these criticisms that I was able to guide the replacement for A levels on the basis of the faults that had been found already with it.

Interviewer: You were a main proponent of the idea of West Indian Federation. Can you shed some light on your views in this regard?

Augier: I wouldn't say I was a main proponent, certainly a believer. What would you like to know?

Interviewer: Why did you support this at the time?

Augier: Well, I believed it at the time and I still believe it, on the grounds that the quality of life which the islands can individually attain is likely to be less. It is obvious from what has happened since that Trinidad is the only island that has a resource in the oil and gas that is capable of earning returns on the world market and has an advantage that economically the others do not have yet. But that is a wasting asset. Both oil and gas have a limited life and even with the limited life, there is also the world price. Trinidad has had oil since, or known it has had oil since, the beginning of the century, and oil has been exploited since then but it is only the day before yesterday that the revenues of that oil has made a significant difference to the revenue the government has to spend on various social services, so that even with the asset, the state of the world market of the asset moves it up and down. So that even with these assets, Trinidad is not free from the need for collaboration with the other islands. My essential argument is that of joining together. I think the mistake that was made was from Trinidad with Eric Williams favouring centralisation with a lot of authority in the central government when it was already too late for that. The islands, particularly Jamaica and Trinidad, Barbados, had all been, since 1945, been given more and more initiative in deciding political things for themselves; reversing that direction for the Federal Government, particularly when the Federal Government had no money, did not make much sense. My own position was never in favour of that, simply that you had to agree on the things that the Federal Government could do by itself (and seemed to me to be a limited number things involving defence, possibly the University of the West Indies, certainly not education in general) and over time when the

economies where able to afford it a number of things could be funded federally as well as locally. I was also in favour of Federation because of self-defence, the army would be best managed as a federal institution and both Jamaica and Trinidad would have benefited and Trinidad in particular. Instead of having individual regiments, there would be a federal regiment that could be deployed in support of individual governments. The rebellion of the regiment in Trinidad and later on the Abu Bakr in 1990 in which the legislature was invaded and the Prime Minister was captured; all these things would have been less likely if there was a Federal regiment.[21]

Interviewer: You were a member of a team led by Sir Arthur Lewis and made up of M. G. Smith and Rex Nettleford that did major breakthrough work on the Rastafarian doctrine and practices.[22] It is widely considered a pioneering effort which stimulated further research on the Rastafarian movement. What prompted your participation and what was your experience working with the Ras Tafari brethren?

Augier: Yes, well, what prompted my participation was an invitation that I couldn't refuse. I think the fact is that Arthur Lewis, responding to a letter which had been written to him by one aspect of the Rasta organisation, simply hit upon Mike Smith who was an anthropologist and Rex Nettleford who was then the Extra Mural Tutor for Jamaica. I was in my room, and the phone rang and that was him saying he's involving me in the business and that was it.

Interviewer: You obviously had no choice.

Augier: Well, yes, I had a choice, I could have said I'm not interested, but that was not a realistic response to the Vice Chancellor inviting you. The experience was very enlightening. They were quite intelligent in the way they conducted business. Mortimer Planner, he styled himself Mortimo Planno, emerged as a highly intelligent person, and I

[21] During the Black Power Revolution in Trinidad and Tobago in 1970, some officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment mutinied. In 1990, there was a radical Islamist coup attempt in Trinidad led by Yasin Abu Bakr.

[22] The result of their investigation was published by ISER in 1960 as *Report on the Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica*. It was subsequently republished in *Caribbean Quarterly* 13, nos. 3–4.

remember telling people when I came back that just on that night alone I knew that if Mortimer was a student at Mona he would earn a first class degree and I really meant it.[23] He was one of those who went to Africa, he went to Ethiopia in particular and when he came back he held a big public meeting in Coronation Market. He told the people repatriation to Ethiopia was really fantasy and one had to admire the way he did it, gradually dropping hints, never telling them this is nonsense but gradually leaving the impression, by a number of indirect phrases, and so only a skilled man in rhetoric and intelligence knew he couldn't come out right away and say 'comrades hey, this is stupid ness, nonsense they won't let wi in.' Mortimer was the outstanding one, and there were several others but also there were those who were clearly mentally psychotic and I had to be very careful. But when the fellows smoked their chillums, I discovered it was like me drinking liquors; they could smoke and speak rationally, they were logical. So I had to make the analogy between us in the Senior Common Room, drinking Red Stripe beer in largish quantities, whilst being able to conduct arguments on our subjects or university policy.

Interviewer: At the time when you started the Department of History in 1955, it was staffed mainly by Englishmen. Did you find it hard working with them? I ask because Douglas Hall in an interview with Woodville Marshall spoke scathingly about a particular one by the name of W. G. Rimmer, so I just want to find out your experience.[24]

Augier: Well yes, all of *us* thought that Rimmer was a bum. But Rimmer came later.

Initially there were two non-West Indians, Parry was professor, and there was Elsa and myself and there was never any problem. Parry had co-authored the book with Sherlock on *A Short History of the West Indies*.[25]

[23] Planno (1929–2006) was a close associate of Bob Marley and a key figure in the rise of Rastafarianism.

[24] Woodville K. Marshall, 'Interview with Douglas Hall, January 4, 1997', *Journal of Caribbean History* 35, no. 1: 26–40.

[25] Parry co-authored *A Short History of the West Indies* (1966) with Philip Manderson (P.M.) Sherlock (1902–2000). Sherlock, at the time, was Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies.

Parry had clearly been involved, he was a Latin Americanist so the direction of the department was clear. Elsa had already worked out a syllabus for teaching West Indian history, but there was not yet an honours course, because in those days, following the London pattern, there was a general degree and an honours degree. So, it was when I came over that the honours degree started. In the period before there had been no honours, the first honours class started in '55. So the answer to your question is, there really was no tension, and the Rimmer thing dates later. He was thoroughly disliked. But Philip Sherlock, Parry, and Thornton, didn't present us with any significant problems, as Rimmer did.

Interviewer: When you joined the department what was the curriculum like, what type of history was taught in the department?

Augier: The first thing to remember is that we were UCWI, we were a College of the University of London, so the courses were the University of London courses with the exception of Caribbean history. The structure was the same. Dame Lillian Penson, a very prominent historian as well as an academic administrator, was Vice Chancellor at that time.[26] I'm pretty certain that no college in the University of London taught West Indian history, but we did. Elsa Goveia was appointed to teach this before she had finished her PhD, before she had submitted it anyway, and she constructed the course. Parry was a Latin Americanist as I think I've told you, he taught Latin American historians, and there were two European courses, which when I was appointed I taught. I taught European I, I think David Waddell taught European II.[27]

Interviewer: Ok, why I asked that was that Douglas Hall in an interview with Woodville Marshall argued that you played a major role in the, to borrow his phrase, West Indian-isation of the curriculum in the

[26] Lillian Penson (1896–1963) served as Vice Chancellor of the University of London from 1948 to 1951, where she was also a professor of modern history. She published *The Colonial Agents of the British West Indies: A Study in Colonial Administration, Mainly in the Eighteenth Century* in 1924.

[27] Waddell (1927–1992) taught at the Mona campus from 1955 to 1959, and at the St Augustine campus from 1964 to 1965.

department, and I know of course of Elsa Goveia and her West Indian history courses.

Augier: I think he might be referring to what both of us did together, which was when we became independent; we were no longer bound by the format of the University of London. And we set about making changes in the faculty; 'set about making changes' is giving you a pretty picture, of what was a pretty messy thing! I mean messy because we discovered to our surprise how many of the English members of staff thought it was entirely unnecessary and were not at all happy about making changes, so it took a lot of politicking. I wasn't the leader, Douglas and I were doing it jointly, because we were also doing it, not just for the Arts Faculty, but we had the idea of combining teaching with the Faculty of Social Sciences. We tried to integrate as much as possible, and it was out of that that I got the idea of a Faculty of General Studies, which had only a short life, partly because it became difficult to have a Dean of Arts and a Dean of General Studies. Douglas and myself, again with success, in the Social Sciences, we got the agreement for the construction of history courses which would yield degrees in history and economics, because one of the things we wanted to do was in fact to have people... we thought we would get bright persons and then they would send them over to the UK or the US to do postgraduate work. We constructed degrees, in history and economics, history and sociology, history and politics, so the fellows who were in the department, people like George Cumper, did history and economics and so on.

Interviewer: You were appointed chairman of the Drafting Committee for the UNESCO *General History of the Caribbean* (1997–2011), which has been hailed as important because it attempted to rewrite the history of the Caribbean from a regional perspective. Can you briefly tell me about your involvement in this endeavour?

Augier: I got there because the university nominated me. UNESCO had created an office in Kingston and I got elected chairman of that meeting and then the meeting elected me president of the committee to do the drafting. We had to hold meetings and there were various volumes and so on, that wasn't the only meeting we still had other meetings to

construct, but that was how I happened to be in the chair, since then nobody has tried to put me out.

Interviewer: Well, sir, this has been very interesting, thank you for your time.

Augier: Well, you now have the hard job of trying to construct something, all the best of luck to you.