

The Dutch Alternative



The Netherlands (Dutch) flag

In 1949 the countries of the Dutch Caribbean were granted Adult Suffrage and self government. Autonomy was granted to the Dutch Antilles on December 29, 1954 by Queen Juliana. This means that they would be on equal footing with their Mother Country- Holland. This is also known as **Associated Statehood**.

The Dutch Antilles comprises the ABC and 3S islands and the mainland territory of Dutch Guiana (Suriname).

Aruba

Bonaire

Curacao

Saba

St. Eustatius

St. Maarten

What were the features of this system?

1. The territories were self governed
2. Every adult man and woman had the right to vote
3. There was a governor who was appointed by the Crown.

4. There was a Council of Ministers led by a Prime Minister.
5. Each island had its own elected Council and an Executive Council headed by a lieutenant governor.
6. These local leaders had complete control over domestic matters.
7. The Mother Country was still in charge of defense and foreign affairs

Why did they choose this route?

- (i) They felt detached from the rest of the Caribbean- Spanish, French and British.
- (ii) They realized that they were too small to operate independent political systems.
- (iii) They already shared a common government administration with its headquarters in Curacao. Independence was not something that they desired.
- (iv) Apart from the oil refineries in Curacao, the rest of the Antilles did not have enough resources to guarantee economic prosperity.
- (v) They expected to get help with infrastructural developments: roads, bridges etc...
- (vi) The idea of them being partners carried a certain sense of security. The Mother Country was in charge of defense and foreign affairs.

Suriname was a very large territory. It had a long history of Maroons (Bush Negroes). The Negroes were in favor of complete independence. They felt that they could handle independence. The Asians were in favor of Associated Statehood. They feared black domination of the economy and power. By the 1960's the racial conflict began to manifest itself in the political arena.

In November of 1975 Suriname opted for independence.