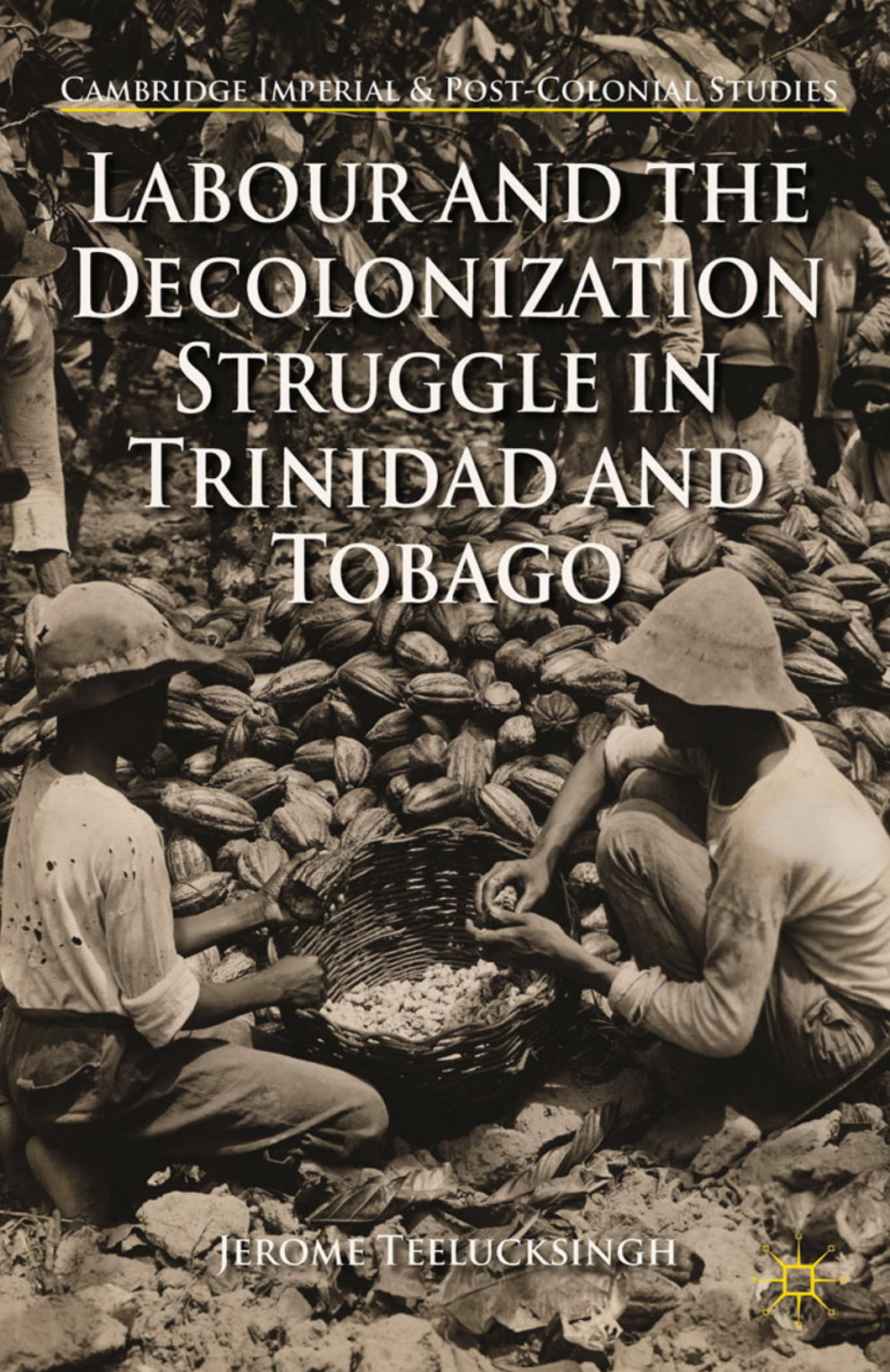
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Labour and the Decolonization Struggle in Trinidad and Tobago

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2015 978–1–137–46232–9

First published 2015 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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ISBN 978-1-349-49901-4 ISBN 978-1-137-46233-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9781137462336

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

This book is dedicated to the working class of the Caribbean, more particularly of Trinidad and Tobago, whose struggles taught us the cost of freedom. The labouring masses, whether chained unwillingly, or corralled by contract, or controlled by oppressive powers, have influenced decisively the social, economic and political evolution of the former British West Indian colonies. The pages herein pay tribute to these "hewers of wood and drawers of water" in their quest for self-determination.

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Contents

Preface

The trajectory in this analysis is fuelled by the pre-eminence of Labour in the process of decolonization of Trinidad and Tobago, and the contention throughout the study is that Labour has been the most potent force in the struggle for liberation from imperial governance and capitalist domination.

In the ensuing dialectic between Labour and Capital, the focus is on the working class which laid the foundations for subsequent nationalist movements in the colony. Therefore, the masses cannot be stereotyped as mere instigators of protests and observers in the social and political development of Trinidad and Tobago. This study examines the reasons for the frustration experienced by the advocates of peaceful constitutional reform and the significant role of the working class in achieving this objective through direct action, namely strikes and demonstrations, extending from the 1920s and 1930s into the post-World War II era. This milieu of social crisis facilitated constitutional reform in a progressive direction, culminating in adult franchise in 1946.

This study utilizes Marxian terminology, but its focus is not restricted to class. Labour, in Trinidad and Tobago, had extended its influence beyond the class boundary. And I have focused on themes which are common in writings on working-class protests and trade unionism. These themes include the dynamics of power at the workplace, political involvement, leadership, formation of trade unions, gender and race/ethnic identity. Furthermore, themes such as religion and the rural–urban divide have been utilized to analyse and assess working-class leaders and organizations in the evolution of the decolonization process in Trinidad and Tobago. I have incorporated both analytical and narrative accounts of Labour during this crucial era in a British West Indian colony.

A critical analysis will be made of the implications of the post-emancipation racial configuration in the colony and its impact on the labour movement. The context is obvious with the freedom of African slaves and the importation of foreign labour, particularly Indian indentured workers. Together, they constituted the colony's working class who could not escape the consequences of collusion between a White imperial administration and European industrialists.

Prior to the formation of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association (TWA), working-class protests were characterized by spontaneity and a high degree of rank-and-file militancy. The TWA's expansion during the 1920s marked the emergence of middle-class leadership of the working class. The early presidents of the Association, Charles Mills and Arthur Cipriani, belonged to the middle class, and this significantly influenced working-class organization and collective action.

Under the guidance of middle-class leaders, the elements of disorder, chaos, primordial ties of culture and the divisive issue of race/ethnicity were significantly reduced. This resulted in a smoother operation of the working-class organizations and trade unions. Furthermore, the middle-class leaders were able to achieve political representation for the working class. This was beneficial to the disenfranchised workers, the masses of whom were not literate or did not possess the necessary income and property qualifications which were required for voting.

The middle-class Indians were used by the TWA (and later the Trinidad Labour Party, TLP) to attract an Indian working-class membership. For instance, in 1925, the TWA established a branch in San Fernando under the direction of Krishna Deonarine. Also, Sarran Teelucksingh was appointed vice-president of the organization with Timothy Roodal and J.S. Dayanand Maharaj as honorary vice-presidents. This set the stage for the Indian presence in the colony's labour movement.

The nature of working-class involvement was primarily through strikes which prompted the Colonial Office in Britain to set up various commissions and allow certain reforms. Labour was also significantly involved in politics during the period of limited representative government from 1925 to 1946. Indeed, Labour served as the humanitarian conscience in the colony which led the campaign for social reform. These reforms included the recognition of workers' rights in strikes or lockouts, abolition of child labour, safeguards against industrial accidents, provisions for workmen's compensation, a minimum wage, unemployment insurance and old-age pensions. Labour law reform was, to a large extent, due to the agitation and resistance of the working class. The recognition of trade unions and the introduction of arbitration units and wage committees in the colony were initiated by memorials and petitions to the government or through the radical protests of Labour.

Undoubtedly, Labour's entry into the political arena in 1925 was a strategic ploy to eliminate low wages, to challenge the exploitation of labour and to campaign for improved social conditions for the working

class. In addition, Labour remained in the vanguard to shape and direct the fledgling national struggle towards self-government.

The Caribbean working-class leadership, who promoted the nationalist campaign, was aware of the concessions of self-government which were granted in the late nineteenth century by Britain to her other colonies – Australia, New Zealand, Cape Colony and Natal. Caribbean leaders also advanced the cause of regional integration through a series of conferences from 1926 to 1945 which resulted in the formation of the Caribbean Labour Congress (CLC).

Additionally, this work is an in-depth analysis of the structure and functions of the colony's first major labour organization, the TWA, later known as the TLP. I have focused on the TWA's role in the gradual evolution of working-class consciousness from its rudimentary stages to the subsequent rise of the new trade unionism of the post-1937 era. Consideration is given to the seminal role of the Association as mobilizer and organizer of the working class both for participation in electoral politics and for catalysing the ethnic cohesion in Trinidad's post-indentureship society.

An analysis is made of the vicissitudes of trade unionism in its encounter with both colonial arrogance and the debilitating effects of disunity among unions and the threat of fragmentation. Against the background of initiatives towards self-government in the British West Indies, I examined the efforts of the Labour movement in Trinidad and Tobago in the promotion of the island's political independence, as well as that of Caribbean political integration and regional trade union solidarity.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the staff at the West Indiana Library at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine; Oilfields Workers' Trade Union in San Fernando; and the National Archives in Port-of-Spain.

Additionally, institutions in England generously made available to me their research collections and allowed any information I used to be published. These included the Public Records Office in Kew, the Trades Union Congress Library at the University of North London, Oxford University and Warwick University.

I am grateful to my parents and Professors Kelvin Singh and Brinsley Samaroo for their guidance and advice. It was a delightful experience to interview certain persons who were eye-witnesses to significant events in the historical drama under review, as well as those whose parents lived in an era of oppression, but contributed to the struggle for liberation. Sincere thanks to these persons for allowing their interviews to be published.

Finally, I appreciate the assistance offered by the staff at Palgrave Macmillan in ensuring my research was published.

Abbreviations

AFL	American Federation of Labor
ATSE+FWTU	All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factories Workers' Trade Union
BEW+CHRP	British Empire Workers and Citizens Home Rule Party
BGLU	British Guiana Labour Union
BGWILC	British Guiana and West Indies Labour Congress
BITU	Bustamante Industrial Trade Union
BLP	British Labour Party
CIO	Committee of Industrial Organization
CLC	Caribbean Labour Congress
FWTU	Federated Workers' Trade Union
GWA	Grenada Workingmen's Association
IASB	International African Service Bureau
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ILO	International Labour Organization
NUM	National Unemployed Movement
OEA	Oilfield Employers' Association
OWTU	Oilfields Workers' Trade Union
POSG	*Port-of-Spain Gazette*
PWWTU	Public Works Workers Trade Union
SILU	Sugar Industry Labour Union
SMA	Sugar Manufacturers' Association
SPTT	Socialist Party of Trinidad and Tobago
SVWCA	St Vincent Workingmen's Association
SWU	Sugar Workers' Union
SWWTU	Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union
TCL	Trinidad Citizens League
TG	*Trinidad Guardian*
TLP	Trinidad Labour Party
TTTUC	Trinidad and Tobago Trades Union Council
TUC	Trades Union Congress
TWA	Trinidad Workingmen's Association
UF	United Front
UWTA	United Workers Trading Association

WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WIIP	West Indian Independence Party
WINP	West Indian National Party
WMA	Workingmen's Association
WRC	Workingmen's Reform Club

Introduction: Labour in the Nineteenth Century

Colonialism, labour and race were the forces which fashioned the social, economic and political structure of post-Columbian Caribbean society. These were the pivotal factors which shaped the history of the Caribbean since the arrival of the Europeans whose explicit intention was to harness available sources of labour to their advantage. Labour, in this study, is defined as denoting persons engaged as wage earners in agricultural, commercial and industrial enterprises or engaged as salaried professionals by the State. The focus is on human activity intended to earn wages, as distinct from those rendered by entrepreneurs for profits or the accumulation of capital. Labour also denotes a composite category of workers including agricultural labourers, oil and other industrial workers, store clerks and domestic workers. These belong to that cadre of "blue collar workers" and are thus distinguished from management. In West Indian colonial society, there were three principal categories of labour: slaves, contracted or indentured servants and freemen. The term "working class" is used in a generic sense, incorporating the diversity of occupations in the category of "wage earners," hence the terms "labour" and "working class" are used interchangeably.

For more than four centuries, metropolitan economic enterprise in the Caribbean generated both the horrific exploitation of labour and the courageous resistance of the exploited. Colonialism flourished on coerced labour, and in the process it decimated the indigenous Amerindians, enslaved Africans and exploited contract labour from Europe and Asia. The correlation of labour and race was evident in Caribbean colonial society where, for centuries, the dominant White minority controlled and manipulated African or East Indian labour. The transoceanic migratory patterns of labour, forced or voluntary, was a distinguishing feature of Caribbean colonial society,

unlike colonial societies in India and Africa (except South Africa), but similar to Fiji and Malaysia. Waves of migrant labour, particularly driven by nineteenth-century contractual labour schemes, fashioned the complex and racially diversified social structure in several Caribbean territories.

During the Industrial Revolution, European capitalism expanded under the influence of the French Physiocrats' "laissez-faire laissez-passer" (let things be done, and let this pass).[1] In England, it was Adam Smith's adaptation of laissez-faire (*The Wealth of the Nations*, 1776), which inspired economic liberty and capitalist expansion, but eventually promoted the wealth of the bourgeoisie and precipitated the misery of the labouring class.[2] Articulated by Richard Cobden and John Bright of the "Manchester School,"[3] in the nineteenth century, laissez-faire and free trade were promoted by businessmen and political radicals who advocated minimum interference by the State in labour relations, unqualified free trade among nations and the removal of protectionist trade policies. Cobden declared that the colonies were a financial burden to Britain, and since they were the chief causes of war they should be discarded. Other leading thinkers who influenced English economic liberation were Jeremy Bentham, the reformer of English law, and his disciples James and John Stuart Mill. They believed in freedom of trade, and in the greatest happiness of the greatest number as the purpose of the State, hence the need to restrict the interference of government in economics and trade.[4]

In Britain, industrial capitalists were the supreme masters of trade and business, setting the stage for the encounter of the working class with laissez-faire demands and preparing for the emergence of the labour movement. Adults worked for long hours with small wages, while children were virtually enslaved in textile factories and coal mines. Similar conditions prevailed in the British West Indies where merchant capitalists and the plantocracy ensured that productivity was driven by cheap labour in order to meet the demands for raw materials for the factories, producing luxury items for the European aristocracy.

After the cessation of forced labour in the British Caribbean in 1838, the capitalist-planter class desperately sought labour supplies to maintain the sugar industry. Vested interests in London and in the West Indian islands were committed to protect their agricultural empire in which "[s]ugar was to remain king . . . the fundamental thesis of West Indian society: no slavery, no sugar. Abolish slavery and immediately reintroduce it in some form or another, whatever its modifications."[5] The labour crisis came at a time when capitalist interests in West Indian

sugar were far from diminished because "an expanding capitalism was still hungry for labour."[6]

Emancipation removed the mainstay of the capitalist enterprise in the Caribbean, and in desperation planters unscrupulously utilized their economic superiority and political influence to control the freed slaves who constituted the only significant supply of labour in the colonies. Planters vigorously implemented strategies to dominate and manipulate labour, thereby delaying the full benefits of legal emancipation for Africans.[7] Labour was not free, and, if negotiable, the terms and conditions always favoured the plantocracy. Freedom, the promise of emancipation, could not easily be appropriated because former slave-owners maintained control of labour, except in the colonies like British Guiana and Trinidad, where the economy, demography and geography allowed the African greater space to negotiate the terms of labour.

The central political and economic issues in the colonial Caribbean were the matter of struggle for the control of labour and land.[8] Capitalist wealth was built on the regime of private land ownership, which enabled them to control their environment.[9] The land-monopoly enjoyed by the merchant-planter class enabled absentee landlords and local proprietors to use their rights over houses and provision grounds to keep labour shackled to the estates. In Trinidad, the official policy was the alienation of Crown or state land on terms that would lead to the curtailment of squatting to keep land "...out of the reach of the masses in order to preserve the estate labour force...."[10] The high cost of Crown lands, governmental policies on squatting which were intended to exclude peasants from access to land and a justice system dominated by the plantocracy were the primary reasons for resistance such as the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica in 1865, which cost 500 lives and 600 public floggings: "[T]he central issue was access to lands as a means of resisting the necessity to work on the estates."[11]

Employer-landlords controlled the wage-rent system where tenancy was exchanged for labour and where eviction was the penalty for defaulters. In the larger colonies such as British Guiana and Trinidad where lands were available for squatting, planters offered rent-free houses and provision grounds to ex-slaves in order to retain the labour force nearer the sugar plantation. Planters used their economic power to control labour through various wage advances to ensure the dependency of the workforce. Truck-shops on estates provided credit to labourers and ensured that planters' profits included both financial returns and the continuous bondage of labour. Ownership of estates and factories enabled planters to manipulate the metayer[12] or sharecropping system

which was implemented in St Lucia in 1840 and subsequently in Nevis, Grenada, St Vincent and Tobago where labour was contracted but inadequately compensated in a scheme which promised workers a share in profits.

The craftiness of the plantocracy in the control and regulation of labour was tacitly supported by legislatures which were dominated by mercantile-agriculture interests. Stringent legislative measures indicate capitalist connivance for a revised version of coerced labour. In Antigua, Jamaica and Trinidad, "Masters and Servants" laws focused on absenteeism, vagrancy and contract obligations ensured that labour remained corralled in the plantations. Laws which made licences mandatory for porters, hucksters and shopkeepers, were primarily planter-motivated measures designed to restrict former slaves from developing independent means of livelihood and ensuring their dependence on estate employment.

Labour, whether coerced, contracted or free, refused to surrender to the machinations of capitalists whose modus operandi was the exploitation and control of the workforce. The history of the domination of labour by the capitalist class is punctuated with a variety of responses motivated by the urgency for both liberty and improved working conditions. These included slave revolts and uprisings, runaway efforts, mutinies, desertion, absenteeism, truancy of indentured servants, strikes and protests over wages by free workers. They reflect a restless desire for liberation which was generated by the basic human desire for freedom and justice as labour refused to be domiciled under oppressive economic and political structures.

Among the diverse forms of resistance, the shattering of the chains of labour in San Domingue in the eighteenth century remains the most daring act of rebellion, but that was not the norm in the history of labour struggles in the Caribbean. The rebellion sent unmistakable signals to French Royalists and the British merchant-planter class indicating that whenever possible, labour would take the initiatives leading to liberation. Mass rebellion by workers in the colonial era was fraught with difficulties. Violent confrontation was curtailed not only through the superior military resources of colonizers, but because tribal diversity of African labour restricted co-ordinated protest. Yoruban, Ibo, Mali, Akan, Fon or Bantu slaves were "mixed and distributed on the plantations as matter of policy in a manner that assured the withering of tribal and cultural ties."[13]

In the larger West Indian islands, marronage was the primary method of resistance and protest in the pre-emancipation era. In Jamaica and

Haiti, thousands of maroons who fled from the plantations took refuge in the forested mountains where they subsisted on farming. In Haiti, marronage was the rule: "This form of protest was used both as 'exit' (grand marronage, where the runaway slave did not intend to return, staying away as long as he could), and 'voice' (petit marronage, where he came back after a few days or weeks)."[14] Marronage symbolized the withdrawal of workers from the plantation, and it was used as one of the most potent forms of protest and resistance.

The rise of the peasantry and the development of a subsistence economy in the nineteenth century constituted a significant form of resistance and challenge to capitalist forces which dominated West Indian agriculture. The new independent peasantry which flourished in Jamaica, Trinidad and British Guiana withdrew from the colonial plantation enterprise, and thus passively resisted capitalist domination. Under political and economic oppression and aware of the risks of violent confrontation as a means of liberation, the peasants sought to "express their discontent through flight, sectarian withdrawal, or other activities" which did not provoke violent clashes with their oppressors.[15]

Few freedmen were able to purchase land, but several of them either rented or squatted and defied governmental policies designed to deter illegal occupation of Crown lands. In Jamaica and Trinidad, occupation of Crown lands formed the basis for the squatter-peasantry, while in British Guiana abandoned estates were purchased in co-operative ventures which developed as peasant settlements. Such determination for economic independence and freedom from planter-control in British Guiana was subsequently restricted with laws which prohibited the purchase of land by more than 20 persons.[16]

In the smaller islands such as Barbados, Antigua and St Kitts, most of the lands were owned by planters, therefore land shortage restricted the development of the peasantry. Planters declined to sell land, knowing that the emergence of a peasantry would create an independent labour force, thereby depleting the cadre of workers available to the plantocracy. Although Jamaican peasants cultivated sugarcane as an economic crop because of planters' demands for large supplies, elsewhere in the British West Indies "sugar was beyond the scope of the peasant" because manufacturing equipment was too costly.[17]

The post-emancipation labour problem and the subsequent development of European sugar beet as a major competitor on the world market were not the only factors contributing to the crisis in the West Indian sugar industry. It was the British capitalist and the Parliament which initially contributed to the difficulties which plagued the industry. British

investors thrived on cheap labour and refused to upgrade their production system in the West Indies. While water power and windmills prolonged the use of antiquated equipment in the British West Indian industry, larger international competitors dominated the sugar trade. Mechanization, the amalgamation of factories and the railway system created major world producers in Cuba, Mauritius and the Dutch East Indies.

As the old mercantilism and its duty system were dismantled, the British Sugar Act of 1846 removed trade preferences on foreign sugar much to the detriment of the West Indian industry. Parliament's repeal of the Navigation Acts (1849) and the subsequent expansion of free trade economic policy of both the Liberals and Conservatives in the nineteenth century removed protective duties on British trade. Neither the Parliament nor the merchant class made provisions to cushion the impact of these developments on the working class on colonial plantations. Instead, with the removal of trade preferences, British investors in the West Indian sugar enterprise benefitted through official concessions in the industry. In addition to Parliament's 20 million pounds sterling as compensation to slave-owners,[18] Britain also sanctioned the use of imported labour and subsequently contributed state funds to support migrant labour schemes.

Planter-dominated legislatures received approval from the Colonial Office for imported workers on the basis that the labour of ex-slaves was "spasmodic, unreliable and insufficient."[19] Although there were responses from Europe, Asia and other West Indian colonies, these early experiments in supplemental labour ended in failure. This was not merely due to the severity of the tropical climate, but planters also contributed to the privations of migrant workers whose housing was reminiscent of slavery, while low wages were poor incentives for sustained contractual obligations. For example, the Governor of Trinidad, Sir George Fitzgerald Hill, received a petition from Portuguese labourers in Trinidad in 1839, in which they pleaded with him to assist in their return to their native country. After ten months in Trinidad, only one third of their number survived the horrors of the plantation system. The petition referred to "the cruelties of the system of slavery" that the labourers faced.[20] It was not surprising that the West Indian labourers who were familiar with the plantation system refused to submit to the unchanged slave conditions maintained by planters.

The West Indian plantation system provided no respite even for Europeans. Profit-oriented and labour-dependent planters did not discriminate against categories of labour on the grounds of race or colour:

"[T]hey were willing to employ any kind of labor, and under any institutional arrangements, as long as the labor force was politically defenseless enough for the work to be done cheaply and under discipline."[21] Based on the testimony of Richard Ligon who lived in Barbados (1647–1650), it is apparent that White servants were treated very harshly: "The slaves and their posterity, being subject to their Masters for ever, are kept and preserv'd with greater care than the (White) servant, who are their's but for five years . . . the servants have the worser lives, for they are put to very hard labour, ill lodging and their dyet very sleigth."[22]

The indentureship of Indians during the period 1845–1920 was the most successful labour recruitment scheme. Planters, particularly in Trinidad and British Guiana, manipulated the system whereby contract labour was fully under their control. Supported by local legislatures, strict regulations sanctioned punishment for absenteeism or desertion. A ticket identification system restricted the freedom of these hapless strangers in a foreign land which denied them basic liberties and virtually enslaved them to capitalists. Although contract requirements facilitated the easy management of imported labour, planters discovered that immigrant labour seemed easier to control than local labour "for it is less secure, less confident and in instances of confrontation, finds itself facing the weight, if not the wrath, of other social groups."[23] Planters used Indian indentureship as an institutionalized form of labour control to restrict the bargaining power of African freedmen. Subsistence wages in the plantation sector contributed to a general depression of wages in the colony, which was advantageous only to sugar and import/export mercantile interests. Indentureship contributed to the retention of poor housing conditions, long hours of work and contracts designed to harness the labouring class in a scheme devoid of provisions for appeal. The Hispanic Caribbean also utilized imported labour to restrict the power of the local working class. In the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, Haitian labourers and "cocolos" (workers from the British West Indian islands) were imported primarily to work on the estates to "undermine the power of local labour."[24] The chief example of imported labour into the Hispanic Caribbean in the nineteenth century is that of approximately 125,000 Chinese who came to Cuba between 1848 and 1874.

Government's policy on the import of foreign labour in the late nineteenth century fashioned the social structure of modern Trinidad and Tobago. The influx of migrant workers contributed to the creation of one of the most ethnically heterogeneous societies in the British Caribbean. Streams of ethnic groups were added to the already existing population

of African slaves and Whites who were of Spanish, French or British extraction. Thus, post-emancipation society was diversified with the arrival of Scottish, German, Chinese, Africans (from the United States and Caribbean islands) and East Indian workers.[25] It was the East Indian indentureship scheme which attracted the largest number of immigrants and impacted significantly on the social composition of Trinidad and Tobago. Indentureship subsequently created an environment of mutual antipathy between Africans and Indians, facilitating manipulation by the colonial authorities and local elite. This would lay the foundations for the evolution of political competition between these two major ethnic groups.

Capitalist exploitation of field labour remained the common denominator in the West Indian plantation economy which extended from the period of coerced labour to the post-emancipation system of indentureship. The new immigrant workers immediately sought to escape the stranglehold of the combined machinations of the plantocracy and the ruling elite whose policy was the total control of labour. The early migrants who refused to sign contracts deserted the sugar estates and either took refuge in the towns, or squatted on Crown lands, while others who served their indenture refused renewal of contracts. The introduction of punitive measures in 1854 for desertion and truancy confined Indian indentured labourers to contractual obligations and bound them as "residents" of the estates. Indentureship regulations restricted the movement of estate workers and curtailed protests against field labour during the period 1845–1880.

The depression in the sugar industry in the 1880s impacted negatively on plantation labour resulting in a reduction of both wages and work days. Dissatisfaction in field labour exploded in strikes, though limited to a few estates, and this was not without justification. In addition to deplorable living conditions on estate barracks, planters manipulated the statutory minimum wage agreement of 25 cents for indentured workers, by lengthening and increasing tasks for the same wage.[26] The disturbances on the estates in the 1880s indicate that pacifist strategies of protest such as absenteeism and fake illness had given way to confrontation in defiance of injustices by employers. The unrest in the estates ought to be understood against the background of oppression which was maintained through strict labour regulations, police harassment and judicial partiality. The strikes at Cedar Hill Estate in 1882 against the colonial company were one in a series of disturbances which culminated in the phenomenal 12 strikes in 1884.[27]

Government's decision to control the growing labour unrest was not based on solutions for the underlying causes of discontent, but on its insistence in governance through strict laws and the use of force. The State found an appropriate occasion to invoke its authority with armed force during the Muharram celebrations in October 1884 when 16 Indians were killed and 28 were wounded in San Fernando. Government's motive was to inflict on the Indians "a bloody lesson in obedience."[28] This lesson was intended for the colony's entire working class including the Africans who dared to defy the police when there were official attempts to suppress the Canboulay celebrations.[29] Indeed, the association of Africans with the Indian festival of Muharram created further easiness for the ruling elite: "[T]here was now the added fear that Negroes joining the Muharram would carry over the confrontational spirit of the carnival to the Indians and challenge the White authority structure."[30] The Muharram Massacre epitomized the ruthlessness of colonial overlords, both political and economic, in responding to threats, real or perceived, to the established social structure of the colony.

Governmental atrocities against the working class were also unleashed in the Water Riots (1903) when 16 persons were killed and 43 were wounded in Port-of-Spain. The initial protestors belonged to the middle and upper classes led by Emmanuel Lazare, a radical African solicitor, and Edgar Maresse-Smith of the Ratepayers Association who were against proposals to introduce meters to control the supply of water in the city. They misled the working class with anti-government propaganda which created fear concerning the water distribution to the public, particularly since February 1903 when approximately 80,000 gallons per day were cut off from supplies for city sanitation, which was targetted as another source of wastage.[31] The masses were deceived into joining the protest, and when the government discriminated against them in the issuing of tickets to the Legislative Council for the debate on the Water Works Ordinance, the crowd responded, and unfortunately in the ensuing confrontation with police there was another massacre; this time it was the urban working class.

In the 1840s, the major political issues in the colony were articulated by constitutional reformers whose campaign focused on the introduction of a limited franchise which would restrict the power of the Unofficials in the Legislative Council.[32] During this stage of the campaign, the protagonists for reform were mainly French creole cocoa planters and British merchants in Port-of-Spain who campaigned through the Legislative Reform Committee against the British sugar

elites who dominated the political and economic affairs of Trinidad and Tobago. These reformers attacked Indian indentureship because British sugar interests used cheap Indian labour to support their enterprise and status in the colony. Nevertheless, their efforts were merely a feeble challenge to the politically entrenched British sugar interests who operated with the approbation of the Colonial Office. Hostility to both colonial rule and the dominance of British sugar interests continued to be the prevailing issues in subsequent stages of the reform movement. In the 1880s, the efforts of the reform movement were accelerated by Philip Rostant, a White French creole, who through his newspaper, *Public Opinion*, campaigned for a wider franchise to include elected members in the Legislative Council. In opposition to the British plantocracy, he urged government to promote a landowning peasantry instead of dependency on the dominant planter class.

The reform movement gained momentum under the leadership of an African and Coloured middle-class intelligentsia who became the primary agents of resistance against the political domination of the propertied class.[33] These reformers sustained the campaign against Indian labour from 1845 to its cessation in 1920 when the Indian government abolished the export of indentured labour. Indian indentureship was the most significant labour issue which featured prominently at every stage in the campaign for constitutional reform. Henry Alcazar denounced the exploitation of the working class by the plantocracy, and he condemned the low wages offered to plantation workers. He called for the cessation of Indian indentureship as it was, in essence, labour in "semi-servitude" and "akin to slavery." Similarly, Lechmere Guppy appealed for the cessation of Indian indentureship and proposed that government's economic policy should be redirected to cocoa rather than the sugar industry. Both Dr de Boissiere and C.P. David joined in the attack on the sugar plantocracy and its dependence on cheap Indian labour. David called for the cessation of state subventions which supported indentureship.[34] In his exposure of the plantocracy as the only class of employers who complained of a labour shortage, David contended that Indian indentureship worked negatively against the working class as it kept wages low for other categories of labour in the colony.

Although the reformers gained no major political concessions from Britain, the rising middle class continued the assault on Crown Colony government[35]and British sugar interests. During the 1890s, the reformers redirected the movement towards local government reform and thus inaugurated a period of "urban nationalism"[36] which would serve as the prelude to the greater objective, namely reforming the structure

of Crown Colony government. Since the constitutional approach was preferred rather than dependence on mass support in the pursuit of political and economic reform, the rising middle class was not inclined to mobilize labour in its campaign. A limited franchise was favoured, designed to exclude the masses and to ensure that power was shared between the White elite and the middle class. The reformers remained urban based and neither sought nor enjoyed the support of the masses, and this significantly restricted the impact of the reform movement.[37]

The abolition of the Port-of-Spain Borough Council towards the end of nineteenth century underlined the determination of both the local elites and the imperial government not to yield to middle-class demands for constitutional reform that would open up the Crown Colony system to possible subversion by an upwardly mobile African and Coloured middle class. The failure to restructure the economy, at least through the encouragement of a peasant farming sector, as recommended by the Royal Commission of 1897, indicated that the colonial plantocracy where many of them were former slave-owners, supported by the import/export merchants and the still influential West India Committee in London, had no solution to the growing political and economic crisis in the colony other than maintaining the stratified social order at all costs. With the middle class in retreat after the debacle of the Water Riots in 1903, it would be the labour movement, organized and increasingly radicalized, that would pose the most potent challenge to the colonial order in the ensuing three decades of the twentieth century.

1
The Pioneers: Organized Labour, 1894–1920

At the close of the nineteenth century, the working class in Trinidad remained on the periphery of the struggle between the African and Coloured reformers and the colonial government. The urban-based reformers such as Henry Alcazar, C.P. David and Emmanuel Lazare failed to mobilize the working class whom they considered irresponsible, unprepared and uneducated.[1] Denied recognition by those who should have led them, the masses remained devoid of legislative representation and State protection against the employer class. Limited options for the protection of workers' interests in the pre-Cipriani era gave rise to the formation of the earliest labour fraternities in Trinidad and Tobago, the Workingmen's Association (WMA) in 1894 and the Workingmen's Reform Club (WRC) in 1897.[2] These organizations constituted early responses to the needs of the working class, and they laid the foundations for the evolution of the labour movement in the twentieth century. Hobsbawm's general comment on the significance of the labour movement for the masses holds true of the working class in Trinidad: "The labour movement provided an answer to the poor man's cry" providing for him "the eternal vigilance, organization and activity of the 'movement' – the trade union, the mutual or co-operative society, the working-class institute, newspaper or agitation."[3]

The WMA and WRC used as their model the labour organizations which existed in England during the nineteenth century, particularly the London Workingmen's Association (formed in the late 1830s) and the Leeds Workingmen's Parliamentary Association (1861). Both were advocates of better working conditions for the English labour force, universal suffrage, education of workers and their families and an honest press.[4] In drawing upon the experience of these organizations, the WMA and WRC emerged as political pressure groups which

challenged Crown Colony government, advocated self-determination and represented the interests of the working class.

The WMA, formed in Port-of-Spain in 1894, was the first labour fraternity of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago. Although scholars have generally accepted 1897 as the year of its formation, there is evidence which suggests an earlier date. It is certain that the Association existed in 1896 and conducted its meetings at Greyfriars Presbyterian Church Hall, on Frederick Street in Port-of-Spain, under the Presidency of J. Sydney de Bourg and Montgomery E. Corbie as the Secretary of the Association.[5]

In 1906, the *Mirror* reported on a meeting at which Corbie reviewed the work of the Association "since its inauguration twelve years ago."[6] In Corbie's account of the founding of the WMA, he recalled that the inauguration of the Association was linked to its concerns made when the Borough Council struggled for the release of £14,000 which was withheld by the government. It was that political issue which gave birth to the WMA, when in solidarity with the Borough Council, concerned burgesses such as Corbie and de Bourg saw the need to mobilize public opinion against governmental pressure on the locally managed Council.

During the period 1894–1896, the WMA attracted certain categories of workers comprising skilled African workers who were masons, carpenters, railway workers and store clerks. It was their employment concerns which subsequently dictated the agenda of the fledgling organization. The leadership of the WMA did not originate from the upper level of the middle-class African intelligentsia in the city. The President, Sydney de Bourg, was an ex-school master, later a Commission agent and owner of a small cocoa estate. The Secretary, Montgomery Corbie, worked in the courts as a "petition writer" a position which judges hoped would have been abolished.[7]

In November 1896, the WMA accepted a resolution in which de Bourg expressed disagreement with Governor Napier Broome who said in a public statement that the condition of the races in the colony had "considerably ameliorated" during the past 100 years of Crown Colony government. In the ensuing debate, Corbie condemned the government's wasteful expenditure on fireworks and parties for the Crown Colony centenary celebrations: "In this Centenary hoax, Sir Napier Broome rejoiced with the plantocrats by burning £1,000 in the air in the sight of starving people, while £2,500 would be spent in getting up balls for Mr. Knollys and his friends." Walter Mills added his criticism of the usurious rate of interest levied on unpaid taxes and the government's threat of the seizure of land if taxes remained unpaid after one year.[8]

In 1897, there were approximately 50 members in the WMA consisting primarily of labourers who were Trinidadians, but some were migrant workers from other West Indian colonies.[9] The membership was similar to other working-class organizations: "Its core, like that of the early Jamaican unions, consisted of skilled workers, but the TWA [Trinidad Workingmen's Association] also sought to include unskilled workers employed at the railway and waterfront."[10] Although the assumption is made that the absence of Indians in the WMA in its formative years reflected "prejudice or neglect or both,"[11] Indians were perceived by the leadership of the WMA as competitors of the African working class who constituted the membership of the Association. The leadership of the WMA contended that imported Indian labour kept wages depressed and thus affected free labour in the colony. This attitude soon translated into hostility to the Indian presence in Trinidad, and inevitably deterred free Indians from joining the Association.

Walter Mills, a Port-of-Spain druggist, became the President of the WMA in 1897, and one of his first assignments was to represent the Association by giving evidence before the West India Royal Commission in March of that year. Mills informed the Commission of the daily hardships faced by the working class, and he proposed the removal of burdensome taxes on foodstuffs, and the introduction of a Stamp Act to replace customs duties on food.[12] He was critical of the 30% additional duty that was imposed by Venezuela on goods imported from Trinidad since that negatively affected the once booming trade with the South American mainland.[13] Also, in his testimony before the Commission, Mills recommended a change in the management of the local road board because of the failure of the Director of Public Works to provide adequate facilities for the delivery of produce to the markets.[14]

For almost a decade, the WMA remained dormant and was not engaged in any serious involvement in public affairs. This was the period when anti-government sentiments were best articulated by the African and Coloured urban reformers. Unfortunately, since the reformers made no attempt to forge an alliance with the WMA, nor to recognize or incorporate its concerns for the working class, the Association had little alternative but to reorganize itself as an independent organization.

In addition to the WMA, a similar labour-oriented organization, the WRC under the leadership of Charles Phillips functioned in Port-of-Spain for a brief period, 1896–1897. The *Port-of-Spain Gazette* referred to Phillips as a "Commission Agent" and also as a "workingman," and in a memorandum to the Royal Commission he is referred to as the "father of labour movements."[15] Since the membership of the

WRC included dockworkers, boatmen, artisans and ships' labourers, the Club could be considered as the first labour organization for seamen and waterfront workers. The agenda for meetings in 1896 indicate the Club's involvement in political affairs particularly issues concerning the Borough Council. On 15 September 1896, the Club pledged its support to Randolph Rust as a candidate for the Borough Council elections on condition that he made a commitment to provide water for the poor, and education for the underprivileged children in the colony.[16] The WRC also advocated proper organization of city scavengers and proposed a six-day Carnival to celebrate the centennial of Crown Colony governance.[17]

In 1897, Phillips submitted evidence to the West India Royal Commission in which he focused on labour conditions in Trinidad. He appealed for governmental intervention to assist the unemployed and destitute. The memorandum from the Club indicated that the coconut industry was underdeveloped and there was need for reconsideration of the monopoly in the asphalt industry.[18] The Commission was apprised of working-class grievances, particularly the oppressive increase of land rates from 1 shilling to 1 shilling and 3 pence per acre and the urgent need to release cocoa lands for small farmers. There was no reservation in the WRC's forthright denunciation of Indian immigration and its economic disadvantages to the colony. Phillips informed the Commission that immigration handicapped farming by African workers since it kept wages low in the colony. He concluded, "Coolie immigrants starving us . . . they contribute nothing to city improvements."[19] After 1897, the WRC ceased to function as a distinct identity. Charles Phillips subsequently joined the rejuvenated WMA in 1906 serving on its Executive Committee.

During the period 1898–1906, the African and Coloured intelligentsia continued its struggle for the political and fiscal autonomy of the Port-of-Spain Borough Council. The Council sought increased subventions from the government and also relief from burdensome taxation. Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, intervened but he was critical of the financial management of the Council. He offered conditional assistance, but when the Council refused he ordered that it be abolished.[20] The abolition of the Council in 1898 indicated the government's intention to pursue its undemocratic, autocratic approach to governance in the colony. However, this created a new wave of disenchantment in the colony as strong resistance came from the African and Coloured middle class who vigorously pursued the campaign for constitutional reform.

The decision of the colonial government to establish a nominated Town Board in 1906 provided an opportunity for the revival of the WMA when its leaders associated themselves with the discontented groups and individuals seeking a restoration of the Borough Council in Port-of-Spain. In 1906, a committee comprising outspoken radicals such as J.D. Alcazar, Emmanuel Lazare and C.P. David were appointed to make recommendations for the municipal administration of the city. There was a division of opinion regarding the composition of the restored Council. The moderates who were in the majority wanted a mixture of nominees and elected persons on the Council, whilst the radicals desired an elected Council.

The official members sought a nominated Council, but Governor H.M. Jackson supported the idea of an elected Council. The views of the official members prevailed as was evident in the Legislative Council's decision in 1906 to experiment with a Town Board that would be wholly nominated for two years. This administrative proposal for the city was rejected by various groups and individuals, among whom were members of the dominant WMA who preferred the restoration of the Borough Council. It was that issue which prompted the revival of the WMA in 1906. In that year the Association printed its first letterhead with its new name – "The Trinidad Workingmen's Association."

In 1906, there were 233 members in the TWA under the leadership of a new Executive led by Alfred Richards (president) and Adrien Hilarion (vice-president and secretary of the association). Other members included Laurence Wilson (carpenter), W.A. Watson (planter) and J.S. de Bourg (commission agent).[21] "Planters" and "Merchants" associated with the TWA were small or medium-sized entrepreneurs or proprietors. For example, Richards operated a wine and grocery store adjoining his pharmacy on King Street, Port-of-Spain. He also owned a small cocoa plantation.[22] In its registration as an incorporated organization, the TWA included in the "Articles of Association" the promotion of better relations between workers and employers, representation for unemployed workers and protection of the rights of workers.[23] The TWA, in its early years was slow to capture public sympathy and to attract popular support from the different sectors of the labouring class.

The first engagement of the rejuvenated TWA was on February 1906 when at its public meeting at George Street, Port-of-Spain, the Association rejected government's proposal to establish a Town Board. Accordingly, correspondence was forwarded to the Municipal

Committee seeking restoration of the town's municipal charter.[24] Although a political stimulus restored the Association from dormancy, the TWA immediately incorporated working-class concerns which determined its character and dictated its future role in the colony. Its first efforts in labour representation came in May 1907 when the TWA appealed to colonial officials to consider improvements in conditions of work for Railway employees. A petition was submitted which proposed benefits for overtime work, shorter hours of work and sick leave without reduction in salary. The Association advised Acting Governor, Gilbert Carter, that porters, engine drivers, firemen and guards worked for over 12 1/2 to 13 hours daily with no remuneration for overtime labour. The recommendations included the introduction of a pension scheme and one month's sick leave with full wages and free medical attention.[25]

In response to the concerns of the TWA, General Manager and Chief Engineer of Railways, H.R. Marwood, met with a deputation including guards, ticket checkers and brakesmen. In his report on that meeting, Marwood said, "A good deal of irrelevant matter was introduced by the several speakers, and there was (evidently) anything but unanimity among the men . . . as to which they considered the burning question."[26] He claimed that the discontented men were confined to the traffic department and not to the locomotive and maintenance department. Therefore, in terms of benefits such as sick leave, hours of work and wages, employees in the Railway Department enjoyed better conditions than other men of their class in the rest of the colony. He proceeded to question the Association's support for railway workers, "with every respect for the Association, which has so large a field of useful labour to its hand, it is, I submit unworthy of it, that it should lend its support to an attempt to force from the Government terms which its proteges would have no hope of obtaining themselves."[27]

Railway employees continued agitation for better working conditions, and in 1909 T. Summerbell raised in the House of Commons the issue of dismissals and matters pertinent to labour in the Railway Department in the colony. The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, J.E.B. Seely, was unable to offer a satisfactory response since he admitted that he was not fully apprised of the problems in the Trinidad Government Railways.[28]

In addition to particular problems, the TWA brought to the attention of the government, matters of social and economic importance to the masses in the colony. In May 1909, the TWA forwarded to Governor Le

Hunte, a resolution expressing its concern over governmental neglect of the Caroni Swamp and the consequence for public health,

> That this Association views with utmost concern the continued danger and menace to the public health of the existence of the Caroni Swamp . . . as a breeding ground of infectious diseases . . . due to the unpardonable neglect in the past [by] the Government in not reclaiming that valuable asset which doubtlessly would be of incalculable value both in respect of health conditions and pecuniary aid to the people and Government.[29]

The Governor submitted the TWA's resolution to the Secretary of State but also enclosed minutes from the Surgeon General, H.L. Clare, and Director of Public Works, A.G. Bell, in which they summarily dismissed the TWA's claim that the swamp was a public health hazard.[30] In June 1909, Summerbell in the House of Commons, questioned the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, J.E.B. Seely, as to whether he had received the TWA's correspondence regarding the threat of infectious diseases from the Caroni Swamp. Seely acknowledged receipt of the resolution and advised Parliament that the matter was receiving the attention of officials in Trinidad.[31]

In its petitions in 1910 and 1911, the TWA protested against the composition of the Commission appointed by Governor Le Hunte to enquire into trade relations between the West Indies and Canada. Memorials were sent both to the Governor and the Secretary of State appealing for representation on the Commission: "The Association respectfully beg to protest against the question of Reciprocity with Canada being treated as one which concerns merchants and planters only, or principally."[32] The TWA was aware that merchants and planters had their own interests in trade with Canada, particularly their need for preferential treatment for West Indian sugar. Therefore the Association expressed concern that in the trade consultation the welfare of the masses was not well represented, since high tariffs were responsible for increased costs in Canadian lumber and saltfish, particularly the latter which was a staple food for the working class.

In other memorials of 1911, the TWA questioned expenditure which favoured the planter-merchant class; and an appeal was made for a reduction in taxes on commodities which affected "the poor and backward masses." The Association expressed its disapproval over the government's grant of £20,000 as a subsidy to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company,[33] charging that the beneficiaries of the subsidy were

the small, wealthy merchant-planter class who abused their political power in the Legislative Council and voted vast sums to support their interests. The subsidy to support the Royal Mail Service would be beneficial to the business elite in the colony "who already contribute almost nothing to the Revenue" and

> The Legislative Council, entirely composed of representatives of that small class, in passing this vote, simply voted to themselves an additional subsidy in supplement of the one they annually bestow on themselves in connection with Indentured Labour. Such a sum spent on Education or local roads would render services incomparably greater.[34]

In its memorandum to L. Harcourt, Secretary of State for the Colonies, the TWA indicated that the excise duty on aerated waters would affect the "poorest class of consumers" and that the additional land tax of 6 pence per acre and the 10% increase on trade licenses would affect peasants and small tradesmen. The Association requested the abolition of the import duty on coconut oil as it yielded no revenue but was a burden on the poorest class of Indians who earned 3 pence and 4 pence a week.[35] The TWA also protested against the imposition of a 4 pence duty on petrol, which as the protective tariff on matches and rum were described as "nothing less than a monstrous piece of injustice to the mass of the population."[36] Although the TWA seemed oblivious of the implications for the local economy of increased external competition for local sugar and rum, the Association in its memorandum was justified in opposing increasing import duties on items of mass consumption particularly as they affected the poorer classes.

There is evidence to suggest that the TWA's proposals were considered by the government even though the TWA was not officially recognized as a worker's organization. In his consideration of the TWA's proposals to remove import duties on unrefined sugar and coconut oil, Governor Le Hunte explained that the existing customs duty on imported sugar being 1 shilling and 8 pence per 100 lbs was the rate of duty on unrefined sugar in other British West Indian colonies. Any withdrawal of this duty, Le Hunte cautioned, would allow other colonies to send their sugar to Trinidad but refuse the importation of Trinidad's sugar. Le Hunte also indicated that the duty on coconut oil would eventually be abolished.[37]

The TWA was an advocate of freedom from racial prejudice as indicated in its memorandum which drew attention to the prohibition of boxing contests between Africans and Whites in Trinidad and Tobago.[38]

While the TWA protested against what in effect was racial apartheid in a sport, R.S. Marshall, the Acting Inspector General of the Constabulary, wanted the sport abolished altogether, instead of advocating an end to activities sensitive to all racial groups in the colony: "As far as I am aware, within recent years, no fight has taken place here publicly between a Black man and a White man, and it appears very desirable that such meetings should as far as possible be opposed in the interest of law and order in this Colony."[39] It is obvious that the TWA involved itself not only in political issues but in economic and social matters as well, and indeed the Association was a precursor in advocating environmental issues in the colony.

Relationship with the British Labour Party

The forging of cordial relations with the British Labour Party (BLP, also Labour Party) was a deliberate attempt by the TWA to acquire recognition and credibility as a viable working-class organization in the colony.[40] In early 1906, Ramsay MacDonald, Secretary of the BLP, received correspondence from the WMA requesting affiliation with the Labour Party.[41] Given the authoritarian structure of Crown Colony government, an incipient working-class representative organization like the TWA had little chance of influencing colonial policy except through a metropolitan connection working on its behalf. Fortunately, in Great Britain itself, the labour movement was gathering momentum in Parliament through its political arm, the Labour Party, which was espousing socialist ideology, and at this stage in its history was not averse to taking sympathetic interest in kindred colonial movements representing labour interests. The BLP was therefore inclined to establish fraternal ties with the TWA since the Party was also criticized for its neglect of the smaller Crown colonies while exclusive interests were shown to the larger colonies – Australia, South Africa and Canada. It was in this context that the TWA's leadership sought affiliation and was received by the BLP.

The BLP served as the conduit through which working-class matters in Trinidad and Tobago were brought to the attention of the House of Commons. In July 1906, Thomas Summerbell raised in the House of Commons issues relating to the deplorable social conditions in the colony.[42] The Acting Governor of Trinidad and Tobago, S.W. Knaggs, was not impressed with Summerbell's petitions on behalf of the TWA: "[T]he Trinidad Workingmen's Association is by no means a representative body, and its statements are so loose and inaccurate as to

impose only on Mr. Summerbell."[43] The Acting Governor informed the Secretary of State that the TWA had no legal status in Trinidad and dismissed as inconsequential the representation of Summerbell in the Parliament.

In 1908, the TWA submitted a resolution to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Elgin, indicating that its members viewed with distrust and apprehension the "secret meetings" of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council which dealt with the expenditure of the taxpayers' hard-earned money.[44] The issue was also raised by Summerbell on 31 March 1908 in the House of Commons, when he questioned Churchill (Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies) on the secretive nature of meetings of the Finance Committee of Trinidad's Legislative Council which were held within closed doors and of which the taxpayers had no knowledge.[45] Churchill disagreed with Summerbell and advised him that the Legislative Council was given an opportunity for debate of the colony's finances upon presentation of the Finance Committee's report.

Summerbell appealed to the government for the reinstatement of the Municipal Council and he contended that the suppression of the Council for 13 years was too lengthy a period.[46] In 1909 he asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Colonel Seely, whether he received communication from the Couva branch of the TWA protesting against the imposition of water rates in Couva and California and the ward of Savonetta, although water was not supplied to these areas. Seely responded in the affirmative and promised to look into the matter.[47] In February 1910, after Summerbell's electoral defeat, Joseph Pointer was appointed as the new Labour Party liaison with the TWA,[48] thus preventing any interruption in the representation of the colony's working class in the British Parliament. The work of both Summerbell and Pointer included 218 questions raised in the House of Commons and eight speeches relating to the state of affairs in Trinidad.[49]

When Joseph Pointer visited the colony in October 1912, he used the occasion to boost the flagging membership of the Association and to improve its image. Pointer's 16 day visit to Trinidad gave him first-hand experience of the fledgling labour movement. This experience enabled him to assess the membership to be approximately 1,000, but popular support of the TWA was probably greater as many workers, fearing victimization by employers, were hesitant to formally enlist as members.[50] Pointer accompanied TWA officials to the sugar estates in Tunapuna where he visited the Cane Farmers' headquarters. A mixture of workers and invited guests listened to addresses by Pointer and J.R. Warner,

Secretary of both the TWA's affiliated branch at Tunapuna and the Cane Farmers Association. Those present included Alfred Richards (President of the TWA), Montgomery Corbie, Urbain Lewis and other officers of the Cane Farmers Association, including C. Howell (Vice-President), J.E. Pilgrim (Assistant Secretary).[51] In his address, Warner indicated that the average purchasing price of canes was 9 shillings per ton, which was considerably less than the price in Barbados– 15 shillings to 19 shillings per ton. Other issues included the inadequate average wage of 25 cents per day for free estate labourers and also the restricted rental of land by factory owners. Pointer, in his address, agreed that 25 cents per day was insufficient for a man to maintain his family.[52]

Pointer also travelled to Princes Town where he met leaders of the East Indian National Association who expressed concerns for political representation in the Legislative Council. In an address in San Fernando to an audience comprising mostly Indians, Pointer urged them to strive for representative government.[53] The growing influence of the Workingmen's Association was demonstrated in its organization of a mass meeting in Port-of-Spain to mark the end of Pointer's visit where there were approximately 3,000 persons in attendance among whom were several Indians.[54] Pointer was sympathetic to the local campaign for the cessation of Indian immigration, but the East Indian National Congress (EINC) and the East Indian National Association (EINA) rejected his attempts to persuade them to join the campaign.[55]

Campaign against indentured immigration

Indentured labour was depicted by the WMA as being responsible for deteriorating labour conditions in the colony. In 1896, M. Corbie, Secretary of the WMA, publicly expressed his disapproval over Indian immigration,

> The first source of evil was the coolie immigration, which had cost the colony upwards of two millions of pounds, and (had a) demoralising influence on the people. These people (the coolies) were under the ban of slavery, most of them had been criminals in India. It was not surprising that natives were starving in our midst.[56]

In 1897, Walter Mills, President of the WMA, gave evidence before the West India Royal Commission where he suggested that Indian immigration was one of the reasons for the deplorable state of affairs among

workers in the Colony: "The condition and prospect of the labouring class calls for serious and immediate attention, as that class is being reduced by a system of state-aided labour in the form of coolie immigration as competitors to continue the starvation wages paid on sugar estates."[57]

Furthermore, Mills indicated that the WMA was in favour of reducing the supply of Indian immigrants; he described indentured labour as "semi-slavery"[58] and he presented an impressive list of recommendations to improve the social and economic conditions in the colony. He condemned the existing insanitary conditions of dwellings in towns and estates and appealed to the government to open up Crown lands for small-scale agriculture by sales of 10-acre blocs which would be payable by 9 or 10 yearly instalments.[59]

Objections to Indian immigration expressed by the WMA in 1897, remained unchanged in the newly organized TWA in 1906. Advised by the Association, T. Summerbell took the matter to the House of Commons where he asked W. Churchill, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he was aware that the starvation and unemployment in the colony were partly caused by the importation of labourers from India who competed with West Indian labourers.[60]

In response, Churchill promised an inquiry and stated, "I am not aware that there is any such distress as the Hon. Member refers to, resulting from want of employment in Trinidad."[61] Summerbell again drew Parliament's attention to the plight of Indians in the lower stratum of society and the need for the abolition of Indentureship,

> owing to the number of East Indian and West Indian labourers unemployed in the town and country districts of the colony, and to the number of East Indians unemployed inhabiting public lodging-houses licensed by ordinance, and owing also to the predominance of crime, particularly among East Indians, the Association protests against the importation of another 2,400 East Indian immigrants . . . and feels the time has arrived that any further importation of such coolies should be at once stopped.[62]

Churchill had not received the correspondence and the matter was allowed to lapse. The expenditure on immigration and the effect on wages of free labour were factors frequently cited by Summerbell as reasons for the colonial authorities to consider discontinuing immigration. On 6 November, Summerbell questioned Churchill regarding the expenditure on Indian immigration and its continuation.[63] Churchill

answered that contributions for the support of indentureship were honoured by the employers and the State, but he evaded the question of cessation of Indian indentureship.[64]

In July 1908, Summerbell sought to inform the members of the House of Commons of the economic implications of immigration,

> The importation of coolies from the East Indies to these islands had reduced the wages of the agricultural labourers from fifty-five cents to thirty-two cents per day, and they objected to the subsidy of £8,000 taken out of the taxation which they had to pay being given to the planters of these islands in order that they might bring in cheap labour.[65]

Summerbell was not satisfied with the apparent apathy and inaction of the colonial officials. He therefore pursued the issue of Indian indentured labour and its negative impact on working conditions in Trinidad.[66]

There was no change in policy on indentureship. Therefore, in 1908 the TWA forwarded three resolutions to the Governor which denounced indentured immigration. The Association protested against the Immigration Ordinance of 1908, which was used by the Governor and his planter-dominated Legislative Council as the index for fixing wages among the working class:

> [T]he Association most vigorously protests against the passing of such an Ordinance which empowers any Governor and his Executive Council to fix from time to time the wages of free labourers in this Colony, but that the minimum wages of free labourers be fixed by law and calculated in accordance with the recommendations of the Labour Committee's report dated 15th, 1906 Council Paper No. 13, of 1906.[67]

It was not unusual that when the Acting Governor S.W. Knaggs forwarded the resolutions to the Secretary of State, he did not support the TWA's resolutions. Instead, he quoted from the Protector of Immigrants, W.M. Coombs, who indicated that on the question of wages, there was no indication of discontent among the Indians in Central, South and North Trinidad.[68] Inclusion of such a contradictory report from the Protector of Immigrants would have facilitated the dismissal of the TWA's resolutions by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The defensive strategy of using official reports which contradicted the TWA's

memorials and resolutions was regularly employed by the Governor or Acting Governor.[69] It was a subtle attempt to dissuade the Secretary of State for the Colonies from believing that colonial officials were inept and uncaring.

The Sanderson Commission (1910) interviewed Alfred Richards (President of the TWA) regarding the nature of the immigration system in Trinidad. He mentioned that indentured immigrants did not receive the promised 5 shillings 2 1/2 pence as weekly wages, but instead received 4 shillings and 1/2 pence. The Commission's members argued that the sum received by the immigrant "is a fair average, and does not show any signs of the coolie labourer being unfairly treated."[70] Richards also argued that the export duty borne by the colony's residents for the continuation of the immigration system was unfair. He firmly believed that the end of immigration would lead to an increase in wages and also labourers would be attracted from the other British West Indian colonies.

He depicted depressing living conditions among the indentured immigrants,

> They are deprived of latrines; there is no latrining of the place at all; and when there is a flood the wash down of these things may go to the pond . . . hence the increase of ankylostomiasis, and ground itch . . . and the anaemic conditions of the coolies. When they complete their five years the greater majority of them are thrown on the expenses of the Colony as poor and debilitated men.[71]

The Chairman of the Commission disagreed with Richard's statement that the majority of indentured Indians were paupers, and he provided evidence to show that during 1906–1909, Indians in Trinidad remitted sums varying from £10,000 and £17,000 to relatives in India. He also indicated that Indians in the colony had £111,000 in the banks and during the period 1901–1908 Indians bought 3,000–5,000 acres of land on an annual basis.[72] In defence, Richards claimed, "Those Indians you see reported as having bought properties and estates are, the greater part of them, the children of East Indians."[73]

The TWA maintained its opposition to Indian immigration and criticized its deleterious impact on the local economy as well as the disadvantages created for the African working class: "[B]lacks were well aware that the Indians depressed wages and increased unemployment. The Trinidad Workingmen's Association, the spokesman for skilled black workers, argued in 1909 that while Indian immigration was not

objectionable up to late 1870s, its continuation after that time had injured the interests of Creole labourers."[74]

In January 1911, the Association again contacted the Secretary of State for the Colonies, L. Harcourt, protesting against the further introduction of indentured immigrants. The Association indicated that the use of cheap labour contributed to the technological backwardness on the estates,

> sugar planters have ignored the use of all mechanical and labour saving appliances, even the plough has been almost entirely given up. The only agricultural implements now used on sugar estates are the hoe, the cutlass, the spade and the fork, and it is found to pay best to have everything done by manual labour. This is an evolution in inverse direction to what has taken place, during the same period in every other civilized country.[75]

In March 1911 the TWA suggested to the Administration that if indentureship was discontinued, the abolition of the Immigration Fund would save the colony £14,000 in annual subventions.[76] Although the TWA agitated for an end to Indian immigration, the Association demonstrated its concern for the working class in its intervention on behalf of Indians who were unjustly treated. The TWA emerged as the only non-Indian organization which expressed concern for the conditions of labour for the indentured workers. In January 1912, Urbain Lewis, Vice-President of the TWA, wrote to Governor Le Hunte identifying injustices against Indian workers. Lewis was critical of the harsh conditions of plantation labour and accompanying injustices against Indians: "[I]mported here . . . to work in the canefields consecutively in sun and rain from 6 o'clock a.m. to 5 o'clock p.m. . . . though physical inability in them are apparent . . . yet they are amenable to law? Bloody sugar canes!"[77]

In one instance, Acting Stipendiary Magistrate, V.X. de Verteuil, on 15 January 1912, sentenced Borrowsau, a time-expired Indian immigrant to pay a fine or serve one month's hard labour.[78] Lewis claimed that Borrowsau was innocent but convicted as a result of faulty interpreters who were confused over the patois he spoke.[79] Also, Lewis claimed to be shocked by the apparently unjust decision of de Verteuil in sentencing the immigrant to jail because he could not afford to pay the fine. Lewis informed the Protector of Immigrants, W.H. Coombs, of the outcome of Borrowsau's case, but was advised that the immigrants were not properly represented in Court because of inadequate staff.[80]

The Colonial Secretary, S.W. Knaggs, received a similar letter of protest from Lewis.[81]

In another instance, Urbain Lewis was in de Verteuil's Court on 8 February 1912 where he witnessed the seemingly unjust sentencing of an indentured immigrant.[82] Lewis subsequently presented a petition to H.A. Alcazar of the Legislative Council, which was forwarded to the Executive Council and upon Lewis' request, a copy was also sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lewis Harcourt. The petition condemned both the immigration system and decisions by de Verteuil,

> That in view of the remark of the inability of the Immigration department to protect (Indians) in a reasonable manner from bad (and no doubt prejudiced) decisions by any Stipendiary Justice of the Peace and V.X. de Verteuil in particular, it is unwise in the interest of the Rate and Tax payers of the Colony to introduce for the Sugar Cane producing interests any indentured immigtants [*sic*] for the season of 1912 and 1913.[83]

In his petition, Lewis complained of being debarred from de Verteuil's Court, and asked that he be suspended as a Magistrate pending an enquiry into the many decisions of the Appeal Court against him, including such rash decisions as that in the Borrowsau case. The Colonial Secretary, S.W. Knaggs, in response noted that the Governor had made an enquiry into the cases in question and thereafter had informed Lewis "you attempted to criticize the Magistrate decision in court and he very properly stopped you."[84]

In a letter to L. Harcourt (Secretary of State for the Colonies) on 30 December 1912, the Association argued that immigrants should be informed of the penalties they would suffer upon breach of their contract. Additionally, the indentured labourers needed to be aware that the ordinary rate of earnings was actually between 3 shillings and 4 shillings despite the promised wage of 5 shillings a week.[85] The TWA expressed concerns about the social consequences which might arise due to the unbalanced and disproportional ratio of 40 women to 100 men. This was one of the weaknesses of the Indian indentureship system "unless it is assumed that the women are to be, if not exactly prostitutes, at least women who do not object to a considerable amount of polyandry."[86]

In April 1913, Alfred Richards, President of the TWA, wrote to S.W. Knaggs, the Colonial Secretary, and argued that indentureship perpetrated the slave master mentality: "[I]t has converted our educated class into a body of men and women with all the hateful qualifications

of slave owners and has thus created an evil which will live long after the system is numbered among things in the past."[87] He added that the introduction of indentured labourers was responsible for extreme poverty and unhealthy living conditions which contributed to the rise in tuberculosis in the colony.[88]

Attitude of the colonial state towards the TWA

On 12 November 1896, the TWA attracted 400 persons at a public meeting held at the Greyfriars Presbyterian Church Hall in Port-of-Spain. Two resolutions were accepted and subsequently forwarded to the Acting Governor, C.C. Knollys. Both resolutions expressed discontent over the nature of governance in Trinidad,

> 1. That owing to mischievous legislation and an unequal distribution of wealth and taxation the peasant proprietary body particularly is being reduced to complete destitution at the close of 100 years of Crown Colony Government. 2. That this meeting entertains the deepest dissatisfaction and records its dissent from the expenditure of the £3,500 as sanctioned by the Legislative Council of the island for the coming Centenary of February 1897 under Crown Colony Government.[89]

In response to these views of the TWA, the Acting Governor in correspondence to Chamberlain criticized the TWA but more particularly its leaders, de Bourg and Corbie. Knollys informed Chamberlain that the issue of the Borough Council and the work of the government were being used by the Association to gain the public's attention.[90] In his disparaging comment, he added, "It is clear that Mr. De Bourg, the President of the Working Mens [*sic*] Association, is not a man whose views are entitled to respect."[91] Knollys also sought to discredit M. Corbie, the Secretary of the TWA: "The 'Secretary' is a black man, who is one of a class known in this colony as 'Petition writer.' The means of earning a livelihood is one which the Judges are endeavouring to put a stop to, and Corbie has already undergone imprisonment for an offence in connection with the same."[92]

The attitude of the colonial officials to TWA members was one of intolerance. Urbain Lewis, Vice President of the TWA, was considered by Governor Le Hunte, as bothersome,

> I may add that I have been informed that there is some doubt as to Mr. Lewis who is an elderly coloured man being in complete

> possession of his senses; he deluges the Government with complaints, some in such offensive terms that I have refused to entertain them unless they were couched in proper language.[93]

The non-recognition of the organization by the government partly contributed to the inactivity and fluctuating membership of the TWA. But the Association persisted and is credited with the establishment of a Labour Bureau in Port-of-Spain in May 1913 with nine branches across the colony, to function primarily in providing aid for unemployed workers.

During the period 1912–1913, official responses to the Association had not changed, since answers were "often derisive and irrelevant, and frequently their (the TWA's) communications were consigned to the waste paper basket."[94] In August 1912, the Acting Governor described the TWA's memorial on the colony's high rate of mortality from tuberculosis as "unmitigated drivel."[95] Similarly, George Le Hunte dismissed their correspondence on immigration as "absolutely ridiculous."[96] In 1919, the Inspector General of Constabulary, M. Costelloe, added uncomplimentary remarks about the Association: "The men who run the Workingmen's Association are of little importance either socially, commercially, or financially, in fact they have no weight or influence with any class of the community."[97]

Since 1896, the colonial officials in Trinidad had been monitoring the activities of Sydney de Bourg. A report by Sergeant P. McGuire, revealed unflattering details of de Bourg's personal life,

> DeBourg was a schoolmaster and married a black woman who owned a cocoa estate. The woman's sister went to live with the pair, with the result that both had children for him. DeBourg was dismissed from the school here (Couva) and left for Arima . . . . DeBourg has failed to get any situation, and has to turn "stomper"; nothing to lose, and nothing to gain. His principal idea of becoming an agitator is to have plenty to eat and good times.[98]

Such an unsavoury description of de Bourg did not equate with the ideals that members of the TWA were promoting. In 1906, the TWA made a public appeal for members of a certain standard to join the Association who were "honest and industrious workmen of a good character and not deemed a convict."[99]

By 1919, de Bourg was 65 years old and had spent 38 years in the colony; his occupation as a teacher had changed and he subsequently worked as a "Commission Agent" and "Accountant." Colonial officials

used certain information on his earlier life to discredit him and the Association. Detective Inspector, M. Costelloe (who claimed to have known de Bourg for eight years) informed the Inspector General of Constabulary that de Bourg was convicted for minor offences and had a history of dishonesty:

> [H]e is an ex-school master, having been dismissed for falsifying the Roll. After his dismissal he went to Venezuela where he is said to have been concerned in counterfeiting gold coins and for which he was arrested and imprisoned, but subsequently escaped and returned to Trinidad . . . . he is strongly suspected of practicing obeah, but being the cunning, clever scoundrel that he is, he has so far escaped the vigilance of the Police.[100]

In an attempt to maintain its integrity, the TWA removed de Bourg from its Executive in February 1918 after he was convicted of unlawfully practising as a solicitor.

Crisis in leadership

Even though the TWA appeared united, internal conflict was evident when Richards expelled "disloyal members" and rejected their attempt at readmission in May 1913.[101] Tension and disagreement partly stemmed from the cautious, conservative approach of the pro-Richards faction as disillusioned members began to agitate over the Association's inability to achieve improvements for workers.[102] Radical voices within the TWA demanded militant strategies such as strikes and more dynamic mobilization of workers. The anti-Richards faction was led by J. Sydney de Bourg who attacked what he claimed was the inept handling of affairs, the neglect of membership subscriptions and the infrequent meetings of the Association. The extent of the division was apparent by July 1914 with de Bourg's campaign for a change in leadership, canvassed through leaflets distributed to workers in Port-of-Spain.[103]

The troubles of the TWA in its formative years could be traced to weaknesses in its organizational structure. As early as 1909, G.D Swain, Inspector General of the Constabulary, said of the organization,

> The Association has no Banking Account, or Sinking Fund, and has no fixed time for meetings, a Committee meets at the residence of a town member, circulars are sent out notifying date and meeting place, and requesting each member to subscribe what he can afford.

> There is no fixed place for meetings, some Lodge or friendly Society's room is borrowed for the purpose.[104]

On 15 June 1910, de Bourg was convicted by Justice Blackwood Wright and ordered to pay a fine of £5 or one month imprisonment for not furnishing the Registrar of Friendly Societies with a five year valuation of the Organization.[105] In June 1914, the TWA failed to provide an annual return of its Workmen's Insurance Fund and thus faced legal action by the Registrar of Friendly Societies.[106] Four prominent members in the TWA's administration, Hilarion, Burke (Assistant Secretary) A. Alvarez (Treasurer) and Richards were found guilty and fined for fraud in connection with TWA funds.[107] Such incidents gave credence to Swain's comments particularly when both government and the employer class sought to tarnish the public image of the TWA.

One of the difficulties facing the TWA was its failure to amicably resolve the differences between de Bourg and Richards. Richards attempted to deter the supporters of de Bourg from establishing a parallel organization using the title "Trinidad Workingmen's Organisation." On 12 July 1914, the Committee of Management of the TWA was informed of the advice given by the Registrar General which indicated that the TWA's charter prevented a new group from using its name. The Registrar General indicated that due to their type of registration, it was not possible for the Association to change its address.[108]

Since a rival of the TWA was illegal, the de Bourg faction held a meeting and expelled Richards. The radicals subsequently wrote to Pointer informing him of the developments within the WMA.[109] Efforts to pacify the radical faction were futile, and in December 1914, Richards admitted defeat and resigned as President of the Association. Opposition to the leadership style and the relatively conservative attitude of Richards were underlying reasons for the Association's decline in popularity and influence among workers.[110] These convulsions within the TWA resulted in a short period of inactivity due to the two irreconcilable factions within the Association.

By 1917, there was an obvious division with two groups coexisting under the umbrella of the TWA,[111] and as tension persisted, the Richards faction continued to campaign for political reforms which conflicted with the aims of the radical faction. It is clear that the source of the conflict foreshadowed that which would put radicals such as Butler and Rienzi against Cipriani, the reformist, in the 1930s. Richards wished to focus largely on political reform as the road to social reform, whereas the radicals preferred the TWA to assume the de facto role of an industrial

union as well. This meant that the radicals were prepared to promote strike action against companies, and this became increasingly evident in the period 1917–1920.

Before the end of World War I, regular meetings were held by the WMA and the visible signs of support for the radicals were evident with the increase in the membership ranks. This was coupled with the concerted effort to win the favour of the government by adopting a policy of "education, thrift and industry."[112] The rebel faction was particularly influential among rank-and-file workers through its workplace-oriented activities.[113] New elections were held in 1917 with David Headley elected as President and James Brathwaite as Secretary, but the effects of dissension within the ranks of the TWA may have contributed to the limited role of the Association in the labour protests of that year.

Labour unrest: 1917–1920

Deplorable working conditions in the colony and the inflated cost of living due to World War I contributed to labour protests during the period 1917–1920. In February 1917, protests at Trinidad Lake Asphalt Company affected the refining, moulding and storage departments which were set ablaze by workers striking over poor working conditions and inadequate wages. The government responded by sending a police detachment to the company's compound that subsequently arrested five strike leaders, two of whom were sentenced to hard labour. Further disturbances were reported in South Trinidad at Point Fortin, Brighton, La Brea and Fyzabad.[114] The unrest at Fyzabad was easily crushed, as twenty strike leaders were expelled and replaced by strike breakers. Likewise, at Point Fortin, the company's threat to dismiss protesting workers resulted in a premature end to the agitation for better wages.

The local government sought to distance itself from the underlying causes of the disturbances in the oilfields. In April 1917, Governor Chancellor forwarded to the Colonial Office a copy of a report made by the Inspector General of the Constabulary, which claimed that the labourers had no genuine reasons for protesting: "These disturbances occurred without previous warning and their origin is obscure. The men have no real grievance as they are among the best paid labourers of their class in the Colony and in addition to that the majority of them are provided with free quarters."[115]

The year 1919 began with widespread tension and agitation among workers in the colony for higher wages. In February 1919, civil servants

petitioned the Governor seeking increased salaries, and in March, the atmosphere of discontent embraced stevedores and mechanics employed on the docks, along with porters and labourers at the Trinidad Government Railway.[116] Other occupations were affected as protests spread to the Trinidad Rice Mills and the Borough Council's Waterworks and Sewage department in Port-of-Spain. The employees of the local match factory identified with workers elsewhere and took strike action over low wages.[117] On 20 March 1919, the TWA held an extraordinary meeting at which two resolutions relevant to the labour unrest were unanimously adopted. Firstly, the Secretary and Executive Committee of the TWA were empowered to make representation on behalf of any existing organization or group of workers to the government or any employer of labour. Secondly, the Association's Secretary was authorized to accept the application of any group of workers seeking affiliation with the TWA.

It was in this milieu of ferment that the Association mobilized workers and established its first branch at La Brea in South Trinidad on 21 May 1919.[118] At this initial meeting, David Headley, President of the TWA, conducted the election of officers, W.B. Gibson was elected President and J. Cromwell as Secretary. Other confirmed positions included the Treasurer, two Trustees and six members comprising a Managing Committee. Headley advised the members of the La Brea branch that if they accepted the guidance of the TWA then they must abide by its decisions and act in accordance with the rules of the Association; he further stressed that the organization ought not to align itself to any activity which it could not uphold with dignity. Two delegates from Port-of-Spain, J. Brathwaite and J.Y. Harper also addressed the audience on the importance of co-operation and the need to establish a fund for the branch's activities. Tension at the Trinidad Lake Asphalt Company was successfully managed by the TWA when workers requested the Association to represent them in negotiations with the Company. Reluctantly, the Company met with the Association and in May 1919 workers were given a 33.3% wage increase. This victory boosted the status of the TWA among the working class and attracted additional members to the Association.[119]

The rise in both the price of foodstuffs and the cost of living without a corresponding increase in workers' wages, were the major underlying causes of the disturbances. This is indicated in *The Report of the Wages Committee 1919–1920*: "[L]abourers were unable to provide themselves with necessities to keep themselves in a physical condition for manual labour; and we are convinced that proper conditions are to be firmly

established throughout the Island that this minimum wage must, for the present at any rate, be established by law."[120] There was a phenomenal rise in the average cost of living in the colony which peaked at 140%. The rise in the cost of living index varied from 126% in Port-of-Spain, 167% in San Fernando to 171% in Tobago and 140% in rural Trinidad.[121] This increase in the cost of living, coupled with unemployment and underemployment served to exacerbate the economic situation in the colony.

Between February and November 1919, agitation gathered momentum among dockworkers in their demands for increased wages and shorter hours of labour. Obstinate shipping officials ignored the workers who appealed to the TWA. The Association intervened to represent the workers, primarily to avoid the escalation of unrest among the stevedores. However, their intervention proved useless as the shipping companies refused to arrive at a settlement, and after three weeks of waiting and bargaining, the stevedores decided to strike. David Headley, President of the TWA, interpreted its role in the strike action of the stevedores,

> The waterfront section approached the Trinidad Workingmen's Association requesting the latter to seek . . . higher wages for them stating at the same time that if they did not get what they wanted they would go on strike. After due deliberation my committee advised the men that the application for higher wages was quite in order, but that the determination to go on strike was to their mind ill-timed and out of place.[122]

In its involvement in negotiations in 1919, the TWA was coldly received as both the employers and Governor Chancellor refused to recognize the Association as a legitimate representative and bargaining body for stevedores. The Governor in his account to the Secretary of State reported, "No incident of importance in connection with the strike occurred until the 25th November, when a large crowd was assembled in Woodford Square outside the Red House by Mr. James Brathwaite, Secretary of the Workingmen's Association, who demanded an interview with me with a view to settle the strike."[123]

On the 27 November, Governor Chancellor met with representatives of the shipping companies. The Agent of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company who replied on behalf of the shipping agents, indicated to the Governor that they neither recognized nor acknowledged the TWA because only a few stevedores belonged to the Association.[124]

One of the reasons for the Governor's reaction to the TWA was his belief that the Association was responsible for initiating the protest among the stevedores. Governor Chancellor, in correspondence with Viscount Milner (Secretary of State for the Colonies), identified the influence of the Association in the disturbances: "The strike was promoted by the Trinidad Workingmen's Association, an organization which was established in 1897 but has been dormant for the last five years until it was revived a few months ago by two men named Brathwaite and Headley."[125] Additionally, Chancellor also accused the Association of planning to create dissension on the sugar plantations: "During the morning of the 6th December further reports reached me that representatives of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association had compelled the labourers at Orange Grove and Waterloo Sugar Estates to go on strike and that riots were anticipated."[126] The pro-government *Trinidad Guardian* suggested that the labour disturbances were part of a revolutionary plot by the TWA to overthrow the government.[127]

At Trinidad's Central Oilfields, workmen and fitters went on strike demanding a 25% salary increase; likewise, striking scavengers employed by the city council demanded a 50% salary increase.[128] Strike action spread to the plantation sector and at the Woodford Lodge Estate, Lal Beharrysingh, one of the workers, was killed. Faced with island-wide unrest, the British government despatched the Royal Sussex regiment to restore order as its forces arrived in December 1919.[129]

On 6 December 1919, disturbances occurred in Tobago among the employees and labourers of the Public Works Department in Scarborough who were seeking higher wages.[130] Immediately after the protests, the Director of Public Works, A. G. Bell, announced that a bonus of 25% from 1 January 1920 would be given to employees of the Public Works Department, and men employed in task work would benefit from similar wage increases.[131] To ascertain whether the TWA was involved in promoting the strike in Tobago, the police examined the list of passengers in search of names of TWA officials who would have possibly travelled by the "Belize" steamer on 1 December. Governor Chancellor informed Milner of the outcome of the police investigation: "[T]hey have not been able to implicate any of them or to establish a connection between the riot and the activities of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association."[132]

The Governor eventually agreed to establish a Conciliation Board to enquire into the conditions of labour in the colony. Among those nominated by the Governor were Dr S.M. Laurence, Dr A.M. McShine, two representatives of the shipping companies and two representatives of

the strikers, J. Phillips (a Stevedore) and A.F. Brathwaite (Acting Secretary of the Association).[133] Governor Chancellor also met with the Chamber of Commerce to discuss proposals for a Wages Committee for the colony, but the Chamber was hesitant to be on such a Committee since "they feared that they would expose themselves to adverse criticism by the planters and other employers of labour, if they were publicly to express the opinion that the present rates wages were too low."[134] The Chamber was also reluctant to be associated with the TWA on a Wages Committee but the Governor, anxious for a peaceful and quick resolution to the unrest, persuaded them to reconsider. He conceded that recognition ought to be given to the Association because of its great influence among the working class: "The Workingmen's Association had now great influence among the working classes, and by meeting representatives of the Association on the Wages Committee, the employers might be able to ensure industrial peace in the colony for a number of years."[135] The persistence of the TWA culminated in a settlement, on 3 December 1919, with a concession to the workers, as the shipping agents consented to a wage increase of 25%.

In December 1919, tension engulfed the Lake Asphalt Company. Although the Company refused to acknowledge the TWA as the bargaining unit for its employees, the Association remained adamant in representing the workers. An ultimatum was given to the Company as workers demanded an increase in wages and an eight hour work day with double pay for work on Sundays and public holidays. The strike was averted, and although credit was not given to the TWA for its efforts, it was later indicated in a special report of the Wages Committee that stevedores and other asphalt workers at Brighton did indeed receive higher fortnightly wages.[136] Governor Chancellor recounted the Association's involvement in the negotiations with Lake Asphalt,

> On the 31 December they addressed a letter to the Manager of the New Trinidad Lake Asphalt Company demanding on behalf of the employees of the Company large increases of wages and the establishment of an eight hours' day. The Manager of the Company replied that he would not consider changes in the rates of wages pending the receipt of the report of the Wages Committee.[137]

On 5 January 1920, a strike erupted at the United British West Indies Petroleum Syndicate at Point Fortin. Governor Chancellor noted the Association's role in restraining the strikers, but he suggested that the TWA ought to indicate whether or not it was involved in the unrest

at the Petroleum Syndicate: "It is due to the Trinidad Workingmen's Association to state that as far as is known, this strike received no encouragement from them, (since) Mr. A.F. Brathwaite, acting secretary of the Association, who proceeded to Point Fortin on the 10 January, urged the men to return to work."[138]

A few days later, on 8 January 1920, when the employees of the United British Oil Company went on strike, Governor Chancellor was convinced that the strike was masterminded by the TWA. He informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies that if the TWA persisted in encouraging the strikes, he would deport officers of the TWA, especially several who were not natives of Trinidad and Tobago.[139] During the disturbances of December 1919 and January 1920, the working class felt the overpowering force of State repression when 82 strikers were either fined or arrested, while the government fined and deported some of the leaders of the strikes including A.F. Brathwaite, Acting Secretary of the TWA and Executive member, John Sydney de Bourg.

The role and achievements of the Association in the strikes made the TWA one of the earliest agencies engaged in collective representation of workers in Trinidad. Despite rejection and opposition both from the government and the employer class, the Association, though not a trade union, was catapulted into prominence. Workers gained confidence in the Association, the government hesitatingly acknowledged its influence, and companies unwillingly had dialogue with its officers. Indeed, during the strikes, the intervention of the TWA on behalf of the working class demonstrated the potential strength of organized labour.[140]

The urban working class sought to form a representative organization to address grievances facing the working class in the colony. The government ignored working-class issues that were occasionally raised and also the protests that erupted during 1917–1920. However, the TWA and the protests were not a threat to the government who continued to oppress the working class.

2
Early Years: The Trinidad Workingmen's Association

The TWA began a new phase of its development under the leadership of Captain Arthur Andrew Cipriani. In 1919, Cipriani became a member of the TWA, and two years later he served both on its Management Committee and also as chairman of its Executive Committee.[1] Elected as president in 1923, his charismatic leadership style and formidable presence in subsequent years transformed the Association into the most vibrant labour organization in the colony.[2]

The expression and revitalization of the TWA was due to the dedicated leadership of Cipriani, the reduced bureaucracy in decision-making, a responsible central executive committee and co-operative membership committed to the struggle for the rights of the working class. There were favourable responses to his work as evidenced in the establishment of several branches throughout the colony and the steady increase in its membership ranks during the late 1920s.

William Howard-Bishop,[3] General Secretary of the TWA, was one of the most dynamic Executive members of the organization during the period 1921–1930. Prior to 1921, Howard-Bishop published the *Spectator*, and after its closure he contributed articles to the *Argos*, another periodical with a limited circulation. His activities were closely monitored by the colonial authorities as indicated in the report of Detective Inspector M. Costelloe, who sought to expose certain of his reputed misdemeanours, "While in Tobago in addition to teaching he acted as Scoutmaster and while so acting was alleged to have embezzled monies and was expelled."[4] And, in 1914, Howard-Bishop was ejected from the Alfred Richards' faction of the TWA for allegedly stealing the organization's funds. Subsequently, in 1918, Bishop was fined £5 for illegally practising as a solicitor in Tobago.[5]

Scotland Yard detectives also monitored Howard-Bishop's financial transactions during his visit to England. In 1922, Inspector Albert Kirchner informed the Chief Inspector that Howard-Bishop obtained a loan of £1 from the Labour Party Office, which was not repaid. The loan was given because Howard-Bishop had lost a bank draft valued at £83. However, the Inspector indicated that there was no evidence that such a draft initially existed. Upon meeting Ben C. Spoor, BLP Member of Parliament, Howard-Bishop recounted his predicament and obtained £85, also not repaid, from the Labour Party's funds.[6]

Furthermore, it was reported that whilst in Britain, Howard-Bishop published two pamphlets – *Trinidad in Parliament* and *An Open Overseas Letter to the West Indies and to British Guiana* in which he used, without permission, the mailing address of the British Labour Party's headquarters.[7] He enjoyed such privileges with the Labour Party because D. Headley, President of the TWA (in a letter to the Secretary of the BLP), recommended Howard-Bishop as "Professor of Education and Official Organiser of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association."[8] Despite allegations of fraud against him, the TWA benefitted immensely from the leadership he provided as a committed member of the Executive, an efficient General Secretary and Editor of the *Labour Leader*.

In the 1920s, the Government persisted in being uncomplimentary and prejudiced against the TWA as evidenced in the assessment of Governor Wilson. He informed Winston Churchill, the Secretary of State for the Colonies: "The Workingmen's Association is not a successful institution, its claim to represent the workers of the Colony are quite unfounded, and the only public meetings it has attempted to organize during the past two years have been complete failures."[9] This was a biased opinion of the Governor since there is evidence which indicate that with the advent of Cipriani in the Association, there was a successful resuscitation of the work of the TWA.

The Association established its first newspaper, the *Labour Leader* in August 1922. In its early years, the paper was located at 95 Charlotte Street, Port-of-Spain and sold at four cents with distribution to 37 areas including Princes Town, Rio Claro, Arima, Toco and Tobago. The *Labour Leader* was the only newspaper in the colony that was political and also representative of the working class. The publication was initially distributed on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays with a circulation of 1,200 copies;[10] it was eventually published on a weekly basis. The existence of the *Labour Leader* provided a convenient medium to notify the TWA's membership of annual elections, special meetings, activities

among the branches, as well as furnishing information concerning local and international events pertinent to working-class issues. The *Labour Leader* provided a much needed forum for workers wishing to express their discontent over working conditions, or to question governmental policy as it affected labour in the colony.

The diversity in the occupations of those in the leadership of the Workingmen's Association reflected a cross-section of persons ranging from middle class to working class. This was apparent in an annual meeting of the Association held on 1 February 1923, at Crystal Hall on Henry Street, Port-of-Spain in which the following persons were elected – Captain Cipriani (Planter) as President, David Headley (Merchant) as Vice President and chairman of the Advisory Board, George Davis (Stevedore) as Treasurer, W. Howard-Bishop (Journalist and Commission Agent, also Editor and Proprietor of the *Labour Leader*) as General Secretary, Wilfred Andre (Barrister-at-law), Vivian Henry (Solicitor and Conveyancer), William Small (Mechanic), Thomas Blackwell (Stevedore) and Thomas Foy (Stevedore).[11]

Consolidation

During Cipriani's tenure as President there was a deliberate effort of the TWA to mobilize the working class belonging to various occupational groups in Trinidad and Tobago. The remarkable spread and rapid growth of the TWA is evident from the number of branches which were established both among the urban and rural working class.

There were also sections within the branches representing occupational groups such as carpenters, clerks, printers, tailors, stevedores and shipwrights. The co-ordination of branches and the management of the TWA were under the supervision of its policy-making unit, the Executive Council, consisting of the President, Vice-President, and the General Secretary who were ex-officio members. To these were added twelve members representing various occupations in the colony. Provisions were made for a more representative body which constituted an umbrella administrative unit known as the Committee of Management comprising the ex-officio members and one member to every 50 persons on the roll of various branches and sections. The general membership of the Association was grouped into 18 categories or occupational sections inclusive of longshoremen, stevedores, porters, shipwrights, ironworkers, printers, tailors, domestic servants and seamstresses.[12]

Concurrent with the formation of its administrative machinery, the Association embarked on a vigorous membership drive and expansion

programme in 1925. The Executive prepared contribution cards and booklets containing Rules and Articles of the Association. Applications for the establishment of branches were submitted to the General Secretary and individuals seeking membership applied either to the General Secretary or the Financial Secretary. To assist in its promotional campaign, the TWA, through the *Labour Leader* appealed for new members to join with an entrance fee of 1s 6d.[13] In a letter by Howard-Bishop, the General Secretary, entitled, "A call to the workers" it was envisaged that recruitment would attract 20,000 financial members,

> the Executive Committee appeals to every man and woman working either by hand or brain to rally to the Red Standard not for defiance to constituted authority, but for defence against the intrusion of those of the employing class who have not a humanitarian concept of what should be their correct mental attitude towards the prime factor in our industrial system.[14]

Among the major achievements in the consolidation of the TWA was the formation on 15 April 1925 of the "San Fernando Workingmen's Association." At this inaugural meeting which was held at the Imperial Hall, on Mucurapo Street, Krishna Deonarine commenced the meeting and explained that in preparation for the formation of the Southern branch, three membership lists were distributed in which there were 400 persons who indicated their interests in the work of the Association. For the first time since the formation of the TWA in Trinidad, Indians occupied major Executive positions in a branch of the Association. Krishna Deonarine was elected President of the San Fernando branch, A. Ogerally (Secretary) and Chatergoon Maharaj (Treasurer). Others in the Executive included Stanley Franklin (Vice-President) and Edgar Hayne (Assistant Secretary).[15]

The establishment of the San Fernando branch in 1925 signalled a new feature in the TWA with the emergence of the Indian presence in the Association. The crossing of the racial divide was a major advance by the organization since African-Indian co-operation was essential both for social cohesion and for economic and political reform. Similar efforts to incorporate Indians in the TWA included the appointment of Sarran Teelucksingh as Vice-President of the Association in 1925, and the nomination of Timothy Roodal and J.S. Dayanand Maharaj, both as Honorary Vice-Presidents.

Deonarine, like Howard-Bishop and de Bourg, was constantly regarded as a radical and was under surveillance by colonial authorities.

In December 1927, Governor Byatt informed L.S. Amery of the interception of a telegram which Rienzi planned to send to the President of Russia.[16] Byatt also notified C.R. Darnley of the Colonial Office that Rienzi attempted to affiliate the East Indian National Congress with the Third International.[17] Deonarine, a solicitor's clerk, was viewed by the Governor as also creating tension within the TWA,

> He is active in the Workingmen's Association and writes, as you see, from the San Fernando Branch, but there are distinct indications that he will shortly split the Association in two, for the Port-of-Spain H'qrs and the bulk of the Association already show an inclination to repudiate him and his friends, which is so much to the good.[18]

The growing interest in the work of the Association and the rapid formation of branches constituted a significant feature in the mobilization of the working class in the colony during the period 1925–1930. The Association established branches in different districts and used various strategies to establish links among them in order to promote cohesion among the working class. The inaugural or affiliation ceremonies of branches or sections, their anniversaries, the installation of officers and the results of elections were featured in detail in the *Labour Leader* in order to advertise activities and to promote a sense of fellowship and community among labour. These occasions were celebrated with visits from Cipriani, Howard-Bishop and other representatives from the Executive of the TWA. Delegates from other branches were prominent at these functions, bringing greetings particularly to newly formed branches.[19] Rallies formed an integral part of the promotional efforts of the Association. At these rallies such as on Labour Day, members wore the badge of the Association and red buttons or roses.

Branches attracted to their membership not merely the unlettered among the labouring class, but leadership positions were in the hands of suitably qualified persons. For example, in Sangre Grande, at the branch elections on 12 June 1928, J.W. Carraciolo was re-elected as President, Andrew Labastide (First Vice-President) and Bertram Skerrette (Treasurer). These joined others to form the Executive who were described as "[t]he cream of the intellect of serious minded persons in the district."[20] In the Tabaquite branch, the President, Henry Seecheran, was a small cocoa proprietor who managed quarrying operations on his property in the Central Range and also owned a sawmill.[21] At the California branch in Central Trinidad, the President was E. Valley, a

mason, while the Second Vice-President George Valley, was a Methodist lay-preacher.[22]

The administrative structure of the branches included elected Executive Committees which served a one year term. Modelled after the parent organization, in each branch there was a "Committee of Management" consisting of officers of the Executive and six other members. This was the major administrative unit responsible for the planning of special events, for programs to increase membership, and for the general supervision of the work of the branch.

Statistical variations in reports on the membership of the TWA create some difficulties in the assessment of the growth of the Association. Ramdin suggests that by 1925 there were 16 branches and a total of 16,526 members.[23] The *Labour Leader* indicated a phenomenal growth in membership. In February 1928, it reported that there were 46 branches with a membership of 35,000; by August 1929 the number of branches rose to 100 with 65,000 members.[24] By the early 1930s, there were reportedly120,000 members,[25] but in March 1930, Cipriani informed Walter Citrine that the membership of the TWA was 50,000.[26] The *People* reported that in 1933, the estimated membership was 70,000.[27] Reddock indicates that by the early 1930s, the estimated membership of the TWA was 300,000.[28] It is possible that exaggerated figures were intended to facilitate the appeal of the Association for wider acceptance and to increase its credibility in official circles.

The expansion of the TWA was not restricted to the formation of branches throughout the colony. Small unregistered fraternities[29] in Port-of-Spain such as the Trinidad Union of Railwaymen (TUR) and the Trinidad Chauffeurs' Association shared a close relationship with the TWA. The TUR in 1930, approved the formation of a branch of clerical workers of the Trinidad Government Railways which was subsequently affiliated with the TWA. Although an independent organization, the TUR held consultations with Cipriani who urged them to form one union for all railway workers which would facilitate their affiliation with the National Union of Railway Workers in England and the International Federation of Transport Workers.[30] In the novel *Crown Jewel*, there is mention of a pipefitter in Point Fortin joining the Workers' Party and of a strike among bakers in Port-of-Spain.[31]

The TWA generated its finances primarily through membership fees of 6d per month, and fund-raising rallies in which branches fully participated. In an effort to raise £500 to send a delegate to the Imperial Labour Conference carded for June 1924 in England, the Association organized a public meeting to inform its supporters of

the concerns which were to be presented by delegates to the Conference. Some of the issues to be discussed were the Agricultural Bank, cane farming, industry, shipping, workmen's compensation and representative government.[32] On 28 May 1925, the TWA decided to send Cipriani to England to represent the workers' interest, and at public meetings for Cipriani's "Off to England Campaign" speakers made stirring pleas for monetary contributions. In June, similar rallies were hosted by district groups at Couva, Chaguanas, Rio Claro, Sangre Grande, Prince Town and Woodford Square. At these fundraising meetings, there were representatives from other branches as was obvious in July 1925 at Liberty Hall, Port-of-Spain, when delegates from rural areas were present: Issac Martin (Morne Diable), J. Sergeant (Penal), W.A. Byam (La Brea), J.Fredericks (Chaguanas), J.O. Connor (Carapaichima).[33]

TWA: A service organization

At regular and special meetings of the branches of the TWA, worker-related issues dictated the agenda. On 6 May 1923, Cipriani and W. Howard-Bishop (General Secretary of the TWA and Editor of the *Labour Leader*) attended a meeting of the Railway Workers' Federation held at Crystal Hall in Port-of-Spain where "members from all parts of the country and from almost every station in the service" agreed to the introduction of a relief scheme that would benefit workers who were sick or had lost their jobs. Similarly the Trinidad Chauffeurs' Association when faced with a crisis of declining membership, carded Cipriani as the feature speaker at a special meeting in July 1924 which brought together chauffeurs in Port-of-Spain to examine problems affecting their trade.[34]

Branches were instrumental in receiving petitions and requests from workers in their respective districts who required advice and assistance with labour-related problems. They served as supporting agencies to coordinate the needs of workers, individual proprietors or farmers. At an historic labour conference organized by the Chaguanas TWA in March 1924, canefarmers in Chaguanas appealed to the Association for assistance. Subsequently, the first Cane Farmers' section in Trinidad was formed, thus taking the initial step for the inclusion of the rural working class of the sugar industry under the umbrella of the TWA.[35] A similar conference followed on 3 May 1925, at the Theatre Hall in Chaguanas where the Cane Farmers' section of the TWA articulated grievances and forwarded resolutions to the Executive. Prominent issues included a

higher price of 10s a ton to be paid for their canes and the unfair distribution of drinking water in certain villages in Central Trinidad.[36] The San Fernando branch of the Association met at the Union Diamond Lodge (Greenidge Hall), at Mucurapo Street on 20 May 1925 and agreed that a petition, sent to the Executive Committee, would be forwarded to the Local Government requesting that the qualification of burgesses in San Fernando be reduced from £20 per annum to £12 10s per annum for occupiers of houses.[37]

Other initiatives of certain TWA branches to assist workers included the formation of a "Penny Savings Bank" which was pioneered by the Princes Town branch on the 15 November 1930 by Cipriani. The Bank provided credit facilities for the working class and encouraged savings among the lower-income earners of the community. Shares valued at a few pence were sold to TWA members. In March 1931, the Sangre Grande branch launched a similar Bank. The Arouca branch provided a "Burial Fund" and in 1931, the Secretary, Isaiah Joseph, reminded financial members to ensure regular payment of dues as those in arrears of five months would not be eligible for benefits.[38]

Attempts were made to resolve disputes among the TWA's branches and sometimes it was necessary to take disciplinary action against members who violated its rules. On 6 March 1927, there was unanimous agreement on disciplinary action to expel eight members of the Stevedore section for working at 30 cents an hour which was an infringement of the 60 cents an hour agreed upon by the Executive Committee and steamer agents.[39] In late 1929, dissension within the Maffeking section regarding its finances was resolved with the intervention of the Executive of the Association during its special visit to Mayaro, Maffeking and Grand Lagoon sections.[40]

At meetings of TWA groups, a certain amount of comraderie and patriotism was fostered among workers as reflected in the singing of labour hymns and songs inspired by the visions and ideals of the working class. Such songs as "Onward Friends of Freedom" or the "Red Flag" were regularly sung at meetings. The labour hymn "Onward Friends of Freedom" encapsulated the labour movement's quest for unity, and its appeal for commitment among workers in their struggle for justice. In its lyrics there were distinct appeals for labour to unite and be prepared to overcome challenges for the benefit of their families and other workers. The song also honoured women and appealed to them "seamstress in the hovel and women of the mill," reminding them that the labour movement (especially the TWA) recognized the contribution of women in the struggles of the working class.

Likewise, "The Red Flag," was frequently sung at meetings to inspire and challenge the TWA workers to be courageous and strong, remembering the victories of workers' movements, particularly the proletarian revolution in Russia in 1917. Furthermore, this song commonly used at the close of meetings, summoned workers to be prepared for persecution, even if the outcome is death: "The people's flag is deepest red; it shrouded oft our martyred dead . . . With heads uncovered swear we all, to bear it onward till we fall." Such sentiments were intended to instil confidence and optimism in workers and gave the psychological and moral impetus required in their struggle. V.S. Naipaul in *The Mystic Masseur* mentioned a strike-leader in the sugar industry, as late as 1949, reminding fellow strikers of the significance of the flag, "He shouted, Brothers and sisters, you know why the Red Flag red? . . . The Red Flag dye with we blood, and is high time for we to hold up we head high high in the market-place like free and independent men and command big armies in heaven."[41]

In all branches and sections, members were being educated and prepared for involvement in the political, economic and social issues which affected the colony. This was evident with the introduction of limited electoral representation and the active engagement of the Association in electoral politics since 1925. The successful co-ordination and the effective administrative system which governed branches and sections, their collective concerns and united efforts, made the TWA the most powerful non-governmental body in the colony. In fact, it was the only such organization which commanded the attention both of the government and the employer class in the 1920s and 1930s.

Spirituality

Religion played a significant role in the activities of the TWA as was evident in the election of chaplains in all branches and sections of the Association. Chaplains included lay-members such as R. Grant of the Tunapuna branch, Alfred Taylor of Tabaquite, E. Hamlet of Maffeking Section no. 2 and Charles Worrell of Arouca. There were instances where prominent church leaders occupied executive offices. These included Rev. C. W. Benjamin, who served as First Vice-President of the Princes Town branch.[42]

The promotion and maintenance of spirituality among the membership was obvious with the inclusion of religious ceremonies for various events. Banners were blest at special worship services, festivals such as May Day celebrations were observed with church services and public

parades during which Christian hymns such as "Onward Christian Soldiers" were sung.[43]

The TWA found no difficulty in its use of Christian hymns alongside the revolutionary song the "Red Flag." Members of the Association used the song to inspire them in their struggle for a better society, but their quest for social reform ought to be understood in terms of Fabianism and Christian Socialism rather than through the violent revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The TWA was receptive to Fabianism which preferred social change through peaceful democratic means, through trade union activity and the education of the masses. In 1926, a branch of the Fabian Society was established in Trinidad with Cipriani as the temporary President and Howard Bishop as temporary Secretary. There is no evidence to suggest that the branch existed for a long time.[44]

In 1930, the TWA Executive, in Port-of-Spain, conducted a public meeting at the Princes Building in honour of Rev. C.F. Andrews on his visit to Trinidad. He lectured on the horrible conditions associated with East Indian labour and the serious limitations of Indian indentureship.[45] The distinguished missionary served in South Africa and India where he worked with Mohandas Gandhi during India's struggle for independence.

It is not surprising that the working class was closely associated with certain Christian denominations, particularly the Moravian and Methodist in Tobago. The TWA used their church buildings and schools for various meetings and functions, and they shared a close relationship with their priests. There were strong historical linkages between African labourers and these denominations. The early anti-slavery movement in England had received its impetus from the Methodist evangelical movement in the eighteenth century. In the post-1775 period, Methodism was associated with the working-class movement in England and served as a "stabilising social force."[46] In the agricultural villages in England, the Methodist chapel was the medium through which the labourer gained independence and self-respect. The influence of Methodism upon trade unions was evident in their centralized organization, the regular collection of penny subscriptions and their emphasis on the importance of the downtrodden in society.

Guyanese historian, Walter Rodney, observed that the non-conformist churches were sympathetic to the plight of Africans in the Caribbean. In reference to Guyana, he identified the work of the London Missionary Society and Congregational Union of England whose missionaries laboured among the dispossessed Africans in rural communities of

British Guiana.[47] Rev. John Smith of the London Missionary Society, was found guilty and sentenced to hang as one of the instigators of the Demerara slave rebellion in 1816.[48] In 1897, another of the its missionaries, Rev. F.C. Glasgow, gave evidence before the West India Royal Commission on behalf of the African working class in the colony.

The strong Christian presence in the TWA and the Association's relationship with the churches may have contributed to the discomfort of non-Christians attracted to the organization, particularly East Indians who were mainly Hindus and Muslims in that period of adjustment when inter-faith encounter was in its formative stages. The subsequent involvement of Indian leaders such as Krishna Deonarine, Timothy Roodal and Sarran Teelucksingh in the work of the TWA in 1925 signalled at least the beginning of a better understanding within the working class despite racial and religious differences.

It may be to the credit of the TWA and its programme, that it became an intermediary of ecumenical encounter and inter-religious contact in an age when missionary proselytization was aggressive and sometimes viewed suspiciously by non-Christians. Social interaction among Christians, Hindus and Muslims at the level of the TWA may have contributed significantly in laying foundations for religious tolerance between the two major races who belonged to religious faiths with sharp doctrinal differences.

Women power

The TWA held the distinction of being the first labour organization in the colony and possibly the British Caribbean to take an active interest in the role of working-class women in the labour movement and to incorporate them into its membership. The recognition of women and their rights in the workplace was similar to the principle of gender equality adopted by the British Labour Party in 1907, which also provided that women be granted four seats on its Executive Committee.[49]

During his visit to Trinidad in October 1912, Joseph Pointer, (Member of Parliament and Delegate of the Parliamentary Labour Party, House of Commons, England), expressed satisfaction that women attended the Association's public meetings and rallies. He also emphasized that the participation of women was essential for the improvement and progress of the labour movement. On 16 October 1912, at one of the TWA's meetings held at Queen's Park Savannah, there were approximately 50–60 women in a crowd of 2,000 supporters.[50]

On 8 September 1924, a delegation of women met with the Governor to discuss the issue of extending the franchise for women,[51] and during Cipriani's campaign for municipal office in 1925, he advocated the principle of inclusion of women in the Borough Council.[52] In August 1927, when he was Deputy Mayor of Port-of-Spain, he moved a motion in the Port-of-Spain Borough Council to amend the Port-of-Spain Corporation Ordinance, which would allow women to contest seats on the Borough Council.[53] Mayor Gaston Johnston, who presided during 1926–1929, refused to entertain proposals for the introduction of women in the Council. The editorial of the *Trinidad Guardian* was critical of Cipriani's historic motion to allow women to serve on the Borough Council. The newspaper argued that women's political consciousness had not yet matured because of the failure of women in the colony to identify with the motion at least through a public demonstration on the issue.[54]

The *Labour Leader* in an editorial entitled "Seats for Women" noted that for the second time within 12 months, the motion initiated by Cipriani for the eligibility of women to City Council's seats was defeated by Mayor Johnston's casting vote.[55] Cipriani was influenced by the British socialist organization, the Fabian Society, which approved a separate women's group and accepted the principle of women's equality in society.[56] In South Trinidad, the TWA promoted the recognition of the rights of women in the colony when in 1926, the San Fernando branch of the Association under the leadership of Krishna Deonarine forwarded to the Government a petition requesting the extension of the franchise to women and the reduction of property qualifications for burgesses.[57]

The treatment of working-class women in the colony was raised in England by F.O. Roberts (Member of Parliament) at the annual meeting of the TUC in 1926. Roberts had attended the West Indian Labour Conference at Demerara, British Guiana and also visited Trinidad where he observed the working conditions of women,

> There is no form of protection for women workers, who do all kinds of heavy work for very low wages. In Trinidad, women of superior education and industrial training are compelled to go into domestic service for wages of from 12s to 20s per month, or to take up manual occupations such as breaking stones in quarries and on the roads, or carry heavy loads of bunker coal on their heads from barges on the wharf to the depots, under the most primitive conditions at the risk of life and limb. The average wage of women employed on such work in about 1s per day.[58]

The concerns of the TUC with labour problems in the colonies was limited to such reports at their annual conferences, but little effort was made to pressure the Colonial Office to improve the wages and working conditions of women.

The TWA sponsored a delegate from the Women's section to attend the National Conference of Labour Women in Huddersfield, England, 16–17 May 1928. Furthermore, the Association sent both male and female representatives to attend the Commonwealth Labour Conference that was held in England, July 1928.[59] The failure of the Association to send delegates to the National Conference of Labour Women held at the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool, 2–4 June 1931, prompted the *Labour Leader* to respond, "it is well to remark, also, that any expense incurred by the Association in sending across at least one female delegate to share the privilege of deliberating upon matters of moment, would have been amply compensated from all angles."[60]

By 1927, there were two official Women's sections operating in Port-of-Spain, section no.1 in which Mrs Alkins was President, and section no. 2 (Domestic servants' section) led by Mrs A. Husbands, a Barbadian immigrant. Group activities included courses in millinery (making women's hats) and dressmaking such as those offered at the Women's section no. 1 at Prince Street, Port-of-Spain. Women's sections were administered by an Executive Committee consisting of a President, Secretary, Treasurer and a few other members. The Committee of Management was a more representative body which included the Executive members and at least four women.[61]

The presence of women in the TWA was not restricted to meetings and activities of women's sections since they were eligible for membership in branches and sections of the Association which comprised both men and women. In November 1930, Mrs Tewitt was installed as the "Lady President" of the Port-of-Spain (eastern) branch. Cecilia Yearwood was a member of the Rio Claro branch until her death on 17 February 1931. The President of the Delaford branch in Tobago, James E. Clark referred to Cecilia Urquart one of their members as the "Queen of their party."[62] In Cipriani's address to the new sections in South at Parrylands and Point Fortin, he appealed for a greater female presence in the TWA,

> We want women to be interested and hit out on their own when possible. Their place is right here with us. Whenever there is a meeting of the association bring the women and children with you. All have equal rights and privileges. The association is not one that is hostile; it is a movement that stands on another road and moves by reason.[63]

The TWA was fortunate to include in its membership one of the colony's leading radical women of the 1930s, Elma Francois. She was born in St. Vincent in 1897 and migrated to Trinidad in 1919.[64] Francois joined the TWA and addressed its public meetings and remained with the Association after its transition to the Trinidad Labour Party in 1934.[65] One of her close friends, Jim Barrette, reminisced,

> I first saw her one night at a TLP meeting at the corner of Quarry and Observatory Street. She spoke on the platform with Julian Brathwaite. She had a good voice and was an explicit speaker. I was fascinated by the way she put it. She was strong on things Africa . . . one day she gave me a book on the French revolution to read and asked me to bring other friends.[66]

Elma Francois and Jim Headley,[67] (also of the TWA), became discontented with the refusal of Cipriani to pay more attention to the unemployed persons in the colony. On 19 June 1933, a hunger march (not sanctioned by Cipriani) through the streets of Port-of-Spain to the Red House, was organized by some TWA members.[68] Cipriani's reservations and conservatism eventually led to the decision of the disillusioned group (including Headley and Francois) to break ranks with Cipriani and form the National Unemployed Movement (NUM) in 1934.[69] Other members of NUM included Bertie Percival, oilfield workers of Fyzabad and Christiana King who served as Secretary of the NUM.[70] In Port-of-Spain, the NUM was supported by approximately 1,200 unemployed persons some of whom attended public meetings of the movement where economic issues affecting the working class were addressed.[71] By 1935, the NUM evolved into a new organization – Negro Welfare Cultural and Social Association (NWCSA) which was "more structured and organised" than the NUM and Elma Francois was its "chief ideologue."[72]

Daisy Crick who was President of the La Brea branch of the TWA, emerged as an eminent leader in the 1930s.[73] She was actively involved in the June 1937 disturbances and was a prominent platform speaker in Point Fortin, La Brea and Cochrane during the period of unrest.[74]

Tobago

The activities of the Workingmen's Association and its formation of branches were not confined to Trinidad. By July 1929, the TWA signalled its interest in consolidating its activities in Tobago, and in early

January 1930 branches of the Association were established in Plymouth, Scarborough, Patience Hill, Lambeaux Village, Mason Hall, Roxborough, Belle Garden Moriah, Glamorgan, Bethel, Canaan and Bloody Bay.[75] The *Labour Leader* reported that as a result of the efforts of Aldon F. Charles and members of the Scarborough branch, 208 workers had enrolled in the Association and more than 100 members joined the TWA in Tobago.[76]

Towards the end of January 1930, a delegation of nine members from Trinidad including Cipriani, Roodal, Henry and Brathwaite visited Tobago for affiliation ceremonies for branches of the Association. The labour representatives from Trinidad were greeted by a crowd of 6,000 persons wearing red rosettes signifying their support for labour. The reception committee comprising L. Edwards (Secretary), J. St. Louis of the Moriah branch, William Timothy of Bloody Bay, N. Williams from Plymouth and H. Frederick of Belle Garden joined a procession led by a brass band, along Main and Bacelot Streets to the R.C grounds where Cipriani gave his inaugural address to the large crowd.[77] The delegation from Trinidad visited 16 districts including Pembroke, Speyside, Glamorgan, Roxborough, Delaford and Belle Garden. A fund-raising effort was undertaken in Scarborough to build a "Labour house" on the island.

Although there was some consolidation in the work of the TWA in Tobago during the period 1929–1930, there were reported attempts to frustrate the recruitment efforts of the Association: "certain mischievous persons . . . still try to mislead the workers, by inducing them not to join the TWA, but Tobago labourers are getting wise and will no longer allow themselves to be exploited."[78] Nevertheless, the Association continued to consolidate its position with the formation of new branches, such as Pembroke branch which received its certificate of affiliation in May 1930.[79]

The supremacy of the TWA

Concurrent with the efforts of the TWA to represent the working class in the colony, there were fledgling labour organizations[80] in Trinidad which sought official recognition through affiliation with international agencies such as the International Federation of Trades Union and the British Trades Union Congress.[81] Since there were as yet no specific trade union laws in the colony, it was inevitable that difficulties would arise for labour movements seeking official recognition. In fact, since international labour organizations recognized only the TWA in Trinidad and

Tobago, other working-class organizations were required to be affiliated with, or be recommended by the TWA, in order to be granted status at the international level.

In 1928, Helena Manuel, formed the Trinidad Cocoa Planters and Labouring Classes Association, which was based in the L'Anse Noire District, Toco; she subsequently applied for affiliation with the General Council of the TUC in England.[82] Walter Citrine, General Secretary of the TUC, replied to Manuel indicating that only organizations in England were eligible for affiliation with the TUC. He further advised her to communicate with the IFTU in Amsterdam since it has provisions for association with certain labour organizations. Undaunted, Helena Manuel maintained her involvement in the work of labour groups in the colony. In 1929, in another bid to gain international recognition, the Cocoa Planters and Labouring Classes Association was renamed "The Trinidad and Tobago Trade Union Centre" under the leadership of Manuel as Secretary and supported by Hubert Carrington. For the period 15 November 1929 to 10 January 1930, the Centre functioned with 300 members which subsequently increased to 1,122 by the end of January.[83]

Not surprisingly, the subdivisions within the Trinidad and Tobago Trade Union Centre were similar to the TWA, a well-established familiar local model for labour organizations. The Centre functioned with four sections – the Seamen's And Firemen's Union (1,004 members), Railwaymen Union (300 members), Chauffeurs Union (864 members), Tramwaymen Union Motormen (86 members and Conductors 100 members).[84] There was a membership fee of one shilling with a weekly contribution of ten cents and entitlement to benefits for unemployment, doctor's visits, sick relief and funeral expenses.[85]

In January 1930, Manuel shifted her operations from Toco to San Juan and resumed her correspondence with Citrine and advised him of the formation of her new union, the Trinidad and Tobago National Trade Union Centre,[86] "I beg most respectfully to state that I have organized a Trade Union in Trinidad which has Friendly relations with the International Federation of Trade Unions, Amsterdam-West, and I thought it polite to write you informing your Department of my organizing spirit."[87] Manuel also complained to Citrine concerning difficulties experienced in obtaining official recognition in Trinidad and Tobago,

> The only opposition I am meeting here in my organizing the West Indian workers is, our Local Government sent me an Official Letter

> informing me that they will not give any hearing, because I have no Official Recognition. Any Petition sent to that Department in respect to the workers of the Islands (Trinidad and Tobago) who are Members of the Trade Union will not be entertained by this Department.[88]

Citrine promptly responded to Manuel and enquired whether her Centre was associated with the TWA because according to IFTU rules, only one workers' organization will be officially recognized from each country.[89] Thus it was imperative that Manuel's Trade Union Centre function in collaboration with the TWA, the designated liaison with international organizations such as the IFTU. Accordingly, Citrine advised Manuel of the requirement of the TWA's approval before further steps could be taken, Citrine advised "as it is the Workingmen's Association which was represented at our last Commonwealth Conference it will be necessary for us to communicate with that organisation before taking any action."[90]

In Manuel's subsequent correspondence in search for recognition, she was more cautious in her application for affiliation and indicated the need for technical support from the IFTU: "What we want is advice, guidance and men of experience from Great Britain and other Countries, especially from Great Britain to lift us out of the despond (sic) and place our feet upon the rock which will lead us towards success and unity."[91] In August 1930, Manuel wrote to Sassenbach and reiterated the need for technical advice and financial assistance,

> Our members, some are thrown out of their jobs, some are dependant upon the Union for support which gives our Union a shortage in capital. I wrote you several letters proving this statement. Our perfect success depends upon your Affiliating our organization . . . and one of your Official Delegates to visit us to investigate into the workings of our Union which is in its infancy.[92]

Manuel's request for the recognition of her Union was discussed in a series of correspondence between Citrine and Cipriani.

On 6 March 1930, Citrine informed Cipriani that Helena Manuel had applied to the TUC for the affiliation of the Trade Union Centre and that he advised her to work in collaboration with the TWA.[93] Cipriani unhesitatingly replied to Citrine indicating that the Trade Union Centre existed independently and was certainly not recognized by the TWA. He further proceeded to admonish the international unions for their communication with Manuel's Trade Union Centre without consultation

with the TWA. Cipriani indicated that he advised J. Sassenbach of the IFTU and members of the British Labour Party that Manuel and others with questionable motives were organizing labour groups in the colony:

> I might tell you that recently the local Police have interviewed me concerning Miss Manuel and others of her ilk, and efforts are being made by that authority, to launch prosecutions against them for obtaining moneys from workers by pretences other than genuine. These parties are likely to drag down the work of Labour and Socialism, and to afford a fertile ground for the ridicule and contempt of our opponents.[94]

Sassenbach requested information both on the TWA and the Trinidad and Tobago Trade Union Centre and in September 1930, he informed Citrine of Cipriani's failure to respond concerning the TWA, whereas Manuel provided the required information. Sassenbach then indicated his intentions to discuss the affiliation of the Centre at the next Executive meeting of the IFTU,

> If it were not for the protest made by Captain Cipriani of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association, Inc., the question would be easy to decide. But I am gradually coming to the conclusion that we must disregard this protest. On June 11th I asked Cipriani to send me information as to his organisation, but have not yet had a reply.[95]

It was obvious that Cipriani regarded parallel labour organizations in the colony as a threat to the TWA.[96] Furthermore, the charges of financial impropriety against Manuel and the possible divisiveness engendered by splinter labour organizations would have been detrimental to the image of the labour movement in the colony. Cipriani's concern was to preserve the authority of the TWA and certainly discourage the growth of other labour organizations: "The T.W.A. is either representative of the Labor Party and Trade Union Congress, or not . . . as we cannot have small unions springing up mushroom-like all over the Colony, and claiming some form of official recognition by a correspondence with accredited Labour Organisations in the United Kingdom or on the Continent."[97]

In addition to his condemnation of rival organizations, Cipriani was aggressive in his efforts to reduce the chances of survival for these

groups. In 1930, Manuel informed Sassenbach of Cipriani's harassment and threats to close down her union:

> I am directed by my Executive Officers to inform you that since the arrival of Cipriani on Sunday 5th October, 1930, he ordered Inspector W.E. Power, Inspector of the Trinidad Police Constabulary . . . to enter my Office without being armed with a warrant to seize your Foreign Official Documents, and letter dated 15th September 1930 which you addressed to me.[98]

Sassenbach was shocked and forwarded a copy of Manuel's letter to Citrine and stated, "Cipriani's action seems to me absolutely unseemly. If he uses his power as burgomaster to oppress a rival organisation, it is, to say the least, not tactful: I need not tell you again that I have never thought much of Cipriani."[99]

The IFTU was able to receive first-hand knowledge of the Trinidad and Tobago Trade Union Centre. In September 1930, a member of the International Transport Workers Federation visited Trinidad and investigated the state of operations and the status of Manuel's organization. The report presented to both the TUC and the IFTU was not favourable for the Centre and suggested that its founders were dissidents expelled from the TWA. This may have been the reason for Cipriani's uncompromising responses to any attempt for the recognition of the Centre,

> The Trade Union Centre is not a bona fide trade union in any sense of the word. It will accept anyone who will pay a contribution. It is seeking affiliation with the I.F.T.U. as a method of gaining a status in the West Indies and using it to prove that the trade unions of Europe consider it a genuine trade union. Its few officials are almost all people who have been expelled from the Trinidad Workingmen's Association for monetary irregularities.[100]

The enquiry also revealed that Hubert Carrington, one of the founders of the Trade Union Centre, was convicted on six occasions for "petty swindle" and assault of police officers.[101] It was such disparaging reports of the leadership of the Centre which ultimately influenced the IFTU to refuse affiliation of Manuel's organization which subsequently collapsed before the passage of the Trade Union ordinance in Trinidad in 1932.

Cipriani's jealous emphasis on the exclusivity of the TWA and his determination not to recognize new working-class organizations should not significantly detract from the impressive achievements and

accomplishments of the TWA. The development and expansion of the Association is particularly noteworthy when one considers the existing limitations of communication in the colony. Opposition from the pro-government and anti-labour *Trinidad Guardian* and *Port-of-Spain Gazette* and the virtual exclusion of working-class issues from the media were confidently addressed in the printing and circulation of the *Labour Leader*. The visits of leaders within the network of branches (inclusive of Tobago) and the efforts at educating the working class through public meetings were effectively co-ordinated by the Executive Committee of the Association. Although opposed by the Government and employers, the TWA laid the foundations for the promotion of a common fraternity of workers throughout the colony.

The rapid expansion of the TWA during the 1920s and 1930s occurred under the presidency of Cipriani. Various leaders of the TWA's sections and branches contributed to the momentum of the TWA which swept across Trinidad and Tobago. The publication and distribution of the *Labour Leader* served to empower the working class and also assisted in the growth of the TWA's membership.

3
Involvement of Labour in Politics, 1925–1938

The TWA, though not a fully organized political party, contributed significantly to the process which led to these first elections and the attainment of limited representative government for the Colony. For at least two decades, the Association maintained dialogue with officials of the local government and the Colonial Office on the need for self-government. To this was added daring criticism of colonial rule in the island. The close relationship and support of the British Labour Party (BLP) certainly provided confidence to the Association in its demand for constitutional reform.

But the main stimulus for imperial response to the need for political reform was the labour unrest of 1919–1920. The armed suppression of the unrest made politics more appealing to the TWA. It was against the backdrop of this unrest that in 1921 Howard-Bishop, General Secretary of the TWA, held discussions with British officials relating to labour issues and constitutional reform for the Colony. At the House of Commons, he met W. Giles, S. Lindsay and Ben Spoor of the BLP. On 18 August 1921, he met with Ben Spoor in the Whips' Room where discussions were held on trade union laws, the Seditious Publications Bill and representative government for Trinidad.[1]

Pertinent questions relating to labour conditions and constitutional reform for Trinidad were later raised by Labour MPs in the House of Commons. They appealed to Parliament for the appointment of a commission to visit the West Indies, and as a result, a Royal Commission led by Major E.F.L. Wood visited the West Indies during the period December 1921 to February 1922. Without the efforts of the BLP, Bishop's visit might not have produced the Commission of Enquiry. Nevertheless, the TWA claimed credit for the appointment of this

Commission whose work resulted in constitutional changes for Trinidad and for certain other colonies.[2]

Major Wood's recommendations for the introduction of the elective principle was accepted by the Secretary of State and formed the basis of Trinidad and Tobago's new constitution which came into effect on 21 August 1924 (for composition of the Council in 1924, see Appendix 1). Although the new proposals made provisions for elected members to the Legislative Council, Major Wood was careful to retain a pro-colonial legislative majority constituting both unofficials and officials. He decreased the Governor's unofficial nominees, but the membership of the officials was increased from 10 to 12, including the Attorney-General, Treasurer and Colonial Secretary. Governmental majority, the basic element of colonial rule, was maintained. Therefore, the introduction of seven elected members to the Council was mere tokenism. The limited franchise severely restricted political participation by working-class representatives in the Legislative Council even if they were able to secure all seven seats. In fact, the Council was so structured that elected representatives remained a minority group. These reservations were characteristic of the policy of colonial trusteeship which was based on the colonial myth that subjected peoples were politically immature, hence the need for imperial governance and control.

Qualifications

Income and property qualifications were compulsory not only for voters but also for candidates seeking election to the Legislative Council in 1925. These prohibitive requirements constituted a major political restriction on the working class who were without the franchise until 1946 when, with the introduction of universal adult suffrage, property and language restrictions were removed. The local franchise committee proposed that candidates for election be required to own property with a minimum value of $12,000, or from which they earned an annual income of $960. Alternatively, they could qualify with an annual income of $1,920.[3] Only men 21 years and over, who were literate in English, registered as voters and satisfied the property and income qualifications, were eligible to be candidates.

According to the Wood Report, income and property qualifications were also high in the other West Indian colonies[4] which were granted similar constitutional concessions for an elected element in the Legislative Council. For example, in Grenada, candidates were required

to earn an annual income of £200, or be owners of property valued no less than £500. Voters' annual income were to be at least £30, and ownership of property was fixed at no less than £150.[5]

In Trinidad, property, income and literacy in English determined the names on the electoral list. These requirements placed electoral participation beyond the reach of the masses, several of whom were labourers earning less than $1 per day when employed. Electors were required to be owners of property for one year prior to the date of election with a rateable value of $60 in a borough or $48 elsewhere; or if they paid $60 for rent, or $300 for both rent and lodging; or if they earned an annual salary of $300, or if, as owner or tenant under agreement, they paid at least $2.40 as an annual land tax.[6] The minimum age of electors was 21 years in the case of male voters and 30 years for female voters.[7] Since prospective voters were required to sign their names to an application for inclusion in the voters' list, a number of non-English-speaking Indians were prevented from qualifying as voters.[8]

The qualifications high income and property were deliberate constitutional barriers designed to screen elected members, thus ensuring "the absence from the chamber of any but well-to-do persons who were unlikely to entertain radical views."[9] This would be in harmony with Wood's concern and that of the Colonial Office to maintain stability in local government and therefore preserve the confidence of foreign capitalists, especially those who had investments in the relatively new mineral industries, oil and asphalt. In addition, it was believed at least by the propertied class that only men of property and wealth "with a large economic stake in the island have its true interests at heart."[10] The effect of electoral restrictions was obvious. Out of a total population of 364,828, only 21,797 or 6% were qualified as voters, and on polling day 6,822 cast their ballots.[11]

Prohibitive requirements based on wealth created serious difficulties for labour in its recruitment of working-class candidates to contest the elections. Indeed, it opened the way for persons such as Albert V. Stollmeyer and Charles Henry Pierre to be labour-supported candidates. The former belonged to the planter class and was merely acquainted with Cipriani while Pierre was a middle-class barrister-at-law and cocoa proprietor.[12] Both candidates were not members of the TWA, and they were without any proven loyalty and commitment to the working class.[13]

Middle-class politicians used labour as a platform for their political ambitions. Because of the franchise qualifications for candidates, the

TWA had little alternative but to rely on middle-class persons to represent them in the Legislative Council (see Appendix 2). Although labour had no electoral strength, the organizational success of the TWA was obvious, and political aspirants rather than form parties of their own, saw in the work of the Association the potential to mobilize support. Certain independents such as Stollmeyer joined the "well-to-do middle class" who monopolized the elected legislative seats and "did not regard themselves as representatives of the poor."[14] The only candidate committed to labour in the early elections was Cipriani who was "the labour spokesman who preceded the emergence of union leaders in the thirties."[15]

Although there was no standardized procedure for the screening and approval of TWA candidates, some measure of confirmation was given by the Executive of the TWA or its officials, particularly Cipriani or Howard-Bishop. The TWA branches which were involved in the initial stages of selection as was evident in August 1924 when the Chaguanas branch of the TWA met at the Theatre Hall and approved the candidacy of A. Bharat Gobin.[16] Final confirmation was then given through a resolution moved by Cipriani and seconded by Bishop who were both present at that meeting. The acceptance of Gobin as a labour candidate was probably the first attempt by the TWA to broaden its ethnic base. There is no record that any further confirmation was given by the Executive of the TWA. In the case of Charles Henry Pierre, he was recommended by the TWA groups from St David, Nariva, Mayaro and St Andrews. Subsequently, this was ratified through Cipriani's resolution at a TWA Executive meeting held at the Oriental Hall, Port-of-Spain in July 1924.

Prominent individuals were also instrumental in the choice of candidates for election. For instance, A. Goberdhan, Head Teacher of the Fyzabad C.M School, asked Timothy Roodal to contest the 1928 elections. He had initially declined in favour of Albert Sobrian. However, Goberdhan refused to endorse Sobrian's candidacy and Roodal was persuaded to accept nomination when other influential persons from Cedros also approached him.[17] It was a common practice for candidates to be presented at public meetings where resolutions were made for crowd confirmation and approval.

The Piper-Mahabir controversy in the 1933 elections for the county of Victoria indicated the role of the TWA Executive in the selection process and its apparent difficulties in coordinating an island-wide election. Cipriani and the Executive endorsed Dr Harold Mahabir's candidacy, but Harold Piper was supported by the Princes Town branch of the TWA of

which he was a member.[18] Although not approved by the Executive as its candidate, Piper contested the elections as an "Independent Labour Candidate." The powerful branches in the Princes Town area were defiant and the split was an ominous sign for labour. It was the first time in these early elections that branches of the TWA seriously challenged Cipriani and the Executive: "Socialist rebels from six leading branches of the TWA . . . encamped in the Town Hall in open defiance of the expulsion threat of Captain the Honourable Cipriani, and in proud support of their new leader, Mr. Harold Piper."[19]

Labour was therefore divided in Victoria for the elections of 1933, and the antagonism during the campaign led to hostile receptions for Cipriani at Brothers Settlement, but particularly at Princes Town where police from San Fernando were summoned to restore order. This incident became a convenient front-page story for the anti-labour *Trinidad Guardian*: "Captain Cipriani Howled Down in Princes Town."[20] Piper expressed his own displeasure with the Executive for the rejection of his candidature:

> The rejection of my candidature by the General Council of the TWA in favour of one little known, and with no great claims to your suffrage, is a direct flouting of your wishes. A gross disregard of your rights, an insult to your intelligence, and a gratuitous and undeserved wounding of your feelings.[21]

The defeat of the TWA in Victoria can be attributed directly to the split in support for two "labour" candidates. Piper and Mahabir together shared 1,281 votes while T. Kelshall won the seat with 791 votes[22] (see Appendix 7).

The media

As powerful agents of communication, the media were certainly not supportive of labour in the early elections and failed to give free and fair coverage of labour's electoral campaign. Candidates used the local press to introduce themselves to the public, to announce their manifestos and to advertise meetings. Similarly, they depended on the press to provide reports on their electoral activities. The working class publication, the *Labour Leader*, not being a daily newspaper, was limited in circulation because of its non-support by the upper class. There was also the problem of illiteracy among a large segment of the working class population who were without the franchise. Therefore, as labour's primary

instrument for political influence, the impact of the *Labour Leader* was severely restricted. Labour candidates were further disadvantaged because of biased reporting by the *Trinidad Guardian* and the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* which were both pro-government and also supportive of capitalist interests.

In their electoral coverage both these publications sometimes boycotted labour meetings or gave reports unfavourable to labour,

> The daily newspapers were patently partial in their reporting of the electoral campaign. They gave support to the candidates of their choice, and since the owners of the newspapers belonged to the white conservative element of Trinidad society, their reporting tended to favour people with similar economic interests. Thus their preference for Rust over Cipriani, Robinson over Teelucksingh, and Cory-Davies over Stollmeyer in the first election is not surprising.[23]

Supporters of labour such as Mrs. A.H. Charles expressed disappointment with the prejudiced reporting of the *Trinidad Guardian* in which labour was portrayed in "exceedingly vulgar terms." She claimed, "By the *Trinidad Guardian* we have been styled, in effect, sedition-mongers, preachers of race-hatred and class-prejudice."[24] To embarrass labour during the early elections, the media published reports containing allegations of the misappropriation of funds by the Executive of the TWA.[25]

A significant feature of the 1933 elections was the addition of epithets which indicate ideological affiliation of candidates. The local press may have been responsible for such designations.[26] The *Trinidad Guardian* regularly referred to labour candidates as "Socialists." Timothy Roodal, Cipriani and Harold Mahabir were all listed as "Socialists," S. Teelucksingh (Independent Socialist), C.H. Pierre and Isaac Pierre (Independents) (see Appendix 6). The *Trinidad Guardian* and its pro-capitalist clientele considered Socialism as anathema and an undesirable ideology for the Colony.

The return of only Cipriani and Roodal, among the TWA candidates, in the 1933 election and the loss of other labour candidates evoked a celebratory response from the *Sunday Guardian*, "Captain A.A. Cipriani, the dictator of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association, suffered the greatest reverse in his political career in yesterday's General Election in Trinidad and Tobago. Regular Socialist candidates, supported by the T.W.A. met with defeat wherever they opposed Independent candidates."[27] An editorial of the *Trinidad Guardian*, entitled "The Defeat of Ciprianism,"

identified a decline in Cipriani's influence "the brand of Socialism as presented by Captain Cipriani, with its vituperation and attacks on everybody who does not see eye to eye with him, is out of political fashion once and for all."[28]

It is obvious that the *Trinidad Guardian* and the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* conducted a united campaign in support of the White upper class candidates. While press reports were favourable to them, there were definite anti-labour reports, letters to the editor and feature articles selected and intended to demean the character and ability of labour candidates. Rust was praised but Cipriani criticized; and Pierre's tenure in the Legislative Council was described as a disappointment.[29] The editorial of the *Trinidad Guardian* supported Robinson's campaign in ignoring his support of child labour in 1926 and arguing that as a candidate his legal training and knowledge of agriculture would be assets in the Legislative Council.[30] There are no such references to the qualifications or ability of Teelucksingh to serve in the Legislative Council.

In the 1938 elections, the *People*, in its support of Rienzi referred to him as "The Idol of the South" and advised the electors of Victoria: "I know you are not an ungrateful people, and will not forget how nobly Mr. Rienzi has championed the cause of your husbands and brothers and friends for good wages and decent living conditions."[31] Recognizing that much of Rienzi's work was Southern-based, the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* questioned his ability to adequately represent national concerns in the Legislative Council, "it remains to be seen whether that popularity extends beyond San Fernando."[32] Since Labour could not rely on the established media for its publicity, the labour candidates sometimes used handbills and posters to communicate with the masses.[33] These were distributed particularly among villagers without regular access to the *Labour Leader* or the daily newspapers. In December 1932, during the tense electoral battle between Teelucksingh and Robinson, posters and handbills played an important role in communication with the electorate "a poster war started yesterday. Chaguanas is ablaze with pink and white posters on almost every shop. They proclaim in large type the merits of respective candidates."[34] The *East Indian Weekly* and the *Trinidad Guardian* both reported a similar "leaflet war" being waged among candidates in Victoria during the 1933 elections.[35]

The electoral campaigns

The TWA was familiar with the use of public meetings as an effective medium of communication with the masses. In preparation for the

general elections, the working class was mobilized through a series of TWA-sponsored electoral meetings conducted throughout the island.[36] Both the TWA and their rivals conducted such meetings in the various electoral constituencies. The attendance at these political meetings included not merely those qualified to vote, but also citizens who were denied the franchise through age restrictions and property qualifications. These persons were aware of political and social issues in the colony and made their presence felt when candidates or supporting speakers addressed them. Brereton refers to the hecklers and supporters who declared in an unofficial way that they were ready to participate in the political affairs of the Colony, "The unenfranchised majority influenced elections by disrupting meetings, heckling opponents and cheering popular candidates, especially in Port of Spain, and through the leadership and organisation provided by the TWA, the people gained experience in political organization and electioneering."[37]

Randolph Rust sought to circumvent the problem of heckling by issuing "tickets" to persons wishing to attend his meetings. On 7 January 1925, at his meeting in Brookland Hall, Woodbrook, he advised the audience that the use of tickets was enforced "to prevent the great unwashed who had no votes from kicking up disturbances and breaking up a respectable meeting." The hecklers were described by Rust as "people scraped up from the wharf and who could not understand any more than pigs."[38] At another meeting he branded Cipriani's supporters as a "band of hooligans" and the "great unwashed."[39]

In their efforts to mobilize support from among the small percentage of the electorate who could vote, candidates recruited canvassers who conducted house to house meetings. There were electoral campaign teams such as the "Teelucksingh Electioneering Campaign Committee"[40] consisting of approximately 5–12 persons. In the 1938 elections, Rienzi also conducted his electoral activities with the assistance of the "Rienzi Campaign Committee" comprising Ralph Mentor as Secretary and assisted by Sheik Niamah, Joseph Aziz, I. Khan and two members of the Executive of the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union (OWTU) – McDonald Moses and E.R. Blades. Early in his campaign, he met with the "party chiefs" discussing campaign tactics.[41] These electoral groups which were organized for the campaign of individuals were not full-fledged political parties. Contrary to Ince who doubted the capability of the TWA to function as a political party,[42] it is obvious that the TWA (and later as the TLP) participated in the elections as a fairly well-structured organization of its kind in the Colony and the first to

introduce albeit not in its classic form, the concept of the "political party."

There is no evidence to suggest that the TWA provided special funds for its campaign. Instead, individual candidates financed their electoral efforts. Roodal, a man of wealth, maintained his own campaign staff and "industriously canvassed" for over a month in the county of St Patrick.[43] Furthermore, Roodal and Stollmeyer financed advertisements of meetings and they published manifestos in the *Trinidad Guardian* and *Port-of-Spain Gazette*.[44] The costly campaigns conducted by the wealthy independent candidates led to allegations of financial assistance from investors in the Colony. For example, Rust denied that his campaign expenses were funded by the Trinidad Lake Asphalt Company.[45] He denied all such rumours and indicated that he was merely the shipping agent for asphalt exported to Europe.

In its electioneering campaign, labour used red symbols inclusive of buttons, flags, cards or other emblems to promote the fraternity of the working class. Cipriani himself wore a red badge on his shirt and encouraged his supporters to wear red buttons to identify with labour.[46] His victory was celebrated with a "Red Button night" at the Princes Building. The supporters of labour jealously guarded the use of red to identify only those who belonged to the common fraternity of the working class. For instance, on 7 February 1925, at the Town Hall in Port-of-Spain, a supporter of Rust wore a red "Rust rosette" on the lapel of his coat and he was challenged by a female labour supporter. The woman who wore "a red frock, red tie, red pair of stockings and red button," confronted the Rust supporter and immediately removed and destroyed the offending rosette.[47]

At one of the TWA's rallies in Siparia, on 11 February 1928, labour celebrated Roodal's victory in which red was prominently displayed,

> The whole country was red. Men and women wore bits of red ribbon on their breasts or as armlets and epaulets and little girls and boys sported the same colour. One woman wore a whole blouse of it. Lorries and cars had red flags stuck all over them, and hundreds carried on their hats red cards with a photograph of the successful candidate on each. Along roads leading to the polls there were men of the red brigade going about from house to house like census takers.[48]

Since the colour "red" was associated with Communism, the pro-capitalist media portrayed labour as being linked with Communism and therefore politically dangerous. The *Trinidad Guardian* used disparaging

descriptions of candidates and supporters labelling them as "Reds."[49] The introduction of the "blue shirt" in the labour organization in Trinidad can be traced to Rienzi's electoral campaign for the Victoria seat in 1938, "Sporting their blue shirts and blue ties, Unionists were to be seen on every side . . . . Blue-shirts were at all the polling stations and their presence was felt."[50] His rival, Piper, used the colour "yellow" during the campaign.

Although there were few protests in 1925 and 1928, irregularities surfaced during the 1933 elections. Prior to the elections, concerns were raised as to the conduct of the campaign in Victoria. On 20 January 1933, the *Trinidad Guardian* published a bold headline "100 Dead People on Voters' List."[51] The report claimed that electoral agents in Victoria identified at least 100 names of deceased persons on the final voting list. In the polling area of Buen Intente Road, in the Savana Grande ward, there were 33 voters listed inclusive of four who had died before the elections.

Robinson's protest in 1933 was one of the few post-election controversies of the 1925–1938 era. He led a deputation to the Governor and Colonial Secretary to discuss the alleged use of hired vehicles which brought electors to the polls. Furthermore, he reported incidents where persons voted more than once, while others who were not registered were permitted to vote.[52] No official decision was taken in response to these protests. Labour did not protest the conduct or the result of the 1933 elections although the TWA suffered some measure of defeat.

In the 1938 elections, four candidates were returned unopposed to the Legislative Council: A. Cipriani (Port-of-Spain), M.A. Maillard (St George), T. Roodal (St Patrick) and E. Vernon Wharton (Eastern Counties). Since there were no opponents to Cipriani and Roodal, the electoral campaign was low-keyed. County Victoria was the only seat which was eagerly contested between Adrian Cola Rienzi and Harold Piper. Rienzi subsequently scored an easy victory, leading in seven out of eight polling stations (2,003 votes to Piper's 547 votes). Piper led Rienzi, 30–24 votes in the Moruga district where the population was predominantly African.

The 1938 elections signalled the involvement for the first time of the newly-formed trade unions in electoral politics. Rienzi contested as the leader of the "Unionist Party"[53] which was not a political party but an ad hoc conglomeration of four unions. These unions, which supported Rienzi, were the OWTU, All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factory Workers Trade Union (ATSE+FWTU), the Public Works Workers Trade Union and the Amalgamated Building and Woodworkers Union.[54] Rienzi's support

among the workers was also due to the fact that he was President-General of the OWTU and the ATSE+FWTU. His campaign in Victoria was led by officers of the OWTU, John Rojas (Second Vice-President) and Ralph Mentor (Assistant Secretary). Clarence Abidh was the only other candidate of the Unionist Party who contested the election.[55] Nevertheless, he was defeated by Teelucksingh (Independent Labour) for the Caroni seat. In Rienzi's victory speech, he expressed regret at the defeat of Abidh as "a trade unionist candidate."[56]

Colonial failure

Although the masses were excluded from official participation in the electoral process, labour in its campaign initiated the working class into another phase of their political education. Although they were without the franchise, they were being prepared for future political participation. Speeches and manifestos from the labour platform exposed the failure and injustice of Crown Colony rule, and the masses were advised to appreciate the urgency for self-government. Anti-government sentiments focused on the social and economic policies of the administration which favoured the upper class but failed to improve the living conditions of the working class.

Electoral speeches gave prominence to the urgency for self-government and the masses were encouraged to cultivate a sense of independence and political confidence. Indeed, Cipriani's election slogan "Trinidad for Trinidadians"[57] and "vote for sons of the soil" summarized labour's conviction that Trinidadians were ready for self-government. Rival candidate, Cory-Davies, and his supporting speakers – C. Birdwood (Secretary of the Tunapuna Taxpayers Association), C.C. Jordan and J. O'Laughlin denounced Cipriani's slogan as being "narrow-minded."[58]

In July 1924, at a public meeting in support of C.H. Pierre, Cipriani's major criticism of rival candidate, Ernest Robinson, was his failure to identify with the early efforts of the TWA to secure representative government for the Colony.[59] Robinson in his response claimed to favour representative government but in contrast to Cipriani, he believed that it could be achieved under the guidance of the British administration. He maintained that the British Government was "a government of honesty," which stood for the freedom of all peoples and was capable of ruling the colony's diverse population.[60]

A frequent contributor to the *Labour Leader*, "The Curate," maintained a constant denunciation of the Colony's political system. The writer

was critical of the non-elected members of the Legislative Council, particularly the officials who functioned as mere "pawns" and "political mummies" subservient to the Government. Additionally, he fiercely denounced the nominated unofficials who were "pandering the while to government's point of view, only to retain that favour and the title 'honourable' which they evidently feel assured that no intelligent elector would bestow upon them."[61]

Self-government was to be understood in terms of the concentration of political power in the hands of locals. In its campaign, Labour sought to cultivate a sense of nationalism in its appeal to the electorate to reject persons who were "foreigners." This concept was evident in the early electoral meetings in Port-of-Spain when Cipriani questioned whether Rust could truly represent the national spirit because he was not a Trinidadian:

> I cannot see how the appointment of an Englishman, no matter how deserving, would argue that we are getting any closer to *Self-Government* and even if Major Rust did actually give us all the representation that could be given, when Major Rust is dead and gone 10 or 20 years hence the local enemies of Representative gov't, the Colonial Office, and our Masters in Downing Street will make use of it against us.[62]

Obviously, issues relative to nationality and citizenship persisted in the Cipriani-Rust campaign. At one of Rust's meetings in Woodbrook, the Chairman, C. Archibald, considered as absurd labour's position that any person born outside Trinidad should be debarred from election to the Legislative Council. Archibald indicated that Rust was a worthy candidate since he had lived in the Colony for 43 years. The *Trinidad Guardian* also expressed support for Rust, contending that although Rust was an Englishman, he had arrived in Trinidad in 1881 and spent his life in the Colony.[63] The problem of citizenship also surfaced in the Stollmeyer-Cory Davies encounter. Stollmeyer, the labour-supported candidate in 1925, said at an electoral meeting in Port-of-Spain that he had hoped his opponent would not be an Englishman. He was referring to Cory-Davies, who hailed from Kent, England. A stormy response emanated from Cory-Davies and his supporters, who contended that he had been in the West Indies for 31 years and lived in Trinidad for 28 years. To this, C.A. Cudjoe added that Cory-Davies was "a great Englishman" who had settled in Trinidad, married a Trinidadian and their children were born in Trinidad.[64] F.D. Blackman, in support of

Cory-Davies, alluded to Stollmeyer's nationality indicating that he was not a Trinidadian but a Barbadian.[65]

Indeed, labour's apparent xenophobia can be understood against the background of its intense objection to British rule and hence the undesirability for any "great Englishman" to be in the Colony's legislature. Labour had no problem supporting Stollmeyer, of Barbadian ancestry, who subsequently won his seat in the Legislative Council on a TWA ticket. Instead, the objective was to undermine and replace the dominating English presence in the Colony's administration. During the 1938 elections, Rienzi made an appeal for self-government and universal adult suffrage. He referred to San Fernando to illustrate the necessity for adult suffrage since out of 17,000 persons in the town, only 2,300 were eligible to vote.[66]

During electoral campaigns, labour focused not only on political issues, but social and economic concerns were also raised. Cipriani identified Government's failure to provide adequate relief for the poor, he severely criticized the health services, and he accused Government of failure to develop agriculture and to make adequate provisions to assist the unemployed. He was critical of the insensitivity of the ruling class whom his opponent Rust represented. He denounced Rust's proposal that the working class should send their children to learn the skills of manual labour rather than seek employment in the government service. Cipriani said on the electoral platform that Rust's intention was to preserve Civil Service jobs for the privileged class and to limit vacancies in the Civil Service for children of the upper class.[67]

Roodal, in his 1928 campaign speeches, claimed it was impossible for residents of Penal to travel on certain roads during the rainy season since in several rural districts the roads were poorly maintained. Furthermore, peasant proprietors experienced severe hardships due to a lack of proper access roads in agricultural areas and that drinking water was polluted and teeming with germs.[68] His proposals included the improvement of living and working conditions in the colony, a minimum wage for workers, better housing, repeal of the Seditious Publications Ordinance, control by the government of the price of gasoline, poor relief, establishment of a Labour Bureau and the imposition of an export tax on oil.

On the electoral platform, Cipriani and Roodal denounced the Government's economic policy which favoured foreign capitalists and investors engaged in the Colony's lucrative mineral industries. They contended that the foreign companies in the oil and asphalt industries benefitted from the Government's generous concessions but the

working class remained impoverished on small wages. Cipriani, in 1928, expressed serious concern about the thousands of dollars from the oil and asphalt industries which went directly to capitalists in the United States and England. In fact he was so harsh on the issue of exploitation of local resources that Rust accused him of implying that the oil industry was a curse to the Colony.[69] Roodal in his 1928 manifesto indicated labour's concern for the price of gasoline in the colony and therefore the high cost of travel for the poorer classes. He observed that although Trinidad had its oil reserves and refineries, yet the price of gasoline in the Colony was 40 cents per gallon, but in Barbados it was sold at 20 cents per gallon.[70] In his proposals, he appealed to the Government for a tax on oil since the companies made enormous profits. At one of his meetings in Penal, he reminded supporters that the oil industry provided prosperity for a minority whilst poverty persisted among the majority of inhabitants in the Colony.[71]

Labour was justified in its denunciation of Government's failure to adequately monitor the exploration of the island's mineral resources. At the end of 1925 there were 19 companies engaged in oil exploration. In addition, there were four refineries located at Point Fortin, Pointe-a-Pierre, Brighton and Tabaquite producing all grades of petroleum products from petrol to road oil. These companies had a total share capital of over £14,000,000 and held almost 180,000 acres of crown lands under leases.[72] Roodal and Cipriani were aware of the enormous profits made by these companies whose exports were valued at £1,560,579 in 1925 while royalties amounted to the paltry sum of £40,099. Labour candidates were concerned that with such vast profits and a small workforce of approximately 4,115 men, the latter's wages were less than ten cents per hour.[73]

Labour's agitation for an increase in Government's taxes and royalties on petroleum was later taken to the Legislative Council. On 9 April 1926, the Council adopted a resolution by Cipriani that Government take steps to consider ways of increasing its revenues from the oil industry. Subsequently, Government commissioned Sir Thomas Holland to conduct a study of the oil industry in Trinidad. In his report, he indicated that in 1926, the oil companies paid to government only £180,000 in the form of customs, licences, taxes, court fees and royalties.[74] He emphasized that when compared with other oil producing countries: "[T]here is no doubt about the leniency of the royalty rates hitherto demanded by the Government in Trinidad."[75] Responding to protests initiated by labour, Holland added, "An export tax on *crude oil* . . . would fail in its object to obtain additional revenue, for the local refineries

would absorb most of the crude oil within six months, and exports would practically stop."[76]

In its 1928 electoral campaign, labour candidates protested against Government's mismanagement of the asphalt industry. Foreign investors made enormous profits from asphalt but as in the case of petroleum, the Government's earnings through royalties remained minimal and salaries for the working class averaged ten cents per hour. In 1923, Trinidad exported 172,369 tons of asphalt valued at £377,814; and in 1924, 169,397 tons earned £385,949. The royalties on each ton of crude pitch or asphalt was a mere pittance, 2 shillings and 6 pence with an export duty of 5 shillings per ton; and 3 shillings and 6 pence as royalties on dried pitch.[77]

Race

Official interest pertaining to the place of Indians in the island's political system was given early prominence by the Sanderson Commission (1910). When asked whether Indians were represented in the Legislative Council, Oliver William Warner, former Assistant Protector of Indians, told the Commission that when he left that office in 1881 there was no person in the Legislative Council who represented the Indians. He added that complaints with respect to Indians occasionally went to a district magistrate who generally forwarded such cases to his office.[78] Cyrus P. David,[79] in his evidence before the Commission, was asked by Sir George Robertson: "What are the circumstances adverse to you on the Legislative Council which prevents you from bringing forward what you consider to be the hardships under which indentured coolies labour?" Robertson assumed that as a non-White person, David could have represented in the Legislative Council the cause of the indentured Indian. David in his response indicated the great difficulty in representing indentured labourers because most of the unofficials were capitalists in the sugar industry who would be unsympathetic to workers. He added, "the present composition of the unofficial members is such that all questions of this kind are viewed mainly from the planters' point of view. I think that apart from Mr. Alcazar and myself, and Mr. Goodwille . . . all the unofficial members are more or less directly connected with the sugar interests."[80]

Although David was correct in reminding the Commission of the preponderance of the employer class in the Legislative Council, he was a bitter opponent of Indian immigrant labour in Trinidad. He was not sympathetic to the hardships of the indentured labourers whom he

considered responsible for the depressed wages of the African working class. Belonging to the middle-class African intelligentsia, David, the urban-based lawyer, was far removed from the privations of the Indian working class and therefore he was not the best person to represent their interests in the Legislative Council.

Since no provisions were made for representation on behalf of Indians, the Commission recommended that they be given their own representative on the Council, preferably an Indian, "The East Indian population of the island numbers about 30 per cent of the whole, and we think that the suggestion of the witness who gave evidence on their behalf that they are entitled to have a representative of their own community on the Legislative Council deserves sympathetic consideration."[81] The Commission was aware that the EINA and the EINC agitated for greater participation by Indians in the politics of the Colony. The work of these organizations was later supplemented by the Trinidad Democratic League of 1912, which encouraged Indians to be proactive in the island's political affairs.

These organizations were influential in the nomination of the first East Indian to the Legislative Council in 1912 – George Fitzpatrick a lawyer and president of the EINA.[82] Upon the death of George Fitzpatrick in 1920, his position as the Indian representative was taken by Rev. Charles D. Lalla. Subsequently, Albert A. Sobrian was nominated to the Council (on 15 February 1924) where he served until the first general elections in 1925.[83] These nominations were meant to pacify the Indian community whose organizations, the EINA and EINC, had embarrassed the Government through aggressive and bitter accusations that the administration had neglected Indians in the Colony. These unofficial nominees were not representatives of the majority of Indians who belonged to the working class.[84] George Fitzpatrick, a lawyer, belonged to the growing Indian middle class, and Sobrian, a cocoa proprietor and business entrepreneur was aligned to the plantocracy. Indian labour was not represented in the Council although there was an Indian presence through these token appointments of unofficials.

In 1925, at the Colony's first general elections, Sarran Teelucksingh was the only Indian among the elected membership, and although appointed by Cipriani as Honorary Vice-President of the TWA, even then he could not have been considered a representative of the Indian working class. Governor H.A. Byatt did not include any Indians among his unofficials and it was Krishna Deonarine, (later Adrian Cola Rienzi) a pro-labour activist, who articulated the disappointment of the Indian community. His intervention subsequently changed the course of labour

politics with the focus on representation of the Indian working class which hitherto had not received prominence either by the EINA or EINC. In expressing concern about the Governor's list of unofficials, the Secretary of State wrote Governor Byatt suggesting that Indians should be represented among the unofficial,

> I note that Mr. A.A. Sobrian, a member of the East Indian community, was not returned to the electorate of St. Patrick, and that there is therefore only one East Indian, an elected member, represented in the Legislative Council. In view of the large numbers of East Indians resident in the colony . . . I should be glad to know your reasons for being unable to nominate an East Indian other than Mr. Sobrian for one of the six nominated Unofficial seats.[85]

Indeed, Governor Byatt's failure to nominate Indians in his list of unofficials reflected the caution of the administration concerning the presence of Indians and Africans in the Council. The Government persisted in the omission of Indians from among its nominated unofficials in the early Legislative Council, as evident in 1925, 1928 and 1933.

The Secretary of State was not merely interested in whether or not there was an Indian presence in the Council. He wrote a second letter to Governor Byatt requesting more sensitive data about the race factor in the elections which further suggests the concern of the imperial Government with the rise of the non-White politicians and the implications for colonial governance. He enquired concerning the race and political attitude of elected members especially towards the Government. He expressed official uneasiness as he made private enquiries concerning those who were "supporters or opponents" of the colonial administration, "I should be glad to learn to which race each of the seven elected members belongs and also their attitude on political questions generally as displayed at elections, and whether they have in the past been prominent either as supporters or opponents of the Government."[86]

Governmental indifference towards Indians would have contributed to the subsequent attraction of the Indian middle class to the TWA, the only organization in the Colony which represented labour. Furthermore, although the presence of the Association in the legislature was severely restricted, yet it offered to the Indian working class an opportunity for political representation.[87] The efforts of the TWA in electoral politics in the Colony provided hope to Indians for their official participation in local politics. The early period 1925–1928 was the watershed in labour politics as the TWA emerged as the catalyst for the

two major sectors of the working class with the inclusion of Indians in the Legislative Council as TWA candidates.

During the electoral campaign, Indian cultural and social organizations undoubtedly appealed to Indian electors to support certain candidates. For instance, on 24 August 1924 the East Indian Mutual Help Friendly Society, the East Indian Recreation Club and the East Indian Debating Association passed a resolution at a joint meeting to support the candidacy of C.H. Pierre. Indians could have identified with Pierre who was a small planter of mixed descent, rather than with Cory-Davies who represented the White elitist, wealthy plantocracy.

In addition to these organizations, the EINC was actively engaged in electioneering particularly in counties with a large Indian community. The Congress influenced the result of the election in Caroni in 1925 where the race factor was decisive. There had been two competing Indian candidates – S. Teelucksingh and A. Bharat Gobin, but also Robinson, a White planter. Samaroo says, "The emergence of two prominent Indian creoles threatened to split the Trinidadian Indian vote, thus making it possible for a third candidate of another race to capture the seat."[88]

The Congress met with both Indian candidates and their supporters, and Gobin subsequently agreed to withdraw from the electoral contest.[89] This was a major compromise since Gobin was supported by the TWA, but the EINC and the TWA must have recognized Teelucksingh's popularity particularly among Indians in Couva and Chaguanas.[90] In addition, the limited membership of the TWA within the county was no guarantee of an electoral victory for Gobin since up to 1925, the TWA had succeeded in attracting only Africans. The interventions of the Congress in Chaguanas indicate that Indians were being mobilized for participation in electoral politics.

The EINC provided Teelucksingh with an organizational base in Caroni akin to that given by the TWA for Cipriani in Port-of-Spain. One of Teelucksingh's platform speakers, C.C. Abidh, claimed that the candidate was neutral and therefore able to mediate between the two classes – labour and capital.[91] Both the EINC and Teelucksingh were confident of support from Indians within the county but "neither Teelucksingh nor the EINC had the political stature or the *potential* for trans-ethnic appeal that the TWA had, once it relegated its Pan-African orientation in favour of socialist ideology, as it did after Cipriani had consolidated his leadership."[92]

Robinson, the rival candidate for Caroni, was certainly uncomfortable with the involvement of the EINC in the elections and he appealed to

the electorate to choose a candidate on merit rather than race, "The Colony did not contain only East Indians, but white, black and every other colour, and the proper thing to do if self-government was to be a success was to look at the merits of the candidates who came before them, irrespective of race, colour and everything else."[93] In the 1933 elections, Robinson encountered once again a formidable foe in the EINC which supported Teelucksingh. At his meeting in the Anglican School in Couva, he criticized the officers of the EINC whom he described as either friends or relatives of Teelucksingh who resided in San Fernando or Couva. Robinson was aware that Teelucksingh was the President of the EINC, Rev. C.D. Lalla (Auditor) a relative of Teelucksingh and P. Jhurisingh (Treasurer) was a friend of the candidate.[94] He further added, "The whole truth is that Mr. Teelucksingh is the Congress and the Congress is Mr. Teelucksingh."[95]

Another organization, the EINA, was politically active in St Patrick during the 1925 and 1928 elections. The EINA supported A. Sobrian in his election campaign but he was defeated in 1925 by Radcliffe-Clarke, a White planter. This may have been a result of the low voter turnout in St Patrick where a considerable segment of the qualified middle class did not exercise their franchise.[96] Furthermore, the non-Indian electorate could have made a difference in such a situation where there were 1,933 electors of whom only 833 were Indians.[97] Sobrian was also supported by the EINA in 1928 but he lost the elections to Roodal, the TWA candidate. Successive defeats for him suggest the declining influence of the EINA, which failed once more to garner decisive Indian votes.

The TWA adopted certain strategies to attract Indian votes in counties where ethnic support was critical. It was obvious that once the TWA became involved in electoral politics it had to accommodate the reality of race. For example, Ralph Mentor disclosed to the Sangre Grande branch of the TWA that the Association used the race factor in a concerted attempt to win the Victoria seat in the 1933 elections. Mentor indicated that he attended a meeting of the Executive at which Mahabir was selected as the electoral candidate because the Association thought that he would attract the Indian votes, whereas Piper, an African was not assured of the support of those electors.[98]

Mentor, an African, seemed displeased with the rejection of Piper as the TWA candidate. This was evident in his decision to travel the long distance from his home in Ortoire-Manzanilla[99] to support his fellow African on the political platform in Princes Town in defiance of the TWA's Executive. Dissatisfied with race as a criterion, L.R. Sinkia, speaking at Princes Town Hall on behalf of Piper accused Roodal of racist remarks. He indicated that as a visiting speaker in Tableland, Roodal

said, "Mr. Piper is only a negro."[100] Sinkia further accused Roodal's team of conducting a racially based campaign in St Patrick: "They made a house to house canvass of the Indian gentleman of that district and appealed to them in this way: It is a national question we have to put up, an Indian candidate and you have got to vote for him."[101] These were early signs of the significance of race as a decisive factor in the colony's electoral politics.

The TWA, intent on retaining the St Patrick seat in 1933, used its influence to avoid any contest between two Indians – Premchand Bunsee, an Independent candidate, and Timothy Roodal, who was endorsed by the TWA. A delegation comprising prominent middle-class Indians who supported the TWA's candidate, encouraged Bunsee to withdraw from the elections.[102] Subsequently, he cancelled his nomination at the Siparia Warden's Office and Roodal, unopposed, was declared the elected member for St Patrick.

These were not the only instances when the TWA sought to influence voting patterns in areas with a high concentration of Indians. The Association endorsed the candidacy of Indians such as Teelucksingh, Hosein, Mahabir and Roodal who were not actively involved in the TWA. This was prudent "even though they were not ideologically committed to the working class movement, they were generally supportive of its causes."[103] It was a strategic decision of the TWA during the elections, in order to expand beyond its African base and develop into a "genuinely multi-racial organisation."[104] But, it was also a decision made in the context of the limited franchise which disqualified the majority of working class people.

A few months after labour's success in the second general elections in 1928 there was an increase in the membership of the TWA, particularly of middle-class Indians, "At this stage it appeared to be mostly the literate, westernized Indians who were gravitating to the organisation."[105] Indian leaders, particularly Krishna Deonarine, President of the San Fernando branch of the TWA, pioneered the involvement of Indians in the TWA in South Trinidad, which increased the membership and enhanced the leadership of the Association. Governor Byatt sought to discredit Deonarine whom he described as a "violent orator of dishonest character."[106]

There is no indication of any serious race problem in counties where there were only White candidates. This applies to Stollmeyer and Cory-Davies who opposed each other in St George.

The former won the election because of the advantage gained through his association with Cipriani[107] and his subsequent support for labour in 1925. Similarly, in Port-of-Spain there were no serious racial encounters

among supporters of Rust, Johnson and Cipriani. The results of the 1925 elections indicate an overwhelming majority for Cipriani who polled 2,557 votes, while Rust and Johnson received 910 and 378 respectively. Among the few instances of racial issues pertaining to White candidates, the *Labour Leader* in one of its reports published a sarcastic comment enquiring as to the absence of Rust's White friends at one of his Port-of-Spain meetings, whereas on that platform, supporters were predominantly African.[108]

The absence of Whites at public meetings was an indication that the White population, race and class conscious as they were, wished to avoid physical contact with a rough African working class crowd. At an election meeting in Siparia, Rust made a plea to Indians to support Sobrian although his endorsement came from a White person, Colonel Hickling. Rust who was White, reminded electors that Cipriani was White and therefore Hickling's support for Sobrian deserved recognition. The Indians' rejection of Sobrian suggests that it was not just race that mattered to them, since they were also conscious of his class alignment. The alliance of Hickling and Sobrian, both being capitalists, represented forces which were incompatible with labour.

Among the White candidates, Robinson was sternly tested in Caroni in all the elections. He knew the significance of the Indian vote and in 1928 included four Indians among the ten persons in his Campaign Committee. In the 1933 elections he further utilized the Indian presence in his campaign to augment his chances in the elections. He invited to his platform prominent Indians such as Mitra G. Sinanan, a 23-year-old barrister from San Fernando who said at Robinson's meeting in Carapichaima: "I see a good many full-blooded Africans here and I am going to speak good creole English to them." In his appeal to Indians in the audience Sinanan repudiated Teelucksingh's advice that Robinson ought to be rejected because he was White. Sinanan further added that one of Gandhi's faithful supporters was Mirabai, a White woman, otherwise known as Miss Slade, the daughter of an Admiral.[109] Robinson eventually lost to Teelucksingh, who was socially nearer to the Indians and had a strong support organization in the EINC.

During the elections in 1933 where race created a volatile situation in Central Trinidad, the outbreak of violence in Chaguanas indicated that both independent candidates, Teelucksingh and Robinson, were incapable of controlling racial antagonisms. The *Trinidad Guardian* reported that a "civil war" almost erupted between supporters of Teelucksingh and Robinson: "Bands of Couva men riding on motor-cars and on motor lorries trooped down into Chaguanas to give battle to the defeated

Robinsonites. . . . Stalwart negroes in short sleeves turned up to give battle, but the Couva men beat a hasty retreat."[110] There was an estimated 800 persons, armed with sticks and stones, walking through the streets of Chaguanas. Police were quickly on the scene and attempted to disarm and disperse the crowd. The report of the *Trinidad Guardian* indicated the racial composition of the groups in that conflict in Chaguanas. It is to be noted that "stalwart negroes" joined others in defence of Robinson while the Couva group, who belonged to the Teelucksingh camp, comprised Indians. This further indicates the growing intensity of race politics in Central Trinidad. It was obvious that if not properly managed, a split in the political allegiance of the African and Indian could create fertile ground for racial conflagration.

It is obvious that in consecutive elections 1925 to 1938, the race factor was prominent in the county of Caroni. However, in 1938, when E.A. Robinson, the White planter, was no longer a candidate there were two Indians– Teelucksingh and Abidh, whose campaign was not dominated by race. Interventions by the EINC and EINA were not necessary as in previous elections in the county.

Tobago

Tobago's participation in the elections of 1925 was merely another phase in its long association with representative institutions. With a past history which included its own governor and electoral traditions, the island developed a political culture of its own. While Trinidad was administered as a Crown Colony, Tobago was self-governing with a bi-cameral legislature in the early nineteenth century.[111] In 1874, that system was replaced by a single chamber legislature until the island later became a ward of the colony of Trinidad and Tobago through an Order in Council on 20 October 1898.

The 1924 Constitution allocated one seat to Tobago among the seven elected members in the new Council. This small concession did not diminish the enthusiasm and involvement of candidates and supporters in electioneering in the island,

> Tobago is hot with the question of the coming election. This is the subject that is being freely discussed. It is not known to a certainty how many candidates will contest the seat for Tobago at the Legislative Council, but Mr. James A. Biggart is electrifying his countrymen to be up and doing in his favour, and many have caught his inspiration.[112]

The selection process for candidates in Tobago contained features similar to that conducted in Trinidad. Candidates were presented and endorsed by audiences at public meetings. For example, Biggart an independent candidate, was presented by J. Prince at a meeting of the Scarborough Anglican School on 10 September 1924 and the audience "by show of hands" gave their approval.[113] Further confirmation was received at similar meetings at the Moravian School in Moriah and Roxborough E.C. School.

The labour candidate, Isaac Hope, was endorsed by the TWA and was presented to the electorate at Scarborough and Moriah by Cipriani and Bishop who visited the island for this purpose on 14 October 1924. The supporting speakers included prominent Tobagonians George McEachnie (Solicitor and Conveyancer) and A. Peters (Headmaster, Mason Hall R.C. School). In Cipriani's address, he referred to the possible assistance of the British Labour Party in securing self-government for Trinidad and Tobago: "[T]hey are coming again with greater power to liberate you and others of your ilk from industrial serfdom and to lift the ban of cheap officialdom from your heads."[114]

Labour's rival, James A. Biggart (Druggist) who won the Tobago seat both in 1925 and 1928 included in his campaign priorities for the island: extension of the Scarborough jetty, construction of a new jetty at Roxborough, a secondary school for Tobago and daily communication with Trinidad.[115] At the end of his first term in the Legislative Council, he was complimented for his efforts which included the introduction of stamping scales and weights at Roxborough, a grant towards a new secondary school, the construction of a retaining wall at Military Road, and the inclusion of Tobago as a port of call for Canadian steamers.[116]

Labour candidates also presented plans for the development of Tobago including a post office at Moriah, construction of the Roxborough market, revision of the Teachers' Pension scheme and competitive entry into the Civil Service. It is obvious that candidates in Tobago did not include in their campaign the major political issues raised in Trinidad. Very little was said with regard to self-government and the abuses of colonial governance. Instead, platform speakers focused on infrastructural development and the provision of social amenities for Tobago. Politicians in the island-ward had their own priorities; hence the distinctiveness of their electoral focus.

The limited impact of labour in Tobago's political affairs is reflected in its successive defeats at the polls. In 1925, Isaac Hope lost to Biggart; in 1928 Sam F. Bonnet was defeated by Biggart and in 1933, G.F. Samuel (the labour candidate) identified by the *Trinidad Guardian*

as an "unknown" lost to Isaac Hope who contested as an Independent. Although there was a total membership of approximately 1,000 members among branches in Bethel, Canaan, Lambeaux, Plymouth, Scarborough, Roxborough and Glamorgan, the Association's political influence was minimal. This may have been due to the severely restricted assistance given by the TWA because of its limited resources which were absorbed in the Trinidad campaigns. The working class in the island-ward was denied the franchise through the required income and property qualifications. Therefore, reports of large crowds at public meetings were no guarantee of an electoral advantage.

In addition to these factors, the election results in Tobago sent signals to the Trinidad-based TWA that the island was prepared to make its own electoral decisions and even with its one-seat allocation in the Council it was prepared to resist political interference from Trinidad. In the case of Isaac Hope, he lost as a TWA candidate but later successfully contested the 1933 elections as an Independent. He thus joined the other Independents who dominated the early elections and confirmed the inefficacy of labour in that period of Tobago politics. The electoral exercise in Trinidad and Tobago during the period 1925–1938 initiated a new era in the politics of the Colony. This first contest for seats in the Legislative Council undoubtedly produced an intense campaign and sustained interest from candidates as well as the electors and those outside the franchise.

The level of participation in the national elections conspicuously heralded the intention of local politicians to take up the cudgels in the struggle against colonial domination. The platform debates deliberately exposed the consequences of colonial neglect. Furthermore, speeches and manifestos served as a powerful weapon to expose the failure of a harsh and negligent administration. The election heralded the rise of a national spirit, which though only in its embryonic stages, inspired future efforts towards self-government. Undoubtedly, the TWA with its mass appeal and closely bonded network of branches was the precursor of the well-organized party machinery which was to develop later in the Colony.

It was always understood by the advocates of constitutional reform that the introduction of a limited franchise would be the first phase of a process leading to universal adult franchise and political independence. For the imperial government and their elitist colonial allies that final objective was regarded only as a distant possibility, and to be deferred to an indefinite future. The limited franchise had been conceded against the background of economic crisis and social unrest following World

War I. It would require another more profound crisis both local and imperial to translate the reformers' hope of universal adult franchise into reality. In the immediate future Labour would have to contend with the impact of the Great Depression.

The decision to allow party politics in the colony suggested that Britain was being more democratic. However, this benevolence was limited as there were requirements that restricted the potential electoral candidates and voters. These requirements included high income and property qualifications that excluded the colony's working class. The campaigning in Tobago and the issue of race were part of the electoral campaign. The *Labour Leader* allowed working class representatives to publish their views and advertise their meetings.

4
Labour's Voices in the Legislative Council, 1925–1938

After decades of agitation for constitutional reform, the Colonial Office in 1924 granted limited concessions for the first instalment of representative government in Trinidad and Tobago. Among the 25 members in the Legislative Council, there were provisions for 12 officials including the Surgeon General, the Treasurer, the Director of Education, the Collector of Taxes, the Attorney General and the Protector of Immigrants. To these were added five unofficials nominated by the Governor from the business and financial interests and who were supportive of the colonial government. Both officials and unofficials belonged to the upper echelons of society, shared common interests and often voted en bloc in the Legislative Council.

The distinguishing feature of the Constitution was the elective principle which allowed for seven members elected under a restricted franchise. The Governor was provided with an Executive Council[1] which functioned as an advisory committee, but political authority resided in the colony's unicameral legislature where the authority of the Governor remained unchallenged. Indeed, "the Governor was in effect the Government" who possessed "near absolute powers" and "whose autocracy was reinforced by the inherited despotic character of the old Spanish governorship and the old French notion of paternal government."[2]

Although the majority of the African and coloured middle class appeared satisfied with the limited franchise, it was labour which remained the driving force for greater self-government since the system of political economy marginalized the masses and restricted labour to the subsistence level. The new constitutional concessions were mere tokenism as Crown Colony government was carefully preserved, and the traditional planter-merchant dominance of the Legislative Council persisted in "an elected element in the Trinidad Legislature was conceded,

but responsible Government in the form of a wholly elected Legislative Council continued to be denied."[3]

At the beginning of the legislative term 1925–1928, Cipriani was the only representative of organized labour in the Council but additional support came with the appointment of Sarran Teelucksingh as Vice-President of the TWA. Charles Henry Pierre and A.V. Stollmeyer were not members of the TWA but they contested the election with the support of the Association and generally identified with labour-related issues in the Legislative Council.

In the Council of 1928–1932, labour was represented by Cipriani, F.E.M. Hosein, Roodal and Teelucksingh. Unfortunately, when labour's presence was reduced in 1933–1937 its only representatives were Roodal and Cipriani.[4] In the general election of 1938, Roodal and Cipriani were returned to the Council unopposed, while labour representation was reinforced by the victory of Rienzi in the county of Victoria. Additionally, Teelucksingh defeated Abidh in Caroni but maintained his position in the Council as "Independent Labour."

Since there were no organized political parties in the colony, elected members functioned independently with no commitment or loyalty to any organization. Although Cipriani and Teelucksingh shared in a loose "alliance" until 1931, Pierre and Stollmeyer were not bound in allegiance to the TWA. They enjoyed much freedom in the Legislative Council which sometimes resulted in their failure to vote in unison, but they were ostracized by neither the TWA nor Cipriani for their independent vote. For instance, on 20 May 1925, when voting on an amendment for the retention of discretionary powers of the Board of the Agricultural Bank, Stollmeyer joined five other persons in supporting the measure while Cipriani and C.H. Pierre were among 14 persons who voted to defeat the proposed amendment.[5]

Labour representatives and other elected members received only occasional support from the pro-government majority, especially when the Colonial Office favoured legislation such as the Employment of Children Ordinance (1927) and the Trade Union Ordinance (1932). Support for labour was sometimes contemptuous and condescending from the pro-colonial arrogant majority who controlled the island's legislature.

The attitude of government to concerns of labour was often evasive and frustrating with frequent deferrals of working-class issues since the administration was in no haste to consider seriously legislative proposals from labour. For example, on 26 November 1926, Cipriani indicated that despite his consistent appeals the government deliberately postponed consideration of the Compulsory Education Bill. The

administration's excuses were based on financial constraints.[6] Cipriani complained, "Every time it is brought up, Government has some clever way of avoiding the issue."[7] Lewis noted, "In the Legislative Council Cipriani battled constantly against the system. He did . . . believe that workers were victimized and exploited under the Crown Colony system."[8] The opinion of the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* was that because of the government's slow response, the Compulsory Education Bill stood on the Order Paper of the Council for a prolonged period as "a dead letter on the statute books."[9]

In the Legislative Council there was no distinct "Opposition" except the collaboration among Cipriani, Teelucksingh and Roodal who represented urban and rural labour until the emergence of Rienzi in 1938 as labour's major spokesman. In voting together on certain issues and sharing similar views which challenged official governmental policy they laid the foundations for opposition politics though in its rudimentary stages. It was the first time that the island's legislature provided for such representation which challenged the powerful control of Crown Colony governance.

A cursory analysis of the contribution of labour in the Legislative Council indicates a variety of economic, social and political concerns which affected the working class. Certain issues deserve consideration, if only as examples to illustrate the broad spectrum of critical concerns which required government's attention and approval. These included the nomination system and the frustration generated by the limited franchise; the abolition of child labour; the repeal of the Habitual Idlers' Ordinance; the enactment of laws for workmen's compensation and a critical assessment of employment practices particularly related to the hiring of foreign labour.[10]

The limited franchise

Labour representatives were conscious of their political limitations but they were not intimidated by the power structure of the Council. Instead, they fearlessly denounced the autocracy of Crown Colony rule and the alliance between the government and capitalist interests, as a deadly combination inimical to working-class aspirations. Eric Williams identified "the nomination system" as a major constitutional provision which labour challenged in the Legislative Council.[11]

Immediately after the first general elections, labour launched an uninhibited protest against the limited concessions of the revised constitution and its denial of a more equitable distribution of seats in the

Legislative Council. In 1925, the elected members led by Cipriani signed a petition which was forwarded to the Secretary of State requesting that full representative government be granted to the colony. The signatories advocated the need for a more representative type of administration similar to that granted to Jamaica in 1884 when the elected members were increased from nine to 14. The petitioners further advised that the responsibility of government should be "more equably shared."[12] Subsequently, another petition with 15,000 signatories from the working class was forwarded by Cipriani in 1930 to the Colonial Office requesting self-government. The petition stated, "the people of this Colony have got the education, the ability, the civilization, and the necessary culture to administer their own affairs."[13]

In 1930 the Legislative Council debated a resolution by Cipriani which called for a Royal Commission to investigate the question of self-government for Trinidad and Tobago. In his presentation, Cipriani spoke of the political maturity of colonial peoples and the irrelevance of Crown Colony government,

> Crown Colony rule might have been ideal 50 or 100 years ago. Crown Colony rule may still be ideal for the primitive races and for peoples emerged from slavery . . . but it has outlived its usefulness in these Colonies . . . we have got to use everything in our power, strain every nerve, make every effort . . . to bring self-government and Dominion status to these beautiful Colonies.[14]

In his closing remarks on the resolution, Cipriani added that "after 150 years of British rule, if we are not fit for self-government we are never going to be fit . . . I have not the slightest confidence in the local nobility . . . I know that their best interest is best served under this form of government."[15]

Not many persons dared to chastise the Governor as Cipriani did when he scoffed at his method of nomination of unofficials. He asked why should the Governor, as president of the Legislative Council, nominate his friends to sit on the unofficial side. Furthermore, he suggested that in the nomination process, the Governor would have been guided by advisers "by a clique, members of aristocratic clubs and circles." He then added, "That system of government is noxious; it is unfair; it is a system of government that is irritating." Cipriani's resolution received full support from the elected representatives who were unanimous in their denunciation of Crown Colony governance. In his contribution,

Teelucksingh spoke of the need for equity in both the elected and nominated membership,

> Perhaps it is the policy of Crown Colony Government to use the official vote and so turn down the demand of the entire colony which is made by its official representatives . . . the time has come when we should have an equal number of representatives of the people as the officials in the House.[16]

Roodal indicated that there was no constitutional justice for the few elected members who were politically powerless and frustrated in a Council consisting of 25 members. He further indicated that labour was unwilling to function indefinitely under such a system: "The present constitution of this Council is a notorious farce. We are seven elected members, and whenever we bring any resolution or motion conducive to the interests of the taxpayers of this colony, it is always relegated to the limbo of oblivion." The extent of frustration experienced by elected members was evident in Roodal's claim: "[W]e are not prepared any longer to tolerate this exploitation . . . under this vicious form of Crown Colony Government."[17]

In supporting the resolution, C.H. Pierre, spoke of the inadequacy of the limited franchise and its provision for only seven elected members:

> [O]ne cannot feel that in the present state of our advancement here that we can be satisfied with just barely seven elected members on the Legislature when there are twenty-eight members altogether. All we are asking is that investigation be made as to whether we are not entitled to a greater share of representation in the management of our affairs.[18]

Perhaps one of the most forthright rejections of colonial administration came from F.E.M. Hosein in his support of Cipriani's resolution. He had little regard for any benevolent despot and suggested to the government that despotism, benevolent or otherwise, must come to an end. In a caustic analysis of Crown Colony government, Hosein alluded to the discrimination as practiced by colonial powers towards their dependencies,

> a look at the map will show you that responsible government is only to be practised among persons who boast of Nordic origin.

> Any race of Nordic origin, or Nordic connection, or Nordic sympathy must have responsible government, and those who cannot boast of Nordic connection must have Crown Colony Government. Now Crown Colony Government is essentially a benevolent despotism.[19]

He added his disgust towards the pro-government media in election coverage and the type of representatives whom they considered best suited for political leadership: "[O]ne did come to the conclusion that the only form of government must be an aristocratic form – that is *hoi aristoi*. Of course there were no *aristoi* here by birth, and therefore they had to fall back on *aristoi* of wealth."[20]

Indeed, the "aristoi" in the Council had little to contribute to Cipriani's resolution except to support it with reservations. A.B. Carr, an unofficial member said, "In my opinion it would not be to the best interest of the people of this colony if full representation were given at once." Other unofficials, G. Johnston and Dr. A.H. McShine, made brief uninspiring contributions to the debate and supported the resolution with no definite commitment. Perhaps Carr spoke for them when he said non-chalantly: "[I]f it turns out . . . that self-government will be to the best advantage of the colony, I shall have to bow."[21]

Labour was not deterred and continued agitation in the Legislative Council for "a revolutionary change in the Government – a change from Crown Colony rule to responsible Government."[22] Although Teelucksingh was not a TWA/TLP representative in 1938, he moved a motion in the Council to amend the Constitution so as to increase the number of elected members. In supporting the proposal, Cipriani added his criticism of colonial rule:

> This form of Government is merely a hollow mockery and a farce, because those who are nominated . . . are representatives of capital . . . Not only is the nomination principle not disappearing but it looks very much as if an effort is going to be made to shorten and cramp the style of the elected principle and possibly throw it out altogether.[23]

Rienzi would have preferred "political power and financial control to be transferred from Downing Street into the hands of an executive in Trinidad which, in itself, will be responsible to a popularly elected Legislature."[24] He further added, "though freedom-loving people in England abhor military dictatorships, the same people acquiesce in the Colonies in certain forms of dictatorships. And what is Crown

Colony government but an open form of dictatorship in which power is exercised from 4,000 miles away?"[25]

After the debate, the Governor agreed to forward the proposal to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. This official accommodation was made against the background of the massive labour unrest in Trinidad and Tobago. British policy which reluctantly and condescendingly conceded self-government in small instalments to such colonies as Trinidad and Tobago was not well received by labour in the Legislative Council. Cipriani, Roodal and Rienzi led an impassioned and persistent campaign in the Legislative Council for self-government. Unfortunately, Cipriani did not live to welcome the next step in the colony's constitutional development when adult suffrage was granted in 1946.

Child labour

Child labour came under attack in England with the rise of liberal humanitarianism in the nineteenth century, particularly because children were excessively exploited in the factory system during the Industrial Revolution. The most cruel forms of child labour included the employment of six year old boys and girls who worked for as much as 16 hours a day in coal mines or cotton and woollen mills.[26] At the same time, six year old children of slaves worked on British sugar plantations in the West Indies. Although Parliament in 1842 banned the employment in the pits of boys and girls under the age of ten years, child labour continued in parts of the British Isles and also in the British West Indian colonies. While Parliament sought to regulate and subsequently eliminate child labour in England, no serious attempt was made by the government in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to address the question of child labour in the British West Indies.

In Trinidad and Tobago child labour was part of the legacy of colonial rule during the centuries of slavery, apprenticeship and indentureship. The profit-oriented plantocracy, in the search for cheap labour during indentureship and post-indentureship, perpetuated the employment of children while upper-class families used children for domestic chores. For instance, the report of the Protector of Immigrants in 1920, indicated that there were 32 boys and 23 girls who were employed at the Forres Park Sugar Estate. Similarly, 26 boys and 24 girls were enlisted at the Non Pareil Cocoa Estate.[27] Children were also employed in collecting coconuts on estates, both in Trinidad and Tobago.[28]

The incidence of child labour in the colony was one of the issues which generated interest at the 58 Conference of the Trades Union Congress held at Bournemouth, England in September 1926. The absence of legislation prohibiting the employment of children in Trinidad was identified as one of the labour problems which required immediate attention. The Congress was informed that children laboured in the fields for several hours per day, they were paid substandard wages and furthermore they were denied educational opportunities,

> About ten years ago a scheme for compulsory education was passed by the Port of Spain, Trinidad, City Council, but nothing has apparently, been done about it. I was informed that children, instead of being at school, are in the fields doing a hard day's work for pittance of 6d. per day.[29]

A Select Committee of the Legislative Council considered the question of hours of labour in business and trade in the colony and its investigations included the problem of child labour, particularly its prevalence on the sugar estates.[30] On 9 December 1925, Joseph Frederick, a cane-farmer gave evidence before the Committee and when examined by Cipriani and O'Reilly, he indicated that children were employed at the Waterloo, St. Charles and McBean Estates. He stated that children at age seven were included in the "paragrass gang" engaged in weed control in the fields; furthermore, children assisted in loading carts and leading the oxen.[31] Paragrass and pest control gangs comprised 20 or sometimes 100 children, the majority being over 14 years but some were under 14 years of age.[32] Estates employed children in frog-hopper control, and also in the application of fertilizer to the fields. Even though the majority of children in the work-gangs were Indians, there were also a few Africans employed on the sugar estates.[33] Frederick referred to the exploitation of child labour whereby the normal work hours of children extended from 6.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Furthermore, during crop-time they worked from 5.00 a.m. or 6.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. He also testified, "I know one boy who now is only 12; he strained himself lifting wood – work which men should have done. He has ruptured himself."[34]

L.A.P. O'Reilly questioned E.A. Robinson, as to whether children were employed on his estate at Woodford Lodge, Chaguanas. Robinson nonchalantly responded that manual labour would always be necessary, hence the need to ensure that there was always a reliable supply of field labour,

> This is an agricultural country. Unless you put the children on to working in the fields when they are young, you will never get them to do so later. If you want to turn all these people into a lot of clerks, caneweighers and people of that sort, all you have to do is to prevent them working in the fields until they are 16 years old.[35]

O'Reilly also asked Robinson if the children he employed were performing "regular work during their hours of labour." In reply, Robinson unrepentantly agreed, "Yes; but they are working in the open air, not in a stuffy factory. Even then they do not work when it rains. They are accustomed to the sun, which does not hurt them; they do not physically suffer at all."[36] Cipriani cross-examined Gilbert Skinner and referred to factory work which endangered the lives of children. He added that there were reports of a few children who were killed in fatal accidents. Skinner then explained, "[A] boy who worked at the mill-house was told not to cross the line . . . he disobeyed and was killed." There were two other deaths of children in that year.[37]

Other industries in the colony also utilized child labour. In his evidence before the Committee, Lieutenant-Colonel H.B. Hickling, representing the Petroleum Association of Trinidad, admitted there was an insignificant percentage of children employed in the oilfields. Among them were a few young boys who served in manual labour while others were employed as apprentices in shops.

Carl de Verteuil, a representative of the Cocoa Planters Association, testified before the Select Committee that children were hired to gather cocoa and assist in mossing trees. They were also employed on the estates to assist in "arrondeering" which involved "the hand-removal of troublesome weeds around the base of the cacao tree."[38]

Isaac Ashby, an African, remembers his early years working with other children on the Adela Sugar Estate in Felicity, Central Trinidad. He said that at age 13 he joined the paragrass gang who assisted loading grass on oxen carts.[39] Ashby recalls the estate conditions during his childhood years,

> On the Adela Estate and Felicite Estate they had paragrass gangs with little children who were too poor to go to school and wanted to help their family. The children were usually employed on the same estate as their parents who assisted in monitoring the young workers. When the children were older they were given tasks with greater responsibilities such as the driving of oxen carts.[40]

Samuel Cowri, an East Indian, was employed on the Felicite Estate when he was ten years of age and earned ten cents a day. Later, he worked at the nearby Woodford Lodge Estate and recalls that "children sometimes fainted in the sun" while a few were injured due to the carelessness of the estate owner: "Some children sprained their ankles in hollows in the ground. Any cuts or bruises we got were not treated and got infected. It was common to see children with sores on their legs." Managers of both estates promoted the recruitment of child labour on the plantations: "The owner was always asking if we had friends who wanted to work on the estate."[41]

On 8 April 1927, the Legislative Council introduced "[a]n Ordinance to prohibit the employment of children under twelve years of age."[42] This was the first legislative effort by the government to debar employers from hiring children who were under 12 years of age. The penalty for an infringement was a fine of £2, whereas a second infringement carried a fine of £5.[43] This paltry penalty for large estate owners or managers was unlikely to have much deterrent effect.

Cipriani, in his capacity as a labour representative, significantly influenced the passage of this legislation for the cessation of child labour. During the debate on 8 April 1927, the Attorney-General, A.D.A. MacGregor, gave a brief account of the government's initiative and was particularly complimentary of Cipriani's efforts.[44] E. Radcliffe-Clarke, the first speaker to respond to the Attorney-General, voiced concerns that the Bill seeking to protect children was unnecessary since the employers of children provided a service which prevented starvation among poor families. The significance of earning an income was emphasized by Clarke who admitted to employing a child (from a family of seven) as a domestic helper in his home. Clarke also revealed that he trained a number of poor children and one eventually became the chauffeur of Governor H. Byatt.[45]

In response, Cipriani expressed his disappointment with Clarke's arguments against the proposed legislation but was also surprised "to hear one of the Elected Members rising to oppose a Bill which means so much and stands for so much to the labouring classes of this Colony." In supporting the Bill, Cipriani referred to the report of the Select Committee (1926) which confirmed that children were employed under harsh and cruel conditions:

> [I]t was proven beyond a shadow of doubt that children were being sweated, overworked and underpaid; and apart from that, that they were let loose in gangs, which had a terrible moral effect on their

> tender years. It was proved that those children were put to work with old men, many of them criminals, and there they learned all the vices which disgrace this fair Colony.[46]

Cipriani added his solution to the alleged labour problem and the planters' dependence on child labour: "I am not prepared to say that children are more efficient than adults. Whether it may be cheaper in the first instance is also a matter open to question . . . it would be well that the agriculturists should first set out to employ all the adult labour which at present goes abegging."[47]

Planter interests sought to temporize by arguing that the issue of compulsory education should precede that of child labour.[48] For Cipriani, children in the fields should not be made to wait:

> By all means let us have compulsory education; but let us start the right way by saving the lives of children in order to be able to give them compulsory education . . . the conditions that operate to-day in the employment of children, not in any particular industry but throughout the Colony is nothing short of scandalous and is a disgrace.[49]

F.C. Marriot, Director of Education, endorsed the suggestions for the introduction of compulsory education. Nevertheless, he refuted the argument by A.B. Carr that child labour was due to inadequate accommodation in schools. Marriot indicated that in the schools there was provision for an additional 6,300 children. He added that State funds should be utilized for "proper training in discipline, religion and academic education of the future citizens of the Colony."[50] In his contribution, C. Henry Pierre dismissed the suggestion that cocoa or sugar planters would be inconvenienced if they were not allowed to employ children under 12 years of age, but he welcomed the idea of compulsory education as a concomitant to the abolition of child labour.[51]

Resistance to the legislation came primarily from the plantocracy and their position was clearly articulated by cocoa proprietor A.B. Carr, who ridiculed Cipriani as being ignorant of matters concerning agriculture. Despite the evidence of others, Carr insisted that he had never seen a child under 12 years of age demossing cocoa trees,

> I have 40 years experience of cocoa estates in Trinidad and I think I know the Colony well, but I have never seen such a condition as my Honourable friend has described. I think that he has made a very

> grave statement, I am yet to see a child of or under 12 years of age employed at mossing . . . . I have seen little children working on sugar estates; they certainly seemed to be very young but I do not think they were under 12 years of age.[52]

Though the bill was passed by the Legislative Council, the problem of enforcement remained. During the period 1927 to 1929, labour representatives expressed their concern for the inordinate delay in the implementation of the Employment of Children Ordinance. Teelucksingh was not convinced that child labour was completely eliminated. Therefore, he filed a question to the administration in 1929 concerning measures adopted to enforce the abolition of child labour. The government's response that there were 11 prosecutions under the Ordinance[53] indicated there was some measure of resistance to the new law. The passage of the Ordinance to prohibit child labour was an important stage in the social evolution of Trinidad and Tobago, and it was the labour movement which contributed significantly to the approval of that legislation.

Habitual idlers

The Habitual Idlers' Ordinance of 1918 was not the first attempt by the planter-merchant class to use the legislative machinery to control labour.[54] In 1838, when emancipation created a crisis in field labour, the planter-interests in the Council sought to control labour through amendments to the Vagrants, Rogues and Vagabonds Ordinance No.12, 1838. Planters attempted "to stop, or at least inconvenience, all forms of non-plantation independent work"[55] with amendments designed to redefine vagrancy so that anyone who did not work on a plantation could be easily accused and punished for being a social menace. Similarly, the planter-dominated Legislative Council ensured that the Masters and Servants Ordinance (1846) provided punishment through fines and even imprisonment for labourers who were accused of breaking contracts. Such "draconian vagrancy and contract laws" were to restrict labour to the plantation and "smacked too much of the spirit of slavery."[56]

Cipriani brought to the Legislative Council the campaign which the TWA had begun for the repeal of the Habitual Idlers' Ordinance (1918). In response to the labour "crisis" which was anticipated when East Indian indentureship was abolished in 1917, the Ordinance was designed to provide for the plantocracy a reservoir of cheap and

sustained labour. Indeed, it was a device to continue indentureship (under a new guise) and to restrict the new freedom which workers gained after the cessation of indentured labour. Singh observes that it was an unnecessary Ordinance because there was no labour crisis owing to the depression in cocoa where labour was becoming redundant, and therefore providing a supply of workers who could have been absorbed elsewhere.[57]

The most vociferous denunciation against the Ordinance came from the TWA which rejected it as repressive and dangerous. It was regarded as an instrument to supplement field labour and an excuse for coercive labour. Furthermore, at a time when wages were depressed, the legislation was seen as dangerous and anti-working class since coerced labour could have been utilized as a capitalist strategy to maintain depressed wages.

The Ordinance provided for "the discipline and reformation of habitual idlers" and was directed at "any male offender who has no visible lawful means of subsistence and who, being able to labour, habitually abstains from work."[58] At the discretion of a constable, a person could have been arrested and charged as a habitual idler, and with a summons from a Magistrate or Justice of the Peace, a constable might call upon "any person whom he has reasonable cause to suspect of being a habitual idler to appear before a magistrate to answer why he should not be dealt with as a habitual idler."[59] Furthermore, a Constable was empowered to arrest anyone whom he "suspects" of being a habitual idler and who refused to give to that officer his name and address. The Ordinance made provisions for detention in a special settlement for "any period not less than three months or more than twelve months."[60] A repeat offender under the Ordinance was liable to "imprisonment with or without hard labour for any term not exceeding three months."[61] There were strict regulations for the management of the settlements, including the discipline of detainees and the allocation of work for idlers and the arrest of deserters.[62]

The TWA submitted a memorial to the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lieutenant-Colonel Amery, calling for the repeal of the Habitual Idlers' Ordinance. The matter was raised by Ben C. Spoor, in the House of Commons where he warned of the repercussions of the legislation on the labour situation in Trinidad,

> the Ordinance will have the effect of leaving labourers at the mercy of the employers and will effectively stifle the universal demand for higher wages; that it proceeds upon the principle that labour is a

> matter of compulsion and not of contract, and that pressure may be legitimately brought to bear upon working men in order to get them to conform to the desires of employers.[63]

Spoor also noted that the expenditure required to ensure the operation of the Ordinance would be borne by taxpayers, some of whom would disapprove of the Bill. In his reply, Amery indicated that the Habitual Idlers' Ordinance was passed "to attain an important object" which was a reduction in the high incidence of praedial larceny, particularly among cultivators of ground provisions.[64] This was clearly a specious defence since the Ordinance said nothing about praedial larceny.

There was considerable speculation surrounding the reasons for the passage of the Ordinance. In July 1921, Howard-Bishop informed Major Wood that the legislation was designed to recruit labour for the Caroni Reclamation Scheme. Wood was shocked and stated that "it was impossible for such an Ordinance to be passed with the idea of recruiting labour for the Caroni Reclamation or any other scheme."[65] Although the Acting Governor, T.A.V. Best, informed Churchill that the Habitual Idlers' Ordinance would be implemented on 1 October 1921, he also added his opinion concerning the harshness of the Ordinance's regulations: "They seem to me to be too drastic – they are practically prison regulations."[66]

Confinement at a "settlement" was incompatible with the philosophy of free labour in the post-indentureship era. Labour representatives in the Legislative Council did not hesitate to agitate for the repeal of this repressive legislation. In May 1925, Cipriani questioned the government with regard to the repeal of the Habitual Idlers' Ordinance and he requested the annual reports on the operation of the legislation since its inception.[67] He also enquired about the number of settlements as places of detention, the number of persons identified as habitual idlers and those detained on the settlements.[68] In response the government presented the annual reports but advised that there were no plans to repeal the Ordinance.

The government did not reply to the additional queries of Cipriani but a year later he again appealed to the government for the withdrawal of the Ordinance. He also sought an answer for the number of detention settlements for habitual idlers and the government indicated that thus far, one settlement was organized. The settlement, primarily agricultural, was located at River Estate, Diego Martin, to accommodate 20 habitual idlers.[69] The reply given to Cipriani was that "[t]he Government has arrived at no decision with respect to the continuance

of the Ordinance, but the matter will be considered."[70] This provided a glimmer of hope which eventually materialized in 1926 when in a surprise move, the government accommodated Cipriani's request for the repeal of the Ordinance.[71] On 29 October 1926, the Attorney-General gave an explanation for the decision,

> This was legislation of an unusual character – legislation of a not altogether desirable character . . . I think it is a truism that unless it justifies its own existence it is better dead and buried. During all the years in which this Ordinance has been in force, its provisions have been applied in only three cases; and for these reasons, Sir, it has been thought best that it should now be repealed and cease to be in force.[72]

Cipriani's success in obtaining the repeal of the Habitual Idlers' Ordinance was one of the speediest decisions undertaken by the administration which did not generate a protracted debate in the Legislative Council. The Ordinance was in existence for at least eight years and was an instrument designed to exercise some control over the labour of the large East Indian population in the wake of the legal prohibition of further imports of indentured labour from India. As "a glaring piece of class legislation,"[73] it exposed the fear of the ruling class that complete freedom for the Indians might lead to a significant withdrawal of plantation labour by Indians in much the same manner as Africans had done following the emancipation of the slaves.

The failure and ineffectiveness of this repressive legislation is illustrated in the low incidence of arrests and confinement to settlements. The Protector of Immigrants indicated that, in 1916–1918, there were no cases of absenteeism from work without a lawful excuse. Furthermore, there was only one such incident in 1919 but no convictions in 1920 and generally there were small numbers of persons accused of vagrancy during 1916–1920.[74] In 1918 when the Ordinance was introduced, six persons were accused of vagrancy, whereas in 1919 – a year of labour unrest, one case was recorded, and in 1920 there were no arrests for vagrancy.[75] If planters were anticipating a flight from the estates by labourers following the cessation of the indentureship system, they were obviously mistaken.

Workmen's Compensation

In 1921, Labour made its first official representation for the introduction of Workmen's Compensation in the colony. Howard-Bishop, Secretary

of the TWA, met with Major Wood and presented the Association's case for the implementation of a Workmen's Compensation Act,

> In the case of oil fields, especially, men were frequently seriously injured and were entirely at the mercy of the management because, in the first place, there was no law definitely to regulate a scale of compensation and, in the second, because he was invariably too poor to bear the heavy expense of a civil suit in the Supreme Courts of the Colony.[76]

On 6 October 1922, the Association submitted a memorandum to Governor Wilson urging the government to pass legislation for Workmen's Compensation.[77] Wilson felt the TWA's request deserved further attention, and he forwarded the petition to T.A.V. Best, the Colonial Secretary. However, on 12 October 1922, Best informed Howard-Bishop that conditions of labour in Trinidad and Tobago did not require a Workmen's Compensation Ordinance.[78]

The TWA was not deterred. At an emergency meeting on the night of 12 October, it was agreed to appeal to the Governor for his intervention, and that a petition be forwarded to Winston Churchill, the Secretary of State for the Colonies.[79] The request indicated that workers who sustained injuries and were temporarily or permanently disabled received small compensation at the discretion of employers and that such workers were unable to afford litigation against employers. The TWA pleaded on behalf of the working class who were exploited by employers and neglected by the colonial government which failed to provide appropriate legislation for the protection of workers,

> the absence of a Workmen's Compensation Act is regarded by the labouring people of this colony as a serious act of neglect on the part of the Government towards their welfare and being . . . they do not aim at too much when they ask that some of the privileges, rights and immunities embodied in the Compensation Law of England which, are today accorded to wage-earners in the United Kingdom be given to them.[80]

Governor Wilson informed Churchill about existing provisions for workers in the government service for workers' compensation, but he was silent on allegations of injustices in other sectors: "At present when accidents happen to workmen employed by the government, compensation is given unless it can be shown that the injury was due to the

workman's deliberate act and not to ignorance."[81] He added that he was receiving information on the functioning and impact of the Workmen's Compensation Law in British Guiana – the only such legislation existing in the British West Indies.[82]

The *Labour Leader* identified with the campaign for protective legislation for workers as it reiterated in its editorial the urgency of enacting a Workmen's Compensation Ordinance.[83] Articles published, were written by prominent citizens including Gaston Johnston (Mayor of Port-of-Spain and barrister-at-law) and Fred Adam (merchant; described by the *Labour Leader* as "a friend of labour"), both of whom favoured the passage of the Workmen's Compensation legislation.[84]

In the new Legislative Council of 1925, labour immediately pursued the issue of Workmen's Compensation by focusing on workers' safety and the inherent risks in certain industries. Cipriani filed a question concerning the safety of workers at Trinidad Leaseholds Limited: "Will the local Government state whether the Inspector of Mines regularly visits the works of the Trinidad Leaseholds Limited, at Pointe-a-Pierre, and whether there is adequate protection for the safety of workers on the No. 30 press (Canning Plant)?"[85]

In government's response, the Acting Attorney General, R.H. Furness, was evasive and seemingly a pro-employer one: "The machine as designed by the manufacturers, is not dangerous to workers provided they exercise the usual caution which is necessary when working in proximity to moving machinery."[86] Despite this attitude, Governor Byatt indicated his sympathy with labour's request and expressed his support for Workmen's Compensation: "My own feeling is that the introduction of a measure of Workmen's Compensation in Trinidad is distinctly desirable, and I believe this to be an opinion which is generally held, but it is necessary to emphasise the fact that a somewhat momentous experiment is to be tried."[87]

Further support for the required legislation came in early 1926 when Governor Byatt referred to correspondence from the Colonial Office confirming endorsement from the Secretary of State: "I trust that there may be no great delay in introducing for your consideration a Bill to provide for Compensation to Workmen for injuries sustained in the course of their employment, which is now under consideration by the Secretary of State."[88]

A decision in favour of labour finally came on 9 April 1926 when the Acting Attorney-General, R.H. Furness, moved the first reading of a Bill to provide for compensation to workmen for injuries suffered during employment.[89] The initiative for Workmen's Compensation was

provided by labour, but the primary consultants in preparing the Bill were the Agricultural Society, the Chamber of Commerce, the Petroleum Association and the Sugar Manufacturers Association.[90] Consultation was essential since they were the chief employers who would be affected by the new legislation. Furness explained that the major reason for government's delay was the unwillingness of British insurance companies to support Workmen's Compensation coverage in Trinidad and Tobago. The Colonial Office had now received a positive response from insurers that they were willing to transact business in Trinidad, subject to the introduction of legislation:

> The addition of a Workmen's Compensation Ordinance to the Statute Book of this Colony was considered as long ago as 1912 but the proposal was allowed to drop because, though no less than 40 Insurance Companies were approached, not one of them was prepared to undertake workmen's compensation business here and without the co-operation of insurance companies, a Workmen's Compensation Ordinance is not a practical proposition.[91]

It was a shallow rationalization by the Acting Attorney General since legislation had first to be passed before British insurance companies could provide the desired coverage, although official consultation with the companies was also necessary. In addition, insurers were reluctant to transact business in the colony because "there was in Trinidad no body of officials corresponding to the Inspectors provided for under the English Factory Acts; nor was there any provision in Trinidad for the safeguarding and inspection of machinery, and life-saving and accident-preventing appliances were below the standard of those in England."[92]

In piloting the Bill, the Acting Attorney-General indicated that the Ordinance was restricted to "hazardous trades" and those "employed in connection with machinery."[93] There were certain inadequacies in the Ordinance; for instance, no provision to prevent a delay in court proceedings meant a prolonged wait for the award of compensation to the injured worker, and the legislation did not allow for compensation rates to be modified according to the cost of living index. Domestic servants, shop assistants and clerical workers were not considered, but the most glaring omission was the exclusion of agricultural workers from the Ordinance although such workers constituted the majority of the workforce. The Acting Attorney-General advised that such exclusions would not be permanent but would later be accommodated in the

Ordinance. Employers under the Ordinance included the Crown, government departments, local authorities, private individuals, companies, clubs and sub-contractors.

Provisions were made for a Commissioner "with all the powers of the Supreme Court" to determine Compensation awards. The Ordinance provided that in case of injury to a workman, "by accident arising out of or in the course of his employment, his employer shall be liable to pay compensation." This included coverage for partial disablement, slight injuries or death.[94] In the event of death, "a sum equal to 30 months wages, subject to a maximum of £250" was to be paid, and permanent total disablement was covered by a maximum compensation of £350. The Acting Attorney-General intimated that the injured worker would not immediately receive the entitled sum. Once more the State preferred to demean the working class suggesting that compensation funds be controlled because workers were irresponsible, and that an official could best do this on behalf of the workman and his family,

> The idea is that lump sums payable under this Ordinance shall not be squandered. It is no use providing compensation for workmen who are injured and then handing lump sums over to people who are not accustomed to handling large sums of money and who may fritter them away and soon have nothing left to carry on with.[95]

During the debate on the Bill, Teelucksingh enquired whether the government would include the "right of appeal" to the Supreme Court if perhaps an injured worker were dissatisfied with any compensatory award. He referred to the existing laws whereby appeals to the Court could be made upon the discretion of the Attorney-General. He added, "I feel that the addition of allowing appeals on questions of fact will create a better feeling which, I am sure, prompted the Government to introduce this law into the colony."[96]

Cipriani proposed amendments for the inclusion in the Ordinance of various categories of workers, particularly agricultural workers and domestic servants. These amendments were defeated, the government preferring to retain the original provisions of the Ordinance (1926) which excluded domestic servants, clerical workers, shop assistants, members of the Constabulary or Railway Police Force, City and Borough Constables, persons in naval, military or air forces of the Crown and casual workers.

In responding to an amendment by E. Radcliffe-Clarke,[97] Cipriani disagreed that magistrates should be appointed as Commissioners. He

further expressed his reservation on the government's insistence that the Ordinance be administered by a single arbitrator, the Commissioner. Cipriani preferred an Arbitration Court "where one of the members would represent the workman, one representing the employers with the Chief Commissioner appointed by the Governor."[98]

In his summation, the Attorney-General rejected Cipriani's suggestion for a larger Arbitration Court, and his proposal for the inclusion of other categories of workers. He also ignored Henry Alcazar's proposals that cases for compensation ought to be tried by trained lawyers and that magistrates be ex-officio commissioners. In rejecting Radcliffe-Clarke's amendment that magistrates should be appointed as Commissioners, Furness advised that although the headquarters of the Commissioner might be located in Port-of-Spain: "[I]t will be an easy matter for him to sit and hear claims in other parts of the colony either at regular intervals or on days fixed."[99] The Workmen's Compensation Ordinance was approved without major dissension in the Legislative Council on 23 April 1926, and appropriately described by Radcliffe-Clarke as "a poor man's measure."[100]

The inordinate delay in implementation of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance led Cipriani to ask in October 1926, "Will the Government state how soon it is proposed to publish a Proclamation bringing into force the Workmen's Compensation Bill recently passed by this Council?" In response, the administration stated that the Ordinance would come into effect on 1 January 1927.[101] The TWA expressed its dissatisfaction with government's provision for a single commissioner[102] responsible for the administration of Workmen's Compensation, and therefore the Association petitioned the Secretary of State for the Colonies to consider the appointment of an Arbitration Board comprising a Chief Commissioner and two assistant Commissioners. The petition was taken to the House of Commons by Labour M.P. Frederick O. Roberts but it was rejected by L.S. Amery, Secretary of State for the Colonies, who advised that it was too early to determine the need for such an amendment.[103]

In December 1926, the Attorney-General, A.D. MacGregor presented regulations prepared by the Executive Council for the implementation of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance.[104] These regulations constituted "a simple and adequate machinery" inclusive of provisions for the Commissioner to perform his statutory duties and better serve the injured workman. MacGregor defended one of the regulations of the Ordinance which required that a nominal fee of ten shillings be paid

by all applicants whose case was to be considered by the Workmen's Compensation Court,

> It is unthinkable, Sir, that this Court should be established without charging some fees. Obviously something must be done to prevent rash applications to the Court . . . the view the Committee took was that the fees should be practically nominal; and . . . the fees are really slightly less than those chargeable in the Petty Civil Courts of the Colony.[105]

It is obvious that the imposition of a ten shilling fee was intended to deter poorer claimants from receiving compensation under the Act. A poor workman would have found such a fee to be a heavy drain on his income, as in many instances it would have been more than a week's wages. The fee weakened the effect of the legislation. There were exemptions from these fees when an employer wished to pay the full amount of compensation on behalf of an injured or deceased worker; and when both the employer and worker agreed to the amount of compensation. Pierre objected to the quantum and proposed the reduction of fees from 10s to 5s since injured workers were already in financial need and might be unable to pay additional costs. In his spurious defence, the Attorney-General rejected Pierre's amendment and stated that the function of the Legislative Council was to either approve or disapprove the entire regulations and not individual sections.[106]

Cipriani was impressed with the basic provisions of the regulations and congratulated the government on its effort.[107] George Yard was one of the first beneficiaries of compensation under the new legislation. An oilfield worker at Trinidad Operating Oil Fields Company Limited, he was awarded £245 when his arm was amputated on 17 December 1926. Likewise, on 24 February 1927, Louis Browne, a 17 year old labourer, was awarded $168.00 in compensation for the loss of a phalanx of the right thumb which was damaged while at work on the Port-of-Spain Wharf. Representation on behalf of Browne was made by the Executive of the TWA.[108] In January 1927, the editorial of the *Labour Leader* warned that "there are still some employers who try to hoodwink an injured worker from getting his just due under the Ordinance by making him sign a receipt for some insignificant sum in 'full satisfaction.' "[109]

Although the Workmen's Compensation Act provided some measure of protection for workers, labour brought to the attention of the Council the need for more comprehensive safety measures particularly in the factories and industrial plants in the colony. On 30 March 1928,

during the second reading of the Prevention of Accidents (Amendment) Ordinance, Cipriani referred to the explosion at the Match Factory in Port-of-Spain in which several employees were killed and many others seriously injured. He urged the government to appoint competent, independent engineers to enquire into the catastrophe.[110] Furthermore, he suggested that experts and qualified personnel be appointed to monitor and make proposals for safety conditions in factories.

Cipriani had supported the original Workmen's Compensation Bill (1926) in which the colonial government excluded agricultural workers and domestic servants, but he defended his position, explaining that he did so, not wanting to obstruct the passage of the bill.[111] Although the government had then rejected Cipriani's amendment to include other categories of workers in the Ordinance, labour, after 1926, persisted in its appeal for the inclusion of domestic servants and agricultural workers under the Workmen's Compensation legislation. For example, the TWA took its concern to the British Commonwealth Labour Conference in 1930 in London,

> Agricultural labourers and Domestic Servants comprise a very large share of the working population, and the continued exclusion of them from the Compensation Laws is working a terrible hardship. As the wages paid to that class of worker are very small no hardship would arise to the employer if the laws extended to meet cases of incapacity which arose out of the course of employment, and workers strongly urge that the Law be amended.[112]

After several attempts by Cipriani and the TWA/TLP to have the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance amended, the government eventually conceded to labour's petitions. In May 1944, labour veteran Councillor Ralph Mentor piloted a motion in the San Fernando Borough Council requesting the colonial government to amend the Ordinance.[113] Labour's agitation finally bore fruit in that year when the Ordinance was amended to include agricultural workers and certain domestic servants.

Foreign labour

In the early twentieth century the labour market in Trinidad was saturated but the flow of imported labour continued, albeit not as significantly as during the period of Indian indentureship. Foreign labour remained a threat to the local labour force particularly since employers used cheap labour to keep wages and working conditions depressed

but the hiring of foreign workers also contributed to critical levels of unemployment in the colony.

After the cessation of indentured labour, the TWA and its representatives in the Legislative Council conducted a campaign against foreign labour, which was in the first instance directed against Europeans in the Civil Service. The working class encountered difficulties in securing employment, while qualified local employees with tenure of service were denied promotion as Heads of Departments and other official positions in the Service.

In 1921, when Howard-Bishop visited England he made representations for the establishment of competitive examinations for entry into the Civil Service rather than the existing system of selection based on character and education.[114] In a subsequent statement he reiterated the TWA's viewpoint: "The natives stood first in the practice of all the leading professions, and I was convinced that, given the opportunity, they would acquit themselves most creditably in any branch of the Service. It was an undeniable fact that whenever they got an opportunity they always held their own."[115]

In its editorial, the *Labour Leader* in 1923, criticized the employment of Europeans to fill key positions in the Civil Service, and in reference to R.G. Bushe (Auditor-General) and Dennis Slyne (Receiver-General) who were replaced by foreigners, the government was criticized for creating a preserve for "European exiles" in Trinidad and Tobago. In the same publication, there was an open letter to the Governor, expressing reservations concerning the appointment of Lennox O'Reilly to the Legislative Council since he was not a native of the colony and held no landed interests in Trinidad and Tobago.[116] Similarly, in its regular column entitled "The Political Mirror," the TWA objected to the appointment of Elliot Maingot (a foreigner) as Crown Solicitor and Official Receiver.[117]

Labour representatives in the Legislative Council demanded an employment policy which gave preference to citizens of the colony instead of foreigners. The issue of employing Europeans rather than locals was raised by Cipriani on 6 March 1925, in a question pertaining to the employment of Europeans with the Trinidad Government Railways – "Will the Government state the terms of the Contracts under which European Engine Drivers recently appointed to the Trinidad Government Railway have been engaged?" The government presented a copy of the contractual agreement for Cipriani's perusal but he was not satisfied that it addressed the problem of employment of foreigners.

In October 1926, Cipriani requested the government to consider the introduction of legislation to prevent or limit the employment of foreign labour in the loading and offloading of ships at anchor in the Gulf of Paria. The administration did not foresee a problem and responded, "Existing legislation limits the employment in loading and unloading of ships to persons who are either licensed locally or borne on the ships' articles."[118]

Labour's agitation for a review of government's policy concerning Civil Service appointments, prompted the government in 1928 to appoint a Committee comprising only officials in the Legislative Council, to advise on the choice of candidates for the Civil Service. C.H. Pierre, elected member for the Eastern Counties, questioned the composition of the committee and proposed a motion for the inclusion of one or more elected members on the Committee. He indicated his reason: "They are in close, personal touch with the people; they enjoy the confidence of the people; and the presence of their representatives on the Committee would, in a great measure, help to remove the suspicions which may arise– whether on well-founded or ill-founded grounds."[119] Pierre's motion was seconded by Kelshall and supported by Biggart, Cipriani, Kelshall and Roodal. Despite Pierre's good intentions and the rationality of his request, the motion was defeated by the official and unofficial members,[120] thereby indicating their determination to keep the Civil Service as the preserve of expatriates.

In its campaign against foreign personnel in the Civil Service, labour appealed for support at the Labour Conference in London in 1930. In its memorandum to the Conference, the TWA listed certain significant concerns: the discrimination against locals in promotion to senior offices in the Civil Service; salary inequity between expatriates and locals; and the ineffectiveness of most heads of departments who remained in the colony for short periods, using their appointments "as a stepping ground" for higher positions in the Colonial Service.[121] In April 1932, the Legislative Council debated Cipriani's motion in which he asked the government to consider the employment of "local men" as a solution to the unemployment situation which was intensified with the Depression.[122] Due to the severity of the Depression and its adverse effects on the working class, Cipriani made a passionate appeal reminding the government of its duty to provide employment for the labouring man who had the right to live:

> [W]e are all suffering from the depression (there is a general depression) the argument falls when it comes to the salaried man. The

> salaried man draws his same full and fat salary, and his increments go up regardless of the depression; so that there is only one section of the community suffering, and that section the one which can least afford it.[123]

In Cipriani's thorough criticism of appointments to the Civil Service he alluded to corrupt practices emanating from London, where favouritism and nepotism seemed to be factors which determined selection for the Civil Service in Trinidad. He emphasized the need for the appointment of local personnel instead of the existing preponderance of expatriates: "I submit that appointments in the Service should be confined to local men... And when I say 'local men' I refer to the broad term 'West Indian.' I feel that the cold answer that I will get is that these appointments are made by 'our masters in Downing Street'... so long as the present Constitution exists, it will be the privilege and perquisite of the friends, relations, and wire-pullers of the Colonial Office to get those appointments."[124] He unapologetically accused the government of discrimination in the appointment of an "outsider" to fill the vacant post of Detective Inspector of Constabulary. He suggested that because of race, Sergeant-Major Sylvester was not promoted to that position: "Sergt.-Major Sylvester, who, being a coloured man, cannot reach the top. He will never get that appointment... this is the ban, I believe, against a man of colour."

State protection for foreigners employed in the government service was another concern of labour. Cipriani noted the biased legal system: "[W]hen the local man is guilty of fraud... Every bloodhound in the Force is trained to bring him to justice." As he denounced State protection for foreigners, he referred to a Judge of the Supreme Court who received a government loan "so as to get away from a series of fugae-warrants and to pay his butcher, his baker and his candlestick – maker."[125]

In his plea that locals be considered for employment Cipriani referred to a Managing Director of one of the largest sugar factories in the colony who was intent on "Europeanizing his staff" and refused to employ local men who were considered allegedly unreliable and dishonest. As Cipriani extended his appeal to dry goods merchants, the oil companies and private enterprises, he alluded to a decision of the English Jockey Club which had refused to renew licences of three foreigners because "there are enough English jockeys in England." He added that if in England there was such "reasonable and practical protection for its

people from unfair competition from outside," then labour in Trinidad and Tobago deserves similar protection.[126]

In his critique of foreign labour, Cipriani chided the government for its insensitivity in appointing persons to Trinidad from the South African service. The transfer of Whites to Trinidad was resented by the working class who was aware of the racist policies of the South African government. Cipriani told the Council: "And I say this, without wishing to offer any offence to any of those who come within this category, that the Colonial Office set out on a policy of appointing everyone to this Government from the African Service . . . we suffer invasion from South Africa from time to time."[127]

Whites from South Africa were not only appointed to the Civil Service, but their presence in managerial positions in the oilfields was a source of discontent among the working class who complained of racist attitudes among these expatriates. Oilfield workers resented the White South African presence in Trinidad Leaseholds Limited which was a branch of a South African oil company. Cipriani was aware of allegations of discrimination in the oilfields. His uneasiness with "invasions" by South African workers was undoubtedly appreciated during the 1937 oilfield disturbances when discrimination by South African managers featured among workers' grievances.

In supporting Cipriani's resolution, Roodal spoke of economic inequity which produced "two extremes" in the social structure in the colony: "On the one side we find fabulous wealth – men living in luxury and splendour; and on the other side we find abject poverty." The effects of the Depression on the working class demanded governmental assistance for the unemployed. Roodal suggested some measure of welfare support similar to the dole system in England.[128] Although Cipriani specified the Civil Service which was dominated by foreigners, Roodal disclosed that in oil companies, preference was given to locals in clerical departments while foreigners were employed in certain "key" jobs demanding expertise. In his analysis of the appointments of colonials to offices in Trinidad he suggested that since England was a small country with limited employment opportunities, the possessions of the Empire whether India, South Africa or the various colonies were utilized as sources of employment for the English. These colonies were used by Britain to provide important jobs "for the benefit of her children." In supporting the resolution, Roodal appealed to the Governor in Council: "[L]et us cut away the physical complexion for the time and give preference to our local men."[129]

Cipriani anticipated "a good deal of criticism and opposition," and indeed his resolution generated harsh responses coming primarily from T.M. Kelshall and L.A.P. O'Reilly, both of whom were from other West Indian islands. Kelshall questioned the use of the term "West Indian" and wondered if Cipriani's usage of the term "local" would exclude a significant number of East Indians who were born in India and were British subjects. He noted that local men were employed on the sugar and cocoa estates and that locals owned most of the cocoa estates, and with respect to the employment criteria in the Civil Service, he did not believe that locals were denied job opportunities.[130]

O'Reilly argued that Cipriani should have offered constructive proposals rather than attempt to pass a resolution which merely proposed the absorption of the unemployed into the Civil Service. As he explained that Civil Service appointments were made by either the Governor or Secretary of State, he cynically advised the member for Port-of-Spain to "go and knock at the doors of the Colonial Office and get them to change the Colonial Office Regulations. It is idle to come to this Council and ask us to pass a resolution like the present one. It is otiose, and it is a waste of time."[131] O'Reilly's attitude indicates the political complacency of the unofficials and their unwillingness to challenge the existing system of governance. He would not have forgotten that labour had previously objected to his appointment as a nominated member since he was not a Trinidadian. He therefore suggested that the acceptance of persons from other West Indian islands was essential for the promotion of Federation.

In response to the resolution, the Colonial Secretary attempted to refute Cipriani's arguments by noting that in the Civil Service with its 964 employees, there were 874 "British West Indians" while 90 were from other parts of the Empire. But he failed to say how many of the 874 British West Indians were Trinidadians. It was not surprising that Cipriani's motion suffered a heavy defeat since officials and unofficials, 21 of them, voted together to defeat the motion which was supported by only Roodal and Cipriani.

Labour's repeated objections to European domination of the Civil Service was not only based on the need for employment opportunities for locals. The presence of British personnel as Heads of Departments and other official positions in the Service symbolized colonial control of the island, which labour resented. The exclusion of locals from such a significant level of administration was regarded as a deliberate attempt to promote and preserve colonial rule. Labour understood the value of the Civil Service as the training ground for administrative and

political responsibilities. Hence a locally managed Service would have been an essential requirement in preparation for self-determination. Similarly, protests against "the Europeanization" of the oil and sugar industries indicate labour's abhorrence towards an economic system which inflicted much suffering on the working class.

The matter of foreign labour was once more introduced by Cipriani and Roodal during the debate on the Immigration Restriction Ordinance (1936). The Bill restricted the admission into the colony of infirm paupers and destitute immigrants such as the diseased, criminals, mentally handicapped, poor and persons of immoral character.[132] Cipriani was not pleased with the limitations of that Ordinance. He preferred a more comprehensive legislation to control immigration because of the consequences on labour. In his view, foreign labour was unnecessary, hence the need for governmental intervention to curb migrant workers,

> There is no doubt whatever in the minds of those qualified to judge that just at the present moment Trinidad has sufficient people in it for the carrying out of her industries and for the general undertakings which go on from day to day in this Colony, and therefore any people coming from outside, no matter from what part of the world, seeking employment here, can only have one result – the addition to the unemployment or under-employment in this Colony.[133]

Cipriani referred to Chinese and Syrian immigrants, and suggested that their presence should not exceed those who are already in the Colony,

> [T]he Chinese and Syrians and others born in this country are West Indian. Their conditions of living are West Indian and they, too, must help in protecting themselves against those who come from outside with a lower standard of living and accustomed to earn a smaller wage than that which is paid in Trinidad . . . it will present a great difficulty if we did allow agricultural labourers from other countries to come in here and to work for smaller wages.[134]

Roodal supported the motion but he did not disguise his contempt for the employment practices of the Syrians and Chinese. He was uncompromising and brutal as he analysed their place within the labour system and its effect on the working class in the Colony. He saw them as immigrants who selfishly exploited the resources of the island, and since

they were accustomed to a lower standard of living, they accepted small salaries which influenced employers to keep wages depressed,

> These Chinese and Syrians come here for the purpose of filling their pockets and draining the resources of this colony and leaving the colony poorer than when they came in. They give employment to their own people, and they become a burden instead of an asset. Their system of wage is the lowest in the world; they feed themselves very poorly. They come here with one object, and that is to help themselves from the fat of this colony and to leave this colony poorer.[135]

No member of the Council objected to Roodal's attack on the two migrant groups. O'Reilly expressed surprise at Cipriani whom he described as a socialist and internationalist in theory, but in reality he was "as sturdy and economic a nationalist as Herr Hitler himself."

Despite concerns expressed by Cipriani and Roodal, the government persisted in its support for hiring foreign labour. In the Legislative Council in 1936, one of the issues raised was the decision to hire a temporary foreman from abroad "to strengthen the staff" in the Public Works Department. Cipriani immediately condemned such a decision: "Buildings have been erected all over Trinidad with the local foremen and it seems rather an extraordinary position that the Public Works Department, which is not a new department, should in 1936 come forward to ask us to import a foreman."[136]

Although labourers who migrated to Trinidad from West Indian colonies were not attracted in large numbers to the sugar plantations, yet some of them, particularly during the Depression, found work on the Estates. Isaac Ashby, a sugar worker who resides in the Chaguanas-Felicity area, reflected on his early years on the estates,

> There were about twenty Negroes who were not from Trinidad and they were from Barbados, St. Vincent and Grenada. They were brought by Robinson to work in his Estate at Woodford Lodge. Also, on the estate there were about ten Negroes who came from Tobago. I worked alongside a few Negroes who were employed on the Adela Estate in Felicity. They came from Carriacou and were very friendly and hardworking.[137]

The freedom of movement of labour from the British West Indian islands to Trinidad gained momentum with the expansion of the

petroleum industry. Despite a relatively high level of unemployment in the colony, employers persisted in recruiting foreign labour in the oil industry. They believed that workers from the neighbouring British West Indian colonies would be content with wages, and thus be less likely to be influenced by demands for higher wages by the radical trade unions. E.R. Blades, a former oilfield employee, confirms the presence of non-Trinidadians on the oilfields in South Trinidad,

> During the 1920s to 1950s I remember a lot of workers from the small islands working for the oil companies. Some of the workers come from St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Vincent and Barbados. There were also a few Jamaicans. The salary was good and this brought them to Trinidad. These workers from other islands used to work hard but some of them also complained of wages just like the Trinidadians.[138]

Blades made particular reference to the large number of Grenadians in Point Fortin,

> There were so many Grenadians in Point Fortin that it was called "Little Grenada." They lived in Point Ligoure, Fanny Village, Techier Village and Egypt Village. These were areas where the workers lived. Most of them were employed with UBOT. The White bosses lived at Clifton Hill and the junior staff lived at Mahaica.[139]

During the early 1940s, a considerable proportion of the labour force on the estates was attracted to the American bases which were under construction. The Felicite Estate was temporarily affected by the shift in labour,

> When the American bases began to be built, many workers on the Felicite Estate left the sugar cane work and went to work on the bases because they paid about 90 cents while our pay was much smaller. Many workers left and the Felicite Estate was almost abandoned but they returned to their jobs in the estate when the bases closed down.[140]

Samuel Cowrie added, "mostly Negroes left, but some Indians went to work on the U.S. Bases. Some Indians from my area went to work for the Americans at Carlsen Field and Cumuto."[141] However, there was discrimination against local labour seeking employment on the Bases. In April 1942, the *Vanguard* reported that an overseer from one of the

sugar estates was at the US Bases to intercept sugar workers seeking employment. When estate workers were identified by the overseer, the authorities on the Bases confiscated badges and redirected job-seekers back to the estate.[142]

The complex problem of labour at the US Bases, the use of foreign labour, the exclusion of Trinidadians and the efforts of sugar manufacturers to retain their workforce were at the background of a question filed by Rienzi in the Legislative Council in 1942: "Is Government aware that an Overseer is sent by the Woodford Lodge Estate to one of the American Bases near Chaguanas to blackball men who were once employed by the Estate, but are now seeking employment with the Americans?" Rienzi advised the government to make enquiries on such reports and use its authority to stop that "undesirable and provocative practice."[143]

Labour was concerned with discriminatory recruitment practices at the bases, for which local employers, such as the sugar manufacturers may have been partially responsible. The *Vanguard* condemned hiring practices at the bases in which not only sugar workers were rejected, but several other Trinidadians were refused employment yet "hundreds of Barbadians are steadily coming under contract to work on the Bases."[144] The *Vanguard* also expressed concern that Trinidad Leaseholds Limited employed one dozen skilled workers from Barbados on short-term contracts for its oilfields although labour was available in Trinidad.[145] The hiring of foreign labour in the oil and agricultural industries was a deliberate attempt by employers to create cleavages in the labour force in order to control it. Foreign workers were considered submissive and to whom employers made very little commitment beyond contractual obligations.

In the foregoing analysis of certain issues which labour addressed in the Legislative Council it is evident that working-class concerns were consistently articulated by the few labour representatives who were sometimes denied support even from other elected members. The impact and success of labour in the Council cannot be adequately assessed merely in terms of the legislative concessions granted to them by the government. Whether it was Cipriani and Teelucksingh, Roodal or Rienzi, their influence in the Legislative Council is certainly indisputable although often they are denied credit for their place in the island's legislative history.

Because the small cadre of elected members was outnumbered by the unassailable pro-government majority in the Legislative Council, certain scholars have been reluctant to credit them with any significant

achievements. Williams thinks that they functioned in a Council which was "nothing more than a debating assembly"[146] where power was in the hands of the government-controlled legislature and where the elected members remained an insignificant, politically impotent minority group. Craig also tends to dismiss as futile the efforts of Cipriani and the other labour representatives whose contributions may have been useful merely because they were uncompromising in their opposition to the government.[147]

On the contrary, Brereton and Lewis attribute greater significance to the work of labour, particularly through the contribution of Cipriani who played "a significant role in articulating grievances and politicizing the people by his speeches in the Council"[148] some of which prodded the government where hitherto political lethargy existed. Through the invaluable contributions of labour, the masses received "their first real lessons . . . in the art of directing social discontent into national political activity."[149] Among the elected members, labour representatives were more proactive than the "Independents" and they demonstrated their debating competence, tenacity of spirit and knowledge of the variety of issues raised both in the interest of the masses and also in national development. They challenged the myth that colonial peoples were politically ignorant and incapable of governing themselves.

Labour exposed the inertia of Crown Colony rule and brought into prominence fundamental political, economic and social concerns which were usually of minor concern to the government. In their appeal for opportunities for self-governance whether through the establishment of a locally managed Civil Service, or extensive constitutional reform, Labour established the need for an alternative to imperial governance. Through its persistent criticism of colonial rule and its focus on the need for responsible government, Labour set in motion a renewed campaign for self-determination which could not be indefinitely ignored by the Colonial Office.

Although Labour was politically deficient and numerically disadvantaged, colonial administrators would not have admitted that Labour in the Legislative Council influenced developmental policies and also "helped to shape the political life of the colony."[150] If perhaps the limited concessions granted to elected members were in effect "self-government on a leash, no matter how long and relaxed the leash may be,"[151] it was Labour which extended that leash to its limit and dared to test it further, rather than capitulate to the master who controlled the leash.

The elected representatives of Labour used the Legislative Council as a forum to highlight the grievances of the voiceless working class. However, the government representatives continued to receive the majority of support and they were able to overrule legislation and dominate debates that were viewed as pro-working class or anti-government. Nevertheless, the quality and content of the contributions of the elected Labour representatives in the Council re-elected their sincerity and genuineness.

5
Rise of the Trinidad Labour Party

Quest for legal status

The TWA was not originally registered as a legal entity when it was founded in 1897, but in 1906 it was registered both under the Friendly Societies Ordinance and the Companies Ordinance since this was a requirement for all Friendly Societies and similar bodies such as the TWA. The Companies Ordinance regulated banking institutions, but it included under its purview organizations such as the TWA and other provident or benefit societies which were categorized as "Associations not for Profit."[1]

The Friendly Societies Ordinance, under which the TWA was registered, was the primary legal instrument for the registration of any workers' organization and included "Societies [in this Ordinance called working men's clubs] for the purposes of social intercourse, mutual helpfulness, mental and moral improvement, and rational recreation."[2] Societies under the Ordinance were constituted with a membership of at least 35 persons, and application for registration was made by 7 signatories[3] including the secretary, treasurer, trustees, and all members of the Executive Committee.[4] All branches and their locations were to be listed in the application to the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

Since the Ordinance specifically regulated Societies operating for charitable purposes, its provisions were inadequate for the TWA whose objective and functions exceeded that of a benevolent Society. Indeed, the concerns and efforts of the Association transcended the limited confines of a charitable organization. It had emerged in the 1920s as the most successful initiative promoting the interest of the working class, particularly the improvement of conditions of labour. Later, in 1925 it functioned as a quasi political group when it participated in general

elections in which the TWA's President, Cipriani, and other pro-labour candidates won electoral seats and served in the Legislative Council.

The legal condition placed on the TWA and other labour groups by the Ordinance was restrictive, and it is obvious that the colonial administration was reluctant to grant wider powers to any working-class organization. Later nineteenth-century colonial policy towards labour organizations indicated extreme caution, suspicion, and an unwillingness to grant enhanced legislative status to workers for fear they may become too powerful and be a threat to the economic and political stability of the colony in the event of strikes, the withholding of labour or public demonstrations.[5] The government was not in any haste to introduce trade union legislation which would be an instrument for the empowerment of the working class. The objective of the government was to keep the masses in subjugation within a system representing the dominant economic elites, and manipulated by planter, merchant and petroleum interests, who dictated the terms of labour. It was clearly an advantage to the employers if they were in control of the labour force in the colony through State action.

The TWA refused to be domiciled within the confines of existing Ordinances and was determined to petition the imperial and colonial administration for the introduction of specific trade union laws. In August 1921, Howard-Bishop, the Secretary of the TWA, held consultations with Ben C. Spoor and E.F.L. Wood in England concerning the urgent need for appropriate labour legislation in the colony. He informed them: "There is no Trade Union legislation in Trinidad on the lines of the Imperial Trade Disputes Acts, and the Association desired such legislation. An Ordinance of this kind has been passed in British Guiana."[6] Accordingly, Howard-Bishop was advised that the TWA should forward its petition to the Governor of Trinidad and Tobago, Sir J.R. Chancellor; and if the request was not favourably received then under colonial regulations a further petition should be forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Viscount Milner.[7]

Cipriani, as an elected member, introduced in the Legislative Council the issue of the need for trade union laws. In November 1926, he questioned the government on its intentions towards trade union legislation in the colony in accordance with a promise given by the British government at a meeting of the League of Nations at Geneva.[8] The government's reluctance to grant legal recognition to labour organizations was again apparent. A month later, the colonial authorities professed to be unaware of the British government's promise to the League of Nations. Nevertheless, it agreed to conduct an enquiry.[9] On 4 April 1930,

Cipriani repeated his appeal in the Legislative Council for trade union legislation. The response indicated an unwillingness by the administration to accede to any such request: "The Government does not consider that there is any necessity at present for the introduction of Trade Union Laws in this colony."[10]

The TWA submitted a memorandum to the British Commonwealth Labour Conference for consideration at its meeting in July 1930, in London. The communiqué outlined the Association's grievances and disappointment at the government's refusal to consider appropriate trade union legislation for the colony: "Workers, notwithstanding the help given to them by the T.W.A., continue to be exploited by the Capitalist or employer class, which exploitation receives the tacit approval of the Government, and unless and until such Laws are introduced workers will continue to be pilloried."[11] The TWA was forthright in its condemnation of the exploitative policy of employers and it did not hesitate to denounce government's support of the oppressors of the working class. Such strongly worded correspondence from the TWA is indicative of the determination of the Association to challenge and expose the anti-worker economic policy of the colonial administration. But the TWA was reminded that the policy of the metropole was extended to all its colonies and that Trinidad and Tobago was not singular in the limitations which regulated workers' organizations. In a confidential circular, Lord Passfield, Secretary of State for the Colonies, expressed his reservations,

> I regard the formation of such associations in the Colonial Dependencies as a natural and legitimate consequence of social and industrial progress . . . organizations of labourers without experience of combination for any social or economic purposes may fall under the domination of disaffected persons, by whom their activities may be diverted to improper and mischievous ends.[12]

Britain defended its cautious approach to trade union development in the colonies by suggesting that colonial administrators were expected to monitor the conditions of labour in their jurisdiction. This perfunctory advice was an inadequate concession in lieu of specific trade union laws: "There should be arrangements for ensuring that the conditions of employment are such that complaints are unlikely to arise; and this means that they ought to come under continuous, and not merely under occasional, review."[13]

The TWA was dissatisfied with such an ineffective policy and persisted in its efforts for the introduction of trade union legislation in Trinidad

and Tobago. In 1931, the Association sent to Malcolm MacDonald a petition which was critical of Governor Sir Alfred Claud Hollis' failure to support proposals for new labour laws in the colony,

> The present Governor has expressed himself as being satisfied that there is absolutely no need for the introduction of Trade Union Laws for Trinidad, the while giving no reasons for such opinion, and has definitely replied to questions put to him in Council, that the Government has no intention, now or in the near future, to introduce such Laws in the Colony.[14]

Trade Union Ordinance 1932

After persistent and relentless appeals for the introduction of trade union laws in the colony, the long-awaited Trade Union Ordinance was laid in the Legislative Council on 27 May 1932 by the Acting Attorney-General, J.L. Devaux. The Ordinance included the removal of trade unions from the purview of the Friendly Societies Ordinance and the Companies Ordinance but made it mandatory for all trade unions to be registered under the new legislation.[15]

The provisions of the Ordinance were designed to closely monitor the activities of all trade unions. Accounts and records would be regularly inspected, while strict regulations insisted on financial management and accountability. Penalties were severe for non-compliance with the provisions in the Ordinance. For example, false entries carried a penalty of £50; and failure to register resulted in a penalty of £1 for every day. Trade unions had to be registered: "Every secretary, trustee, member of the committee or other officer of an unregistered trade union shall be guilty of an offence" Clause 10(5). The Registrar exercised controlling authority over trade unions, and "in his opinion" a certificate of registration could be withdrawn, though there were provisions for appeal to the Supreme Court (Clause 21).

Among the other provisions, the Ordinance included the establishment of a "political fund"[16] designated specifically for election purposes. Membership in the fund was not obligatory, but "contribution to the political fund shall not be made a condition for admission to the Union."[17] Furthermore, non-contributors to the fund "shall not be excluded from any benefits of the union"[18] and there should be no penalties or discrimination against such persons.

The legislation emphasized that the Political Fund be kept as a "separate fund" of the Union and not merged with other funds designated for unemployment relief, sickness or death benefit. In the debate on the

Ordinance, the Acting Attorney-General insisted that these special funds ought not to be used for political purposes,

> During the first years of the life of a Union in this Colony its funds and assets must necessarily be very limited, as these will be derived from the small contributions which the working man will make, and that at a great sacrifice to himself. If these funds were to be used for political campaigns, they would be all swallowed up in each campaign, and there would be nothing available for the other benefits which the Union should primarily provide for.[19]

The government in Trinidad and Tobago was indeed concerned about the unqualified provisions of this section which permitted trade unions to engage in politics. J.L. Devaux explained that it would be disadvantageous if unions were formed with political intentions: "As to the policy of using these trade unions for political purposes, in my opinion it will be a mistake to start the unions with that idea. It will cripple them in regard to their other spheres which are the fundamental ones for which these Unions should be formed."[20]

Walter Citrine, the General Secretary of the TUC in London, in a telegram to Cipriani, remarked that the new legislation was ambiguous in its provisions for a "Political Fund" since the section had virtually no restrictions to the political activity of trade unions. He expressed concern that the privileges extended for the involvement of trade unions in politics were even more liberal than what existed in Britain,

> I notice that Clause 3 of the Bill gives a Trade Union power to apply its funds for any lawful objects for the time being authorised under its Constitution, whether they are statutory objects or not. These words are very similar to those in the British Trade Union Act, 1913, but in our case the section goes on to qualify this power by referring to the special provisions laid down in the Act for the Political Fund.[21]

The labour representatives in the Legislative Council welcomed in the Bill the unguarded, extensive concessions granted to unions for political activity. It is obvious that contributions to an additional cause, such as a political fund, would have been burdensome to the working man who was already committed to more urgent welfare contributions to his union. The likely motive for the liberal concessions in the Ordinance which encouraged the establishment of a political fund, was to prevent

the build up of a strike fund and to lure the TWA to become political as it did.

The immediate response of the TWA to the proposed legislation was one of apprehension because of certain deficiencies in the Ordinance. The Bill was unacceptable because it neither made provisions for the right of unions to participate in strikes nor engage in worker demonstrations; nor did it include immunity from actions in tort, that is, prosecution in the event of damages incurred during labour protests.[22]

Cipriani requested a postponement of the debate on the Ordinance through its referral to a Special Committee to allow for further consideration. The Governor agreed, and the debate was deferred for three weeks.[23] During this interval, Cipriani contacted Walter Citrine seeking his advice on the proposed Bill,[24] but unfortunately, there was no response from Citrine at the time the debate began in the Legislative Council on 18 June 1932. The Acting Attorney-General moved the second reading of the Trade Union Ordinance which was seconded by S.M. Grier, the Colonial Secretary.[25] The Acting Attorney-General explained the purpose of the Trade Union Ordinance in which he implied that the colonial government preferred the TWA to become more politically oriented and less industrial in its activities,

> The Unions which will come under the Bill, if enacted into law, will be given legal recognition and protection. They will be empowered to do certain acts and carry on certain functions which they would not have been able to do under the Common Law or without the enabling powers of the Bill.... Let us not not [*sic*] be misled by the idea that the Bill is to be used as a lever for the working man merely to increase wages.[26]

In the debate he responded to Labour's proposal that strikes and lockouts be included in the legislation and insisted that the trade union laws of England had to be consulted.[27] He then offered a reason for government's deliberate omission of a clause on strikes: "As I have said before, matters controversial have been excluded from the Bill, and when once we launch into the sphere of strikes and lock-outs, we are on uncertain ground and probably in stormy waters."[28]

In his contribution to the debate, Cipriani requested that amendments be made to the Ordinance providing for lockouts and strike action by unions. The government was adamant in its rejection of any such proposals, and its inflexibility towards further amendments to the Ordinance is well exemplified in its attitude to the simple proposal from

Cipriani with regard to Section 16(1). He suggested that the Auditor be selected from a person "appointed by the trade union with the approval of the Registrar." He added, "I do not think that it should be left to the Registrar to appoint if the Registrar approves of the person submitted to him that ought to satisfy the Government."[29] Even in this, the government refused to accommodate any change which would give some supervisory authority to a union. It maintained that the Auditor be appointed solely at the discretion of the Registrar. Governor Sir Alfred Claud Hollis was uncompromising in his response: "I think the clause had better stand as it is."[30]

On 21 June, Cipriani communicated with Citrine informing him of the outcome of the debate in the Legislative Council and emphasized the refusal of the government to include clauses which were protective of workers' rights.[31] The TWA, displeased with the provisions of the Ordinance, was determined to maintain its opposition to the new legislation. In December 1932-January 1933, Vivian Henry, the TWA's General Secretary, visited England and held discussions with W. Gillies of the British Labour Party, and W. Milne-Bailey of the TUC, on the deficiencies of the Trade Union Ordinance passed in Trinidad. Upon his return to Trinidad, Vivian Henry continued his dialogue with William Gillies requesting an official response from the TUC regarding the Ordinance. He enquired whether it was advisable that sections of the TWA should eventually register under the new legislation, and he requested (from the TUC) copies of rules and regulations pertaining to English trade union Acts.[32]

The TUC, in its response to Henry's letter, reiterated the view that the colony's new trade union legislation was inadequate: "[I]n our view the proposed Trade Union Ordinance is thoroughly unsatisfactory, and falls far short of the minimum required to safeguard Trade Unions . . . it contains no provisions for safeguarding the Trade Unions right to strike and carry on the usual activities connected with strikes. It is quite a mockery."[33] Even though the TUC discerned that the new legislation in Trinidad was "utterly unsatisfactory," it advised that the TWA should be registered as a trade union under the new Ordinance: "The Ordinance defines what is meant by a Trade Union, and the appropriate section says that Trade Unions shall be registered. Thus you seem to have no option since you are a bona fide Trade Union within the meaning of the Ordinance."[34]

Contrary to this advice from the TUC, the TWA remained inflexible in its refusal to be registered under the new legislation. Henry replied to Citrine of the TUC, informing him of the TWA's hesitation to comply

with his suggestion that the Association be registered as a trade union under the new Ordinance.[35] It was evident that compromise was not an option since the Executive of the TWA was determined to maintain its non-compliance with the legislation.

Henry notified the Registrar that the TWA was already registered under the Companies Ordinance (1907) as an incorporated body and thus registration under the new Trade Union Ordinance was unnecessary. Henry then circularized the secretaries of all affiliated branches and sections of the TWA informing them of the decision of the Executive that they should not register under the new Ordinance. Certain affiliates such as the Railway Union and the Stevedores Union declared their interest in registration. Both unions reconsidered their position after Cipriani uncompromisingly warned, "The Railway Union and the Stevedores Union are only sections of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association. The Trinidad Workingmen's Association says 'We are not registering,' and neither the Railway Union nor the Stevedores Union can register."[36] Furthermore, Quintin O'Connor, a member of the Clerks Union of the TWA, made unsuccessful attempts to persuade Cipriani to support the registration of the Association.[37]

The defiance of the TWA and its insistence on non-registration prompted the Attorney-General, F. Gordon Smith, to request a meeting with the Registrar, Cipriani and Henry. It was evident that the TWA's position was inflexible unless there were amendments to the Ordinance with provisions for the right to strike and the use of peaceful picketing. In an update to Citrine, Henry informed him: "For the moment, it was made clear to us that prosecution was not intended if we failed to register. Much stress was made by us about the refusal by Govt. to incorporate in the Bill amendments we proposed upon your advice, namely, provisions for peaceful picketting and immunity from liability of Trade Unions in actions for tort, but the Attorney General expressed himself as speaking for Govt that if we registered, and became properly organised Unions, it was likely that later on those provisions would be brought about by an Amendment Ordinance."[38]

The steadfast and uncompromising position of the TWA in defiance of the new Ordinance prompted a reply from the TUC in which Citrine expressed concern and admitted to his limited knowledge of the laws governing Trinidad. In this, he indicated his fear that the TUC's involvement in the issue may complicate the situation in the colony. In offering candid advice, Citrine concluded in his letter: "Perhaps it might be useful to you if you could obtain the opinion of some international lawyer."[39]

Citrine took such a long time to admit to his limited knowledge of laws governing Trinidad. His advice that the TWA should consult "some international lawyer" was mysterious and evasive. This position of Citrine exposed the ambivalence of the TUC towards the developing labour movement in this period of growing crisis for the British and international capitalist economy. The defiance of the TWA must not be underestimated, especially its determination to ignore Citrine and the TUC. It maintained its principled stand rather than surrender to colonial pressures through the new Ordinance. Indeed, the TWA was correct in its insistence that the omission of the right to strike action was the Achilles heel in the new trade union laws.

In Grenada, a parallel development occurred in the working-class movement. Marryshow, in January 1931, moved a resolution in the Legislative Council, requesting the government to enact legislation which would recognize workers' associations in Grenada. An Ordinance was introduced by the government. However, it had similar inadequacies as the trade union legislation in Trinidad. The Trades Union Ordinance introduced in Grenada in 1933 did not offer immunity against action in tort and was silent on the right of peaceful picketing.[40] As a result, the Grenada Workingmen's Association refused to register and in 1937 it adopted a new name – The Grenada Labour Party.

In St Lucia, a Trade Union Ordinance was approved, but the sole trade union in the colony remained unregistered. Owen Mathurin, one of the working-class activists in Castries, informed the General Secretary of the TUC of the inadequacies of the trade union legislation in 1934: "I may point out that the Bill which is at present in force makes no provision whatever for picketing; it is on the same lines as the one in force in Trinidad which, I understand, was unfavourably commented on by the T.U.C. I would particularly like to get copies of model Trade Union rules."[41]

Mathurin's request was not entertained by the Secretary of the Research and Economic Department of the TUC who replied, "We do not issue any Model Rules for Trade Unions as the rules required depend upon the circumstances of the organisation concerned."[42] Mathurin had also requested specimens of literature which dealt with organizing trade unions. Subsequently, the Organisation Department of the TUC sent samples of posters, leaflets and a recruitment poster issued by the General Council of the TUC.[43]

Resistance and transition

Government's rejection of amendments to the Trade Union Ordinance (1932) prompted a major decision of the TWA to change its

name in order to avoid prosecution for non-compliance with the new legislation.[44] On 26 July 1934, the TWA convened an "extraordinary meeting" at which members agreed to the voluntary dissolution of the Association. An historic resolution was subsequently accepted on 9 August 1934 at a general meeting held at Prince Street, Port-of-Spain when the TWA adopted its new name – "Trinidad Labour Party."

The TWA delayed the process of changing its name to the Trinidad Labour Party for certain reasons. An immediate name-change might have occasioned some misunderstanding for the public since the Association contested the 1933 general elections under the aegis of the TWA. Furthermore, the Association needed sufficient time to explain to its membership the consequences for all issues related to the new Ordinance.

Henry communicated with W. Milne-Bailey of the TUC providing justification for the TWA's change in status: "In consequence we have refrained from registering and as certain objects of our Articles of Association are in fact trade union objects and render us liable to persecution for failing to register, we have just by resolution at an extraordinary meeting dissolved the association from the Companies Ordinance."[45] The membership of the former TWA were assured that the transition to the TLP would prove beneficial and there was no reason for alarm: "The old true, trusted and tried appellation – The Trinidad Workingmen's Association – is now known as and called the Trinidad Labour Party. It is claimed that the change of name will give the Party greater scope in carrying out its aims and objects. The Presidency remains unchanged."[46]

The process of transition and absorption of TWA branches into the newly formed TLP was not a traumatic change for its membership. Sections and branches which functioned since the 1920s continued their work in the absence of additional constitutional requirements for the new TLP. Meetings of the Party were conducted at the traditional venues within the framework of the familiar TWA format.

Significant to the growth of the TLP was the interest shown by other classes of workers who hitherto had not been affiliated with the former TWA. One of the first of these were the fishermen in the Port-of-Spain area, who sought affiliation with the TLP through a resolution on 20 May 1934 at their meeting place in Sackville Street, Port-of-Spain, under the presidency of H. Taitt.[47] The fishermen further encouraged the incorporation of colleagues from other fishing villages such as Pt. Cumana, Teteron Bay and Carenage. At their meeting in Carenage, the Convenor, E. Yorke, spoke of the need for the consolidation of efforts of all fishermen and the importance of effective representation which the TLP offered them.[48]

The expansion of the TLP in Port-of-Spain was enhanced by well-organized branches such as the Port-of-Spain Clerks Union which met at St John's Hall, Pembroke Street.[49] They identified with working-class groups in the City and canvassed them to seek affiliation with the TLP. Certain of these organizations in Port-of-Spain which had not been in existence as branches of the former TWA included the Municipal General Workers Section and the Amalgamated Building and Woodworkers Union.[50]

New affiliates formed under the TLP included the Carpenters' Section which met at 64 Duke Street in the "Carpenters' Hall." In 1935, the Section represented only Carpenters, but later in 1936 Joiners were incorporated under the new name "Carpenters and Joiners Section."[51] On 13 October 1936, when Carpenters and Joiners protested against the importation of foremen from England for the Public Works Department,[52] they affirmed that one of the objectives of the TLP was to promote co-operation and solidarity among the varied ranks of labour. Other significant additions to the TLP in 1936 included the incorporation of employees in the water services who formed the Water and Sewerage section of the TLP. This was followed by the affiliation of workers of the Transport and Public Works Department located at 64 Duke Street, Port-of-Spain.[53]

The energetic Port-of-Spain Clerks Union and the Stevedores Union extended the mission of the TLP beyond the City as their officers visited and encouraged former TWA branches to be affiliated with the TLP. Groups at Tacarigua, Curepe, Maracas, Arima, Caroni, Couva and Chaguanas were visited and canvassed by C.P. Alexander (President of the Stevedores section), R. Mitchell (President of the St James branch), C.B. Pointkowski and C.B. Mathura (President and Vice-President respectively of the Port-of-Spain Clerks Union).

In South Trinidad, the motivating force for the expansion of the TLP came from the San Fernando branch, which with the support of the Port-of-Spain Chauffeurs Union, organized a new section of the TLP comprising chauffeurs, conductors, bus and lorry drivers in San Fernando. E.R. Blades recalls his association with the TLP branch in the South and with some of its members who would later play a pivotal role in the trade union movement:

> [I]n 1934, I went to the office of the No. 2 branch of the Trinidad Labour Party in San Fernando. As a stranger, I met for the first time, Adrian Cola Rienzi, Tubal Buz Butler, and Timothy Roodal and soon became a member of the party. This group of dedicated and loyal

members of the party, attended meetings regularly, and sat on the same platform while advocating the policies of the party soliciting new members.[54]

The South expansion of the TLP included Fyzabad which received its charter in February 1935. In close proximity were the Siparia and the Los Bajos branches of the former TWA whose membership included workers from Erin and Buenos Ayres. The active branches at St Madeleine and Bonne Aventure continued to lead as exemplary groups in rural communities.

There was a considerable number of young persons in the TWA who also became members in the Juvenile sections of the TLP. The new Trade Union Ordinance of 1932 made provisions admitting persons between 16 and 21 years of age to become full members within a union.[55] Since there were no distinct youth sections in the TWA, the formation of the Juvenile Section of the TLP remained one of the Party's most progressive membership projects as it sought to educate the youth to appreciate the problems of the working class, and prepare them for future leadership in the colony. The TLP's Juvenile section placed under the supervision of the Women's section of the TLP, consisted of members' children such as Thelma Williams whose mother belonged to the San Fernando branch of the TLP.[56] Juveniles were encouraged to participate in Carnival celebrations and other cultural events,[57] while programmes in vocational education were conducted in certain sections: "On Monday afternoon last, Mr. C.B. Mathura paid a special visit to the classroom of the Juvenile Section of the St. James TLP where boys and girls representing . . . the St. James community were attending classes in music, dress making, hat making, drawing etc."[58]

Tobago

The TWA branches in Tobago as their counterparts in Trinidad accepted their subsequent absorption into the newly formed Trinidad Labour Party. Although there was no rapid increase in membership, branches remained active and by July 1937, there were 300 members as reported by the Scarborough branch.[59] In November 1936, C.B. Mathura visited Tobago and spent a week addressing several sections of the TLP at Mt. St George, Hope and Scarborough.[60] Kiely argues that the TLP had a noteworthy presence in Tobago: "[T]he TLP remained dominant among the more radical sections of society . . . . The TLP enjoyed a strong base in the more populous Leeward district where there were some wage labourers."[61]

The TLP branch in Tobago encouraged the formation of a Juvenile section and the number of young persons who served in various positions indicates the enthusiasm of the section in the sister isle. In 1934 at its annual general election, officers included: Lionel Pollard (President), Eldeca Collins (Vice-President), Lionel Jones (Financial Secretary), McCarthy Jolfield (Recording Secretary) and S. Tunon (Treasurer). These officers were joined by Wilfred Lane, Lousia Williams and Henry Williams to form the Executive.[62]

The May Day celebrations generated much interest, when in 1936, the Executive of the TLP, consented to the first May Day celebrations in Tobago in which C.P. Alexander (Second Vice-President) from Trinidad attended and participated in the programme.[63] Subsequent visits to Tobago by Cipriani, C.P. Alexander and Mathura promoted the fraternity of the TLP branches between the two islands but the branches were regularly apprised of the activities of the Party whose Executive was based in Port-of-Spain.

The race factor

In the 1930s, certain factors threatened the fragile relationship between the TWA/TLP and the Indian working class. Previous efforts to mobilize substantial Indian support for the labour movement were weakened when Sarran Teelucksingh, one of the leaders of the EINC and Cipriani's erstwhile collaborator, severed relationship with the TWA in 1931, after Cipriani's assault on him in the Legislative Council over the controversial Divorce Bill. The subsequent split in labour's leadership undoubtedly challenged the authority of Cipriani: "He was thus unable to carry the whole of the TWA into the anti-divorcist camp."[64] But more significantly, it affected the campaign of the TWA to attract the Indian working class which constituted a major section of the labour force in the colony. Singh observed, "Cipriani's conduct towards his Indian vice-president, Sarran Teelucksingh, in 1931 delivered a mortal blow to the process of drawing Indian mass support for the organization . . . . Shortly after the incident 850 Indians resigned from the organization. This, of course, was a stunning blow to the organization's drive to create a multi-ethnic base."[65]

On the eve of the formation of the TLP, the declining confidence in the TWA was evident when on 6 July 1934, a crowd of unemployed Indians independent of Cipriani and the TWA, stormed the warden's office in Couva where they made their own demands for employment. Industrial unrest spread across certain sugar estates

particularly Esperanza, Frederick Settlement, Woodford Lodge, Phoenix Park, Milton, Brechin Castle and Rivulet, indicating that labourers had lost faith in the TWA for its failure to meaningfully assist them with perennial labour problems they faced.[66] Interestingly, it was in these areas in Central Trinidad that Teelucksingh's support was unquestionable. Sahadeo Basdeo saw the disturbances of 1934 as illustrative of the declining influence of the TWA on the Indian working class,

> The Association played a negligible role in the events of July 1934. If anything, the July episode revealed the declining popularity of Cipriani. It is interesting to note that throughout the unrest, the Indian sugar workers refused to consult with the Trinidad labour leader or seek the advice of the T.W.A.[67]

With the emergence of the TLP in 1934, there were vigorous attempts to attract Indians to join the new party since they formed a substantial percentage of the labour force in the colony. The focus on the recruitment of Indians to the TLP in North Trinidad, primarily Port-of-Spain, received its impetus through the efforts of Chandra Bahadoor Mathura. He was associated with the TWA/TLP from 1928 to 1942 and was foremost amongst the early Indian leaders who identified with the labour movement in Port-of-Spain. He lived at 29 Rosalino Street, Woodbrook and owned a small printery on St Vincent Street next to the offices of the *Trinidad Guardian*.[68] Educational opportunities were limited for him as his formal education ended when he left the Woodbrook Presbyterian Primary (also known as the "Akal School"). But this was no hindrance for young Mathura who was proficient in Hindi and English and became a Sanatanist pundit. He founded the Young Indian Party in 1921, he served on the Executive Committee of the EINC in 1930 and was Secretary of the Pundits' Association in 1932.[69]

During the 1930s in Trinidad, certain Indians favoured the recognition of Hindi and Urdu in public affairs. Interestingly, though Mathura was a devoted Hindu he realized the need for Indians to be educated and well versed in English rather than having a knowledge of Urdu and Hindi except for religious and domestic purposes "it is of no other use in this present age, and to sacrifice a good knowledge of the English language on mere sentimental grounds is a crime when we consider how our Educated men and women in Hindi and Urdu are treated in the Banks and other business places."[70]

As an enthusiast for cultural development, he organized the first Indian Cultural Club in Port-of-Spain; he was the General Secretary of

the Trinidad Indian League, promoted the work of debating clubs in the Woodbrook-St James area[71] and was the Vice-President of the St James Literary Club.[72] He was the first Indian elected as Vice-President of the Port-of-Spain Clerical Union (1934–1935) with its predominantly African membership. Serving in these influential offices made him an asset in the TLP's thrust to incorporate Indians into its fraternity: "Mr. Mathura is regarded as leader of Indian thought in this community and he carries with him, in consequence, a large Indian following."[73] Indian membership in the TLP grew, and at festivals and celebrations organized by the TLP the Indian presence was obvious.

In his May Day address in 1935, Mathura commended the participation of Indians and the interest shown in the activities of the TLP: "A very pleasing feature is the large number of East Indians who are availing themselves of the opportunity of becoming members of the greatest, most influential, powerful political institution in the West Indies."[74] In that address he assured his audience that the TLP would continue its agitation for local persons to fill important offices in the judicial, legal and educational systems in the colony.

Mathura's task of appealing to Indians to support the TLP became increasingly difficult by mid-1936 when attempts were made by certain persons to form a distinctly Indian working class organization.[75] As he frowned upon the divisive effect of such tendency, he was convinced that the racial forces at work were disadvantageous to the solidarity of the labour movement and it was an obstacle to Indian progress. He advocated Indian and African support of each other at the level of the TLP rather than separatist tendencies and the inclination to compromise with colonial rule.[76] In October 1935, Mathura indicated the problems he encountered in appealing for unity between the colony's two major races: "I have been called a political agitator and a foolish one, because of my desire to awaken the political consciousness of the East Indians, and to get them to join the Trinidad Labour Party, the only Political Organization in the West Indies."[77]

Mathura was brutal in his condemnation of Indians who were inclined to identify with the government and thereby increase their dependence upon colonial patronage: "It is well known how they seek the friendship of the white race and government officials. It is also well known how they go about with hat in hand seeking an entrance through the back door and how they suffer from an inferiority complex."[78]

As a representative of the TLP, and one who was eloquent in his appeal for African-Indian co-operation, he earned the respect of non-Indian

organizations such as the Ethiopian Brotherhood League of Picadilly Street, Port-of-Spain. He addressed the League on two occasions, in February and also in March 1937 when he encouraged its membership to consider affiliation with the TLP.[79] Appreciation of Mathura's work was enhanced not merely through his concern for the welfare of Indians but also in efforts to identify with the needs of the African community. This is well exemplified in his support for the Baptists in their struggle for freedom of worship through the removal of the restrictions imposed by the Shouters Prohibition Ordinance.

It is noteworthy that the efforts of the TLP to attract Indians were not without some measure of success. There were indications of a growing interest in the Party in South Trinidad where Timothy Roodal exerted much influence,

> Hundreds of Indians in the La Plaisance village of San Fernando are new members of the Trinidad Labour Party. Through the initiative of the Hon. Timothy Roodal, First Vice President of the Trinidad Labour Party, five hundred Indians of Debe, will be seeking affiliation with the T.L.P. at an early date.[80]

But Indians still did not comprise a significant proportion of the Party's membership. In 1935, the TLP consisted of an overwhelming African membership which was inherited from the TWA. The *People* observed that 99% of the membership of the TLP were Africans.[81] At the outbreak of the Italian-Ethiopian war in 1935, the local media chided the TLP and its predominantly African membership for their apathy and failure to condemn European aggression against the "Negro brethren." The TLP was challenged to identify with the interests of Africans on the continent. The *People* queried the silence of the TLP and even referred to the British Labour Party which made a public statement on the Ethiopian conflict and called for a peaceful settlement – "wars should cease and peace and goodwill reign on earth."[82] In the ensuing months, the *People* continued to denounce the nonchalant attitude of Cipriani and the TLP towards the Ethiopian conflict. Eventually, members of the TLP identified with a pro-African group operating in Trinidad, the Committee of Friends of Ethiopia. On 17 October 1936, this group decided to appoint a sub-committee to determine a programme of humanitarian work. The leadership consisted primarily of labour officials, including Cipriani and Alfred Richards.[83] The Committee collaborated with two local pro-Ethiopia groups, the Afro-West Indian League and the TLP. These groups raised $4,000 which was sent to Ethiopia.[84] The TLP

continued its association with the Friends of Ethiopia and at a joint public meeting at the Princes building, Port-of-Spain, on 7 May 1936, the Party reaffirmed its support for Ethiopia.[85] Similarly, on 12 July, C.B. Mathura spoke on the Italo-Ethiopian war at a mass meeting held at Picadilly Street, and pledged solidarity with the Ethiopian cause.[86] Both Cipriani and Henry publicly identified with the Friends of Ethiopia at the Trinidad Public Library on 10 April, 1937 in support of resolutions which denounced the Italian invasion of Ethiopia.[87]

Dissension and fragmentation

In less than a year after the transition from TWA to TLP, there were signs of upheavals within the leadership of the Party. In 1935 there were complaints of the ill-treatment of oil workers at Fyzabad, and Tubal Uriah "Buzz" Butler, a member of the TLP, organized a demonstration in protest against the harsh policies of employers. This action was not supported by the TLP, and Butler was subsequently expelled from the Party.[88] This action of the Executive of the TLP contributed to the declining influence of both Cipriani and the Party. Sahadeo Basdeo noted that the protests in the colony reflected the diminished status of the TLP: "The 1935 incidents of labour unrest had a serious effect on the T.L.P. and Cipriani's leadership. They represented an open challenge to the Captain's 'constitutional Fabianism' with which Trinidad workers had become grossly disenchanted. They also represented an open challenge to Cipriani's autocratic leadership."[89]

Cipriani was unable to tolerate criticism and with the rise of radical thinkers within the Party a leadership crisis was inevitable.[90] His style of leadership, described as "individualistic" and "authoritarian"[91] would have exacerbated relations with leading men in the TLP such as Rienzi and Butler. E.R. Blades, one of the early trade unionists, in an article in the *People*, criticized Cipriani: "The party minus Captain Cipriani does not exist. So the moment the gallant Captain ceased to exert magnetic influence or hypnotic spell upon the rank and file of his followers at once his society began to crumble."[92] Blades recognized the contribution of Cipriani to the development of the labour movement, but insisted, "Workers preferred Butler's style of aggressive leadership which they thought produced more tangible results."[93] Ramdin believed that Cipriani's status in society was a hindrance to the labour movement,

> Cipriani's occupation, position and social status guaranteed that he would not jeopardise his privileged position, and to this extent, the

> colonial authorities could well afford to tolerate his speeches. Moreover, since he was essentially one of their class, his public outrages (staged or otherwise) in real terms bore little relation to his private life-style . . . . Cipriani thus fitted well into the designs of the Colonial Government.[94]

Although Cipriani was not regarded as a threat by the government, he was a member of neither the plantocracy nor the import-export mercantile elite. As a reformer, Cipriani's preferred consultative or legislative strategies to resolve working-class issues since he was convinced that the constitutional approach was better than the use of aggression in labour relations.[95] But the long-suffering labouring class was tired of the lethargy and ineffectiveness of the traditional colonial methods in responding to their call for improved working conditions. In December 1935, prominent members severed ties with the TLP. Rienzi left the Party and together with Butler and John Rojas, founded the Trinidad Citizens League (TCL) consisting primarily of East Indian and African supporters who had defected from the TLP.[96] Rienzi had been an activist on behalf of the working class whose efforts continued to be closely monitored by the Governor and Secretary of State for the Colonies: "Adrian Cola Rienzi formerly Krishna Deonarine, born Trinidad 1906. Indian Secretary of New Indian Political Group, 1933. Stressed the need for propaganda against British rule in India. In 1933 he was in England and in touch with one J. Headley, an agitator, who was then lecturing to the 'working masses' in Trinidad . . . . He has, with two other individuals recently organised the 'Trinidad Citizens League.' "[97]

Blades, a member of TCL, described the organization as a "pressure group" which held public lectures on economic and political issues affecting the lives of the masses in the colony.[98] Rienzi, a Communist and lawyer, headed the TCL which initially functioned as "an educational group" and which he envisioned as the basis for the formation of a communist party.[99] By mid-1936, the TCL had gained sufficient momentum to rival the TLP's support among the working class: "The leadership element present in the Trinidad Citizens League combined with the working class political vacuum which existed in the colony provided the League with the ideal opportunity to challenge the T.L.P. Indeed, it seized the mantle of working class leadership from Cipriani."[100]

By 1937, the official view of Britain towards working-class leaders had not changed. Colonial officials still harboured suspicions and fears over the intent of persons such as Rienzi, who allegedly espoused doctrines

that threatened Britain's status quo in the colony. In October 1937, correspondence between the Governor and Colonial Secretary revealed allegations that Rienzi was an organizer of a planned strike in January 1938 intended to eradicate Whites in the colony.[101]

The status of the TCL as a political alternative and working-class rival organization to the TLP was short-lived. In September 1936, only a few months after the TCL's formation, Butler parted with Rienzi and formed his own party, the British Empire Workers and Citizens Home Rule Party (BEW+CHRP). By October 1936, Butler's Party had replaced the TCL as the TLP's main opponent. Blades contended that despite the fact that Butler and Rienzi were leaders of different organizations, both men maintained cordial relations.[102]

In 1936, Cipriani estimated the membership of the Trinidad Labour Party consisted of 125,000 persons comprising peasants, small businessman and skilled workers.[103] Less than a year later, Cipriani informed the Forster Commission: "In every district there is a section of the Trinidad Labour Party and in every section, workers are free to become members and the membership of the several sections is around 100,000 people."[104] These statistics may be exaggerated since some supporters of the TLP had defected to Rienzi's TCL and Butler's BEW+CHRP. In addition, at the end of 1936, the population of Trinidad and Tobago was 448,000, at least one third of whom would have been children.[105] Therefore according to Cipriani's calculation, almost a third of the colony's adult population would have been members of the TLP.

1937 Riots: TLP involvement

The events of June 1937 brought into sharp focus the work of Cipriani and the TLP. At the commencement of the riots, Cipriani was on his return trip from England. Upon hearing the news of the disturbances, he wired a message to the workers, particularly the TLP, to be calm and "to avoid any acts of violence." Indicative of his conservative style of leadership and his disapproval of the Fyzabad workers' strike, Cipriani affirmed, "I desire to inform the British Labour Party that my Organisation has in no way been connected with the unrest . . . . It has been my policy ever to preach to workers generally, and members of my organisation in particular, that nothing can ever be achieved other than by constitutional methods."[106] Although Cipriani indicated that he would cooperate with the government in the restoration of order, officials such as John Maffey of the Colonial Office were reluctant to approve of his involvement in resolving tensions in the colony: "I am thoroughly convinced that the gentleman referred to has been entirely instrumental,

directly and indirectly, in bringing about the present situation and that if he were regarded by the ignorant people in an entirely wrong light . . . the future would be worse than ever."[107]

Maffey's response to Cipriani's offer reflected the attitude of colonial authorities to local politicians. Although Cipriani confessed that his Party was not connected with the riots, his reputation and stature as a working-class leader made the officials uncomfortable with him. The Colonial Office inextricably linked him with promoting workers' discontent.

On 26 June, at a meeting of the Legislative Council, the Governor was granted emergency powers to deal with the crisis. A government Strike Committee, formed to negotiate with strikers in the oilfields, was disappointed with Cipriani's refusal to serve as mediator to resolve the impasse: "The main difficulty facing this Committee was to find someone with whom to negotiate . . . . Captain A.A. Cipriani had returned to Trinidad on the previous day, refused to acknowledge Butler, who, they said, had been expelled with others of his circle from their party for Communistic tendencies."[108] In the aftermath of June 1937, Cipriani insisted on his organization's non-involvement in the strikes. Such a decision prompted Butler to refer to Cipriani as "the betrayer of workers" and "the great somersaulter."[109] In November 1937, Cipriani wrote to Williams Gillies, reiterating the TLP's innocence and described the disturbances as "negligible and ill-organised."[110] He added that rival working-class groups, supported by the government, were prejudiced against the TLP and were instrumental in the creation of social disorder: "Associations, such as the Negro Cultural and Welfare Association; the Citizens Home Rule Party and others were tacitly permitted by the past Administration and by the police to abuse the Party and its friends and supporters."[111]

At the time of the 1937 disturbances there was only one registered union—the Amalgamated Building and Woodworkers' Union[112] having a small membership. Furthermore, rivalry, non-cooperation and polarization among labour organizations created disarray in labour representation and the fragmentation within the labour movement was a source of concern among the colony's working-class groups. In a letter to Citrine, the Secretary of the Port-of-Spain Clerks' Union (a section of the TLP), lamented the existing tension between the newly formed unions and the Trinidad Labour Party,

> These Unions are, as far as I am aware, of and for themselves only, and their leaders rightly or wrongly have always refrained from having anything in accord with the T.L.P. They put up their own candidates

> for Legislative and Municipal honours, and in their election campaigns and propaganda they oppose the T.L.P.; and their slogans would sometimes appear thus: Trade Unionists vs. Labourites of the T.L.P.[113]

Within the TLP, certain affiliates did not concur with the inflexible stance of non-registration and preferred registration as trade unions. For instance, in 1937 the Clerks Union was interested in functioning as a union under the new Ordinance. However, this conflicted with the decision of Cipriani for the TLP to remain unregistered. In October 1937, a member of the Committee of Management of the Clerks Union of the TLP, Emile Jones, wrote to Citrine requesting copies of union books, an agenda and relevant literature on unions.[114]

The Clerks Union sought permission from Cipriani to function as an independent organization and be registered as a union. This request was summarily dismissed by Cipriani who cited advice previously given by Citrine, in which the Trade Union Ordinance was deemed to be inadequate. The Clerks Union felt the necessity of registering as a union and appealed to Citrine to consider their request in respect of the changed circumstances in the colony,

> With this advice the Union still abides, nevertheless, it occasions the Union the greatest concern for at the moment there would seem to be a strong tendency and leaning towards registration as a Trade Union by some members of the Union; and they are firm in their convictions and rigorous – persistently so – in their demands for immediate registration.[115]

The Clerks Union eventually decided to comply with Cipriani instead of registering as a separate union. Another section of the TLP, the Shipwrights' Union, also remained unregistered but functioned as a workers' co-operative for the building and repairing of boats. The pursuit of union status by the Clerks Union was indicative of growing dissension in the TLP and such internal conflicts led to the undermining of the Trinidad Labour Party.

The TLP made a strategic error in refusing to associate with the newly formed unions. For instance, the TLP did not maintain cordial relations with the OWTU which was formed in 1937. In August 1937, the OWTU invited labour organizations, including the TLP, to a planned conference on 26 August at the Union Diamond Lodge, San Fernando. The purpose was to create a "United Front" to petition the British government

to appoint a Commission of Enquiry into the 1937 disturbances, to be conducted in the same manner as the Commission which investigated the Water Riots of 1903.[116] The TLP's Secretary, Vivian Henry, declined the invitation and gave reasons for not participating: "I regret very much that owing to the short notice of your invitation and to the absence of any information from you as to the real purport of the proposed Conference, it will not be possible for any T.L.P. delegate to be present."[117]

Cipriani neither attempted to make amends nor encouraged TLP members to support other unions and working-class organizations in the colony. He stubbornly held the view of the supremacy of the TLP and informed the TUC that all communication from unions and working-class groups to the TUC should be sent via his Party: "After all, the T.L.P. is the only accredited political entity in the British West Indies. They have been in close and loyal association with the B.L.P . . . . for 20 odd years, and are entitled to be respected by any new organisation."[118]

Workers' attraction to other labour organizations created a continuous decline in the membership of the TLP. In November 1937 Cipriani admitted to the declining influence of the Party. In his assessment, he attributed the Party's decline to such factors as Sir Arthur Pugh's advice that the working class organize themselves into unions; also, he denounced the tacit support which international agencies gave to emerging unions in the colony: "The Party is losing ground for two main reasons: (1) Sir Arthur Pugh has emphasised publicly and privately that all workers should form themselves into Unions, despite the disabilities in the local laws, pointed out by the Party. (2) The Unions since formed have received recognition from Sir Walter Citrine."[119]

In July 1937, at a meeting in the Colonial Office, London, between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and a deputation of the West India Committee,[120] the matter of Cipriani's honesty was discussed. Sir George Huggins, belonging to the planter/merchant class in Trinidad, questioned Cipriani's accountability. Huggins made allegations and expressed dissatisfaction with Cipriani's management of funds in the TLP. The Secretary of State for the Colonies noted Huggins' assessment: "He added that a further unsatisfactory feature in Trinidad to-day was the management of the Workingmen's Association by Captain Cipriani. Members of this Association paid weekly contributions, but no accounts were kept and no audit was conducted."[121] Furthermore, H. Beckett, from the Colonial Office, concurred with Huggins' comment,

> Mr. Beckett elucidated the position as regards Captain Cipriani. There was, he explained, an Ordinance in Trinidad for the registration of trade unions, but as this Ordinance obliged the unions to keep and publish accounts, the idea of maintaining a trade union did not appeal to Cipriani and he accordingly made his Association a political party instead.[122]

Local officials were aware of charges of financial impropriety against Cipriani, Governor Murchison Fletcher informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies that "It is generally alleged that Cipriani is corrupt where money is concerned . . . . there is evidence that, when Mayor of Port-of-Spain, he used his position to help others by methods which, to say the least, were irregular."[123]

The operations of the Arouca branch of the TLP was questioned by Charles Cumberbatch (of Arima) a member of the TWA since May 1926. He queried the whereabout of the monies donated by members of the branch's Burial Fund, Dole Fund and Labour House Project. Cumberbatch requested that the contributions to these funds by former members be returned so they could be used to fund their trade unions.[124] The concern of Cumberbatch and other members was highlighted in the editorial of the *People*: "It is time that an organization, the main plank in whose platform is immediate self-government, showed a higher sense of responsibility in managing its own affairs."[125] The editorial added that these financial irregularities would not have arisen if the books of the TLP were annually audited. Such controversies served to tarnish the image of the TLP and undermine its credibility.

Interestingly, the TUC received correspondence in 1937 from Roland Sawyer, Secretary of the London-based Negro Welfare Association, who asked about the involvement of the TLP in the 1937 strikes. Sawyer communicated with Citrine enquiring as to the advice and counsel given to the TLP with regard to the new Trade Union Ordinance passed in 1932 in Trinidad. Sawyer referred to an article in a British newspaper, the *Manchester Guardian* (21 October 1937) which reported that the Trinidad Labour Party "opposed unionisation on the advice of Sir Walter Citrine, General Secretary of the TUC, because the law does not make provision for exempting peaceful picketing from court action."[126] In defending the TUC's action, Citrine told Sawyer, that the Bill in the colony had no provisions for safeguarding the rights of trade unions to strike: "We did our best to impress on the Association the absolute need for getting these rights recognised in the Bill. This advice must not be construed to mean that we did not favour the establishment of Trade Unions."[127]

On 7 July 1937, less than a month after the strikes in Trinidad, the members of the House of Commons debated the state of affairs in the colony, particularly matters pertaining to the TLP and the activities of trade unions. Arthur Creech-Jones of the British Labour Party asked Ormsby-Gore, Secretary of State for the Colonies, if appropriate legislation existed in the colony,

> whether at the time of the recent disturbances in Trinidad, there was in the colony any governmental machinery established by law for official conciliation in settling industrial disputes; whether any minimum wage legislation or industrial statutory regulation of wages exists; what restrictions are imposed on the organising of trade unions and their functioning in accordance with recognised and legitimate practice as exists in Great Britain.[128]

Ormsby-Gore defensively explained that the chaos in the colony's trade union movement was due to the unwillingness and refusal of labour organizations to adhere to the new trade union laws. Instead, they dissolved themselves only to re-emerge as political parties. Of course, this was in direct reference to the TWA in its non-compliance with the Trade Union Ordinance. Ormsby-Gore added,

> With regard to the operation of the legislation to which the hon. Gentlemen referred, whereas trade unions were formed and registered under the Trade Unions Act, they ceased to exist, not because of any action of the Government of Trinidad or of any of the employers, but the trade unions dissolved themselves and became a political party so that the Ordinances under the Act for the registration of trade unions could be complied with.[129]

But, Cipriani in his assessment of June 1937 did not hesitate to accuse the government of its own negligence and irresponsibility in governance and for responding only in time of crisis. He cynically referred to "the method of Crown Colony rule to pretend no knowledge of things taking place in the colonies under their administration, unless their attention is called to it in the manner such as their attention was called to the labour troubles here in June."[130] Cipriani elaborated that if there had been less colonial hypocrisy and administrative procrastination, then the crisis of 1937 might have been averted. He referred to an earlier despatch from the Secretary of State, Malcolm MacDonald, which was never put into effect and the result,

> It is because of this juggling, dishonesty and hypocrisy in dealing with matters of import such as from the Secretary of State by Colonial Governors that the people of these small countries have to take the only course left open to them of making their grievances heard by violence and by breach of law.[131]

Labour organizations such as the Federated Workers' Trade Union (FWTU) joined in opposing Cipriani and his TLP. A resolution was passed by the FWTU which questioned the TLP's motives and called for an investigation into the operation of Cipriani's political organization,

> That in view of the fact that the Trinidad Labour Party is not known to be registered locally, nor is known to the general public to have any regular Constitution and laws which govern it, and as it is questionable what good or benefit has resulted to the public and the Colony during the whole of its existence, the Commissioners consider the advisability of investigating the Constitution of the said Trinidad Labour Party with the object of ascertaining how it is calculated to benefit the colony.[132]

The TLP's non-involvement and refusal to support the workers in the June 1937 disturbances provoked severe criticisms from the working-class publication – the *People*. There was an absence of coverage of TLP's activities, which gave rise to the assumption that the Party was disbanded. References to its work in the *People* were unfavourable and critical. In a letter to the editor signed "OILFIELD WORKERS – SOUTH TRINIDAD," resentment towards the TLP was apparent: "We really do not have any use for the T.L.P. We the Workers are thinking very hard about our money in that talcarie party organization. We the workers will soon call upon the head of the T.L.P. to turn over our money to our Trade Union, the money is our money, we want it."[133] Oscar L. Allen, a former member of the TLP, was also disillusioned over Cipriani's actions and tactics:

> Mere constitutional agitation has brought to the workers of this Colony a decrease of one hour in labour, but also in their pay envelopes, and an increase in the output of work – all to the employers' benefit. The TRINIDAD LABOUR PARTY and its LEADER are absolutely of no use to the hard WORKERS of this Island.[134]

Cipriani was also accused of branding these recently organized unions as "mushrooms" and discouraging workers from establishing a united front.[135]

The articles in the *People* reflected a definite shift in opinion against Cipriani and the TLP: "Public feeling to-day is however much changed and the President-General of the Trinidad Labour Party will himself have a hard time retaining his seat for Port-of-Spain if he is seriously challenged by a popular and able candidate."[136] On 30 October 1937, an editorial of the *People* entitled "The Reds Must Go" dubbed Cipriani an "egoistical politician" obsessed with "a spirit of opposition politics."[137] The disenchantment with the TLP was cited by the *People* as a reason for the failure of the "Reds" in three of the four seats contested in the municipal elections in Port-of-Spain,

> The majority of Burgesses . . . have lost confidence in their darling "Captain" who professing to be a champion of the black masses did not come up to expectations during the disturbances last year, and whom this newspaper had to denounce. Only recently he showed his political unfitness by declining the request of "The People" to table a question in the Legislative Council over treatment of a coloured schoolboy in New Town.[138]

The TLP responded with its own monthly publication – *The Socialist*, edited by Mildred E. Greenidge, which began in October 1935. It was the medium through which the working class was informed of the TLP's contacts with the British Labour Party and England's trade union movement.[139] The *Socialist* also published Cipriani's speeches in the Legislative Council. The articles in the edition of April 1938, reported on issues debated in the Legislative Council, inclusive of the Shop Hours Bill and Cipriani's dissent concerning exploitative overtime work and the late opening of shops and stores to facilitate tourists.[140]

The events of 1937 made the TLP appear obsolete and irrelevant to effective labour representation in the colony. Cipriani persisted in his refusal to recognize and register his organization as a bona fide trade union, and therefore forfeited its right to be a legitimate working-class bargaining body. Rawle Farley in *The Caribbean Trade Unionist* explained:

> [O]nly a Trade Union engages in collective bargaining for better wages and working conditions for its members. No other voluntary association engages in collective bargaining. The political party does

> not bargain. It is not a trade union . . . The political party can regulate external social conditions . . . collective bargaining between trade unions and employer associations constitutes the principal method by which wages and working conditions are set up.[141]

Cipriani's shift from engagement in industrial action to politics was in part based on the assumption that the British Labour Party, once in power would concede internal self-government to the British West Indies. The rise of new labour organizations in the post-1937 era provided workers with alternative options for representation which resulted in a steady decline in the membership of the TLP. The decline of the Party was evident from the attendance at its May Day celebrations. In 1936 there were 7,000 participants, but in 1937 there was a sharp decline to 1,000, while only a few hundred persons attended the observances in 1938 and 1939.[142] Rienzi's TCL and Butler's BEW+CHRP were among the first of the new organizations which opened the way for the demise of the TLP. The Party's apparent irrelevance was further emphasized with the rise of powerful occupational unions, particularly the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union (OWTU) which was registered on 15 September 1937 with its membership comprising workers in the petroleum industry. Almost immediately, with Rienzi's assistance, the sugar workers formed the All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factory Workers' Trade Union. The Federated Workers' Trade Union (FWTU) and the Public Workers' Trade Union created further opportunities for labour representation among the working class in Port-of-Spain.

The TWA (and later the TLP) had, up to 1936, exercised a virtual monopoly as the political and labour representative of the masses. Workers now had the freedom to be associated with emerging alternative political parties. In addition to the formation of Butler's BEW+CHRP in 1936; other contemporary parties included the West Indian National Party (WINP), the Socialist Party of Trinidad and Tobago, the Progressive Democratic Party and the United Front which were all formed in the 1940s.[143] By the early 1940s, most union leaders and the middle class which had campaigned for constitutional reform since the nineteenth century, reverted to Cipriani's emphasis on the need for self-government. By then the trade unions had experienced disappointment with the results of collective bargaining.

In 1940, the US authorities identified Cipriani as no longer a threat to the status quo: "A former firebrand, he is regarded as moderate today, which probably accounts for his loss of prestige with the masses. However, he still vigorously and eloquently fights their cause in the

Legislature and on the platform."[144] A year later, an article in *New Dawn* entitled "Rise and Fall of the Trinidad Labour Party," analysed the shortcomings of the TLP, and in certain respects an unfair assessment of the Party was suggested,

> Certainly they had no political theory, no immediate programme. They had no thought except the distribution of patronage to the faithful when their Party secured control of the Port of Spain City Council . . . It was a broad movement with no real working class basis, as is shown by its refusal to foster trade unionism even when the times showed that its position was wrong.[145]

Since the TLP was not a bona fide trade union it could not represent workers. Instead, those who retained membership in its various branches met among themselves to discuss their problems. For instance, on 18 January 1943, 500 longshore workers belonging to the TLP, met at Duke Street, Port-of-Spain, to discuss working hours, wages and improvement of working conditions.[146]

On 24 January 1945, at its meeting at Duke Street to celebrate Cipriani's 71st birthday, the TLP applauded him for his vital contribution in the quest for universal adult suffrage which was eventually approved for the colony.[147] The TLP, though severely limited in influence and membership, and certainly ineffective amidst such varied and powerful unionists, continued to revolve around Cipriani until his death on 18 April 1945. Roodal subsequently became head of the TLP,[148] but he soon left and joined Butler's BEW+CHRP.

Raymond Hamel-Smith, a lawyer and Labour candidate in the 1946 elections, assumed leadership of the TLP but was unsuccessful in his efforts to compete as a political force in the general elections of 1946. In an analysis of the decline of the Party, Patrick Solomon disparagingly said:

> He tried to revive Cipriani's defunct TLP and eventually became its President-General, leading a bunch of old-fashioned labourites who had learnt nothing from Cipriani and less from the passing years. The TLP had in fact become an anachronism . . . In trying to revive the TLP he naturally came into conflict with the new progressive movement.[149]

The Party failed to win a seat in the 1946 elections but it continued to function. In April 1948, four public meetings were held in Port-of-Spain

to consider such issues as the right to vote at City Council elections, the amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance and the extension of opening hours of the Trinidad Public Library.[150]

In the 1950 general elections, the TLP contested twelve seats, but its only successful candidates were Councillors Aubrey James and Raymond Quevedo. On 4 October 1950, Raymond Hamel-Smith and E. Mortimer Mitchell were chosen by the TLP's Executive as candidates to contest the north-eastern and south-eastern wards in the November local government elections.[151] Six years later in the 1956 elections, Victor Bryan, under the banner of the TLP, won his seat in St Andrew-St David; similarly, A.P.T. James won the Tobago seat. Thereafter, the TLP was absorbed into a new party, the Democratic Labour Party.

The decision of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association to change its name to the Trinidad Labour Party was a calculated move to avoid Britain's effort to undermine the Labour movement in the colony. This name change did not hamper the TLP as the organization continued to attract a wide cross-section of the working class. During the 1930s, the TLP made considerable progress in attracting the Indo-Trinidadian segment of the population.

6
Demands for Self-Government and Federation

The federal project: Foundation

For almost a century the Colonial Office considered various proposals and schemes for a federated British West Indies. From the mid-nineteenth century, British policy makers were convinced that political integration was advantageous for administrative purposes. Furthermore, federation held the key to economic development in the region with benefits to the poorer, smaller islands. However, as the Colonial Office conjured wistful images of a federated West Indies, nationalist leaders inclusive of labour remained convinced that self-government was of paramount importance in any programme for regional development. As early as 1839, Herman Merivale in his Oxford University speeches (later referred to as "Lectures on Colonization and Colonies") developed the concept of a West Indian federation.

The first federal experiment brought together the Leeward Islands in 1871 when these colonies were governed by a General Legislative Council and a Federal Executive Council.[1] Similarly, the Windwards were administered under one Governor who was resident in Barbados. The proposals of 1875 for the creation of a federal unit between the Windwards and Barbados did not materialize because of protests from Barbados. The Barbadian plantocracy successfully opposed the federal plan because they feared that such an association with these colonies of semi-Crown Colony status would require constitutional changes which would reduce the powers of the Assembly in Barbados. The plantocracy intended to preserve the old Representative Assembly which they virtually controlled.[2]

These early West Indian federal initiatives and subsequent constitutional proposals belong to a period of uncertainty and experimentation

in colonial administration to meet the challenges of a "new British Empire" which was evolving. Britain sought new models to determine her relationship with her colonies, both the larger ones and the smaller protectorates and dependencies. The larger colonies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand or Cape Colony and Natal in South Africa created a political dilemma for Britain with their demand for radical constitutional changes. Responsible government was in its infancy as an administrative formula, but the colonies were demanding their own elected assemblies.[3] Canada took the initiative, inspired by the Durham Report which in 1840 proposed responsible government and the union of Upper and Lower Canada. Later, the British North American Act (1867) approved the formation of the Confederation of the Canadian provinces. Similarly, responsible government was granted first to New South Wales in 1855, and thereafter the Australian colonies were federated and granted Dominion status.[4]

The Report of the Earl of Durham with its liberal provisions recommended that autonomy be granted to those British colonies that had shown themselves capable of managing their affairs. The Report, known as the "Magna Carta of the Colonies," was the chief landmark in Britain's improved colonial policy.[5] The fundamental proposal was that colonial governors and prime ministers in these colonies be made responsible to elected legislatures. Furthermore, where several provinces or colonies existed close together as in Canada it was advisable that they form a federal union under the British crown.[6]

Amidst fears of the dissolution of the old Empire, the federal vision inspired the formulation of new constitutional models to define Britain's relationship with the free nations which emerged in the late nineteenth century. In 1872, Benjamin Disraeli, Prime Minister of Britain, proposed a federal council or parliament consisting of representatives from all parts of the Empire,[7] and in 1884 the Imperial Federation League was formed to promote the federation of the Empire. This scheme was doomed to failure with the rise of nationalism and the political independence of the larger colonies

> when the imperial federationists proposed a super-government for the whole empire they came into conflict with another feeling equally strong – the nationalism of the dominions and the greater colonies. Canadians, South Africans, Australians and New Zealanders were thinking of themselves as nations. They had freedom to manage their own affairs and they were not willing to give it up to a superior authority.[8]

West Indian leaders were aware of the constitutional concessions granted to the larger colonies, and they unhesitatingly used that precedent in their request that similar consideration be extended to the Caribbean islands. Prominence was always given to the need for responsible government for the colonies rather than the pursuit of federalism. Labour's involvement in the campaign for constitutional reform gained momentum in the early twentieth century with its distinctive focus on self-rule.

At a public meeting organized by the TWA and chaired by Alfred Richards in 1912, it was agreed that a resolution be forwarded to the Governor appealing for representative government.[9] In 1921, during his visit to England, Howard-Bishop, General Secretary of the TWA, again raised with the Colonial Office the issue of constitutional reform for the colony. It reported that "Mr. Bishop said his Association desired a representative form of Government in Trinidad. It seems to be quite clear that the Secretary of State would not move in this matter except in consequence of a widespread movement, genuinely representative of the people."[10]

The movement for self-determination received new impetus with the rise of nationalism in Europe at the end of World War I. Veterans such as Captain Cipriani who served in the war returned to the West Indies and became leaders of nationalist movements. The 1919–1920 treaties of Paris recognized the rights of small districts in eastern Europe to national recognition. In small disputed districts associated with Germany, Romania or Austria, plebiscites (popular voting) were held to determine what states people wished to join. Therefore, nationalism triumphed with the restoration of territories and the formation of new states.[11]

West Indian nationalism, though in its infancy, was inspired by such international events, and it was the labour movement which remained the foremost agent to articulate the appeal for self-government. Labour took the lead in its promotion of nationalist movements which challenged Britain to recognize the rights of her West Indian subjects. For example, Grenada preferred self-government and sought support in its domestic programme in this regard. In 1922, Marryshow visited Trinidad and identified with the efforts of Labour for constitutional reform. Subsequently, he appealed to Cipriani for assistance and invited him to visit Grenada to support his campaign for political self-determination:

> We are about to launch a heavy movement in Grenada for Representative Government free of all the fraudulent entrenchments of

> Crown Colony rule, and your presence here, should you be able to see your way to come, will be [an] impressive signal that hostilities in the cause of justice and righteousness have been declared.[12]

In demanding the withdrawal of British rule in the Caribbean, Marryshow declared that Grenada would govern itself and that the island would not permit outsiders to exercise dominion over it.[13] During Cipriani's visit to Grenada, he said on a joint platform with Marryshow,

> We see that Canada, Australia and New Zealand, got Self-Government and recently South Africa, which not so long [*sic*] was at grips with England in a bloody war, has got it. Why should we be left out? Soon will India's claim to Self-Government be heard . . . I ask if we are not going to strike a blow now for Self-Government and get our case put before the Imperial Government? . . . The demand for Self-Government must be made today and now.[14]

Grenada's determination was applauded by labour in Trinidad as expressed in an editorial in the labour newspaper:

> Their demand for self-government is sound and reasonable and in like manner, as the several British dominions have made and have been granted their respective claims, these [W.I.] Colonies are now making theirs . . . Grenada like her sister colonies is awaiting with breath-quickening applause for the advent of a better form of constitutional government, whereby her sons and daughters might be able to work out their own salvation without fear.[15]

At the second British Commonwealth Labour Conference in England (1928), labour raised certain issues which indicated some measure of suspicion concerning British proposals for the Caribbean colonies. Cipriani warned Britain of treating the colonies as mere commodities to be disposed at will:

> Time and again the two questions (a) Sale of the West Indies to the U.S.A., and (b) Annexation to Canada, come up for discussion; and while it is quite true that we have the assurance of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales that they are not for sale . . . We in the British West Indies appreciate that you have it in your power to sell these Islands . . . but one thing you have no power over is the soul and spirit of a people,

> no matter how small, and this you cannot sell. We, the people, of the British West Indies are not going to be sold to the U.S.A., nor are we going to be made a Canadian province.[16]

Delegates who attended the third British Commonwealth Labour Conference at Westminister (21–25 July 1930) spoke not of federation but of the urgency for self-government in the West Indian colonies. Among those attending were Cipriani and Roodal from Trinidad; Hubert Critchlow of the British Guiana Labour Union; A.R.F. Webber also of British Guiana and Marryshow of the Grenada Workingmen's Association.[17] One of the submissions of British Guiana was a memorandum which proclaimed the necessity of adult suffrage and "an executive responsible in 'larger measure' to the legislature."[18] In his address to that Conference, Cipriani presented a case for the political independence of the British Caribbean, and he submitted a memorandum from the TWA which listed as its first concern the need for "Dominion status for the British West Indies:"

> The time has come when a fuller measure of representation should be granted by Imperial Government to these Colonies. The B.W.I. claim indisputably that they are ripe for self-government. Baron Lord Oliver, than whom there is no greater authority in the British Labour party, can support the arguments that the B.W. Indies [*sic*] are more than ripe for Dominion Status.[19]

At the Dominica Conference in 1932, Cipriani repeated the warning that the British West Indies was not for sale: "[W]e shall not be sold to the United States of America [cheers]. We are not going to be a Canadian province [cheers]. We will not continue under Crown Colony Rule [cheers]. We are going to enjoy right and privileges such as every other part of the Empire [cheers]."[20] Cipriani's viewpoint was enthusiastically received at the Conference, but this was not the consensus throughout the Caribbean. In August 1940, a Jamaican-based organization, the Progressive League and Citizens of the Federation, passed a resolution in favour of confederation with Canada. The League expected the colony to benefit from this alliance because of the Canadian ownership of the railway and lighting system, and also three of the four commercial banks in Jamaica.[21]

By the end of World War I, Britain owed $4.5 billion to the United States.[22] In 1929, US President Herbert Hoover suggested to British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald that part of the British debt be

repaid by offering some of the British West Indian islands as repayment. MacDonald rejected this proposal from the United States.[23] The matter of the sale of the West Indies to the United States was again mentioned in the *Trinidad Guardian* on 18 February 1932 under the caption "West Indies for War Debts?"[24] It was reported that Congressman Louis P. McFadden (Republican of Pennsylvania) in a debate with Norman Thomas (a prominent Socialist) on the Hoover debt moratorium[25] recommended that Great Britain cede her territorial possessions in Caribbean waters as partial payment of her war debt to the United States.[26] The issue was again raised in 1939 by Senator Lumdeen of Minnesota who introduced a bill in Congress that repayment of war debts could be achieved through the secession of British and French possessions in the Caribbean.[27] Although such proposals were initiated in the United States, there were no serious bilateral discussions on the question of the sale of the West Indian colonies.

The federal imperative: Twentieth century

The federal formula for the Caribbean was revised by Britain in the twentieth century. The British journal, *United Empire*, referred to the constitutional changes throughout the Empire and observed that the federation of the West Indian territories was included in that process: "Latterly the idea of federation has again been enjoying a revival in West Indian circles. Whatever form it might take, the union of the West Indies is certainly one of the next steps in political reorganisation of the Empire."[28] The federation of Canada and the British West Indies[29] was among the earliest proposals for the region, but this was not seriously pursued by the Colonial Office. The primacy of the federal vision was obvious in 1913 when the West India Committee suggested that a joint flag be adopted by the British West Indies for ceremonial occasions to foster regional unity: "[T]he adoption of a collective West Indian flag is a step away from the insularity which has been so marked a characteristic of the West Indian Colonies in the past and an obstacle to their progress."[30]

Early responses to the federal proposals included a memorandum from the TWA to the Secretary of State for the Colonies suggesting that the first stage in any federal plan should be the granting of a "democratic constitution" to Trinidad and Tobago.[31] During the post-World War I period, there were several recommendations for the constitutional restructuring of the colonies in which the federal principle remained the central theme. In 1920, Sir Edward Davson, Chairman of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the West Indies, proposed the formation of

a conference or council of West Indian colonies comprising representatives appointed by individual colonies. The council with its permanent secretariat would meet at fixed intervals to deal with matters of common interest, hopefully to further develop into an organization capable of expressing a united West Indian opinion.[32]

The Wood Report (1922) recommended the formation of two federal entities, namely, that the Windward and Leeward Islands be combined with Trinidad and Tobago, and that Jamaica be grouped with the Caymans, the Turks and adjacent islands.[33] The scheme was favourably considered and labour leaders such as Cipriani expressed support for the establishment of two federal zones in the Caribbean.[34] At the inaugural session of the St Lucia Legislative Council in 1928, Sir Seton James, Governor of the Windwards, supported the plan for a federation of the Windward Islands with Trinidad in an effort to reduce administrative costs. He observed that Grenada, St Lucia and St Vincent maintained at elaborate costs their separate Executive Council, Attorney General and Legislative Council.[35] Similarly, in Antigua, the unofficial members of the Executive and Legislative Councils submitted a petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies suggesting that a single governor administer the British possessions in the Eastern Caribbean. In Jamaica, a member of the Legislative Council presented proposals for the formation of a "Federation League" with branches in the colonies. Consideration was given in that debate to the economic benefits for the smaller islands if resources were pooled and managed by the League.[36]

Among the islands, there was support for a closer association involving the Leewards, Windwards and Trinidad and Tobago, but any question of general legislative union would have been unacceptable.[37] Since 1871, the larger islands in the Leeward and Windward group had their own Legislative Council and an Administrator or Commissioner who represented the Governor. Therefore, they favoured a federal arrangement with Trinidad but without the erosion of their traditional constitutional status. The Legislative Council of the Leeward Islands expressed its reservations in its correspondence to the Governor (7 May 1931):

> [W]e have the keenest interest in the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the question of West Indian Federation, believing that such a Federation will lead to economy in Government administration. We wish, however, to put on record our view that although we have no objection to Trinidad being the seat of Government of a West Indian Federation, yet we have no desire to become dependencies of that Colony.[38]

Although implementation of proposals for constitutional change in the Caribbean was slow, there were several British-supervised West Indian conferences which considered issues of common interest to the region. The preliminary West Indian conference was held in London in May–June, 1926. Subsequent conferences supported the formation of a body, "capable of putting forward a definite West Indian opinion for the information of the Imperial Government . . . and possibly entitling it in due course to a voice in the deliberations of the Imperial Conference, thus at length raising the West Indies to their proper status in the Empire."[39]

There was some scepticism and doubt concerning the purpose and benefits of these West Indian conferences. An editorial of the *Labour Leader* dismissed them as "abortive and of no practical value." In fact, there was concern that if the colonies were to plan their own destiny then there ought to have been greater participation of West Indians in such conferences rather than being schoolmastered by colonial secretaries.[40]

The Dominica conference

In pursuit of the federal vision the recommendation of the Wood Report was re-examined. Lord Passfield, Secretary of State for the Colonies, mandated the Closer Union Commission to visit the West Indies to explore the possibility of "closer union and co-operation between Trinidad, the Windward, and the Leeward Islands."[41] Lord Passfield informed only the respective governors of the impending visit of the Commission. The exclusion of local politicians from any preparatory consultations led to the labour conference in Dominica (October–November 1932) under the leadership of Cipriani and Marryshow.

On the eve of the Commission's visit, labour leaders at the Dominica conference agreed to communicate with the Secretary of State, expressing disappointment that the Closer Union Commission excluded self-government from its proposed agenda: "This West Indian Conference learns with regret that the terms of reference of the closer union Commission appointed by you do not include Self-Government, and strongly urge that the said terms of reference be widened to include Self-Government."[42] A subsequent appeal was made when Marryshow and J. Edwards of Grenada met with the Secretary of State and the Under-Secretary. Unfortunately, labour's proposal for the inclusion of self-government in the Commission's terms of reference was denied.[43]

The Dominica Conference consisting of delegates from Barbados, Trinidad and the Leeward and Windward Islands, agreed to promote "the co-operation of all sections of West Indians for the common good of the West Indies."[44] The Conference supported the establishment of a Federal Government for the region, with an Executive Council and a Federal House of Assembly.[45] This proposal was a revision of a draft constitution for a federal dominion which was submitted to the Conference by Cipriani.[46]

The Conference addressed the delay by the Colonial Office in granting adult suffrage to the West Indian colonies. Delegates were also critical of the high property and income qualifications for electoral participation which excluded the masses in the lower income bracket and agreed to the resolution that "no adult who pays any direct tax shall be deprived of a vote and that any property or income qualification that may be imposed shall be sufficiently low to provide for the free expression of opinion of all classes."[47] Cipriani insisted that adult franchise, self-government and federation were indissolubly inter-related factors in any resolution of the West Indian political question,

> Our policy is this, no Federation without Self-Government and no Self-Government without adult franchise and on that we stand or fall . . . I want you to remember that these islands are ours. It is true that they are under British rule, and perhaps owned by Great Britain, so are other parts of the Empire, but our claim to self government is the honest and straight forward claim that the people of this Colony have the education, culture and ability to run their own affairs.[48]

The Closer Union Commission

Sir Charles Fergusson, Chairman of the Commission, fully understood his mandate in the Caribbean:

> [W]hat we consider our mission to be is to examine whether there is any possibility, in any way, economical or political, of doing something to weld together the mutual interests and aspirations of the different islands in the West Indies . . . we interpret our terms of reference to mean that we are at liberty to listen to everybody, every shade and opinion.[49]

Fergusson envisioned that the closer union project would provide uniform laws, greater efficiency in administration and lower taxation for

the participating islands. He advised that federation had two aspects "political and economic" and "how far we can safely go into all those with due regard to economy and efficiency is one of the main problems before us."[50]

In addition to these concerns of the Commission, there is no doubt that the social and economic effects of the Great Depression contributed to the reopening and the intensification of the debate on West Indian federalism. The Depression impacted negatively on the colonial economy, and government revenues dropped as exports decreased in sugar, while diseases affected the cocoa, citrus and banana industries. Unemployment increased, poverty was endemic, and West Indian administrators were severely criticized by the working class for their failure to maintain social services. For the Colonial Office, the maintenance of a plethora of small legislatures had become an economic burden. It was under these circumstances that political reform was advocated with federalism "offering a way out of economic stagnation."[51]

The Commission conducted 172 interviews in Antigua, St Kitts-Nevis, Dominica, St Lucia, Grenada and Trinidad and its report remains one of the most comprehensive studies conducted on West Indian federalism in the 1930s.[52] The Commission used as its reference, the existing administrative structure in the British Caribbean with its three distinct forms of union. These included the Leeward Islands with a loose federation, although its several units enjoyed local autonomy; the Windwards which functioned as an association of three colonies under one governor, but otherwise autonomous; and Trinidad and Tobago as a complete amalgamation of two units with a common purse and one legislature.[53]

In a public address in St Vincent, Conference Chairman Charles Fergusson, expressed the misgivings of the Commission in dealing with the obvious difficulties in the federal initiative. He recognized the existing constitutions and the different systems of administration in the various islands which must first be "brought into some degree of unity before you can even talk of federation."[54] Fergusson further reported "due to the differences in the legislative power between federal and local legislatures we are of the opinion . . . it is impracticable at this stage to establish a system of real federation between the Leeward and Windward groups."[55]

Such problems did not hinder the Commission from making its primary recommendation for the union of the Windward and Leeward Islands with headquarters in St Lucia and served by one governor.[56] This meant the dissolution of the existing federation of the Leewards, although the islands in both groups were to retain "as much freedom as possible in managing their own affairs."

Based on negative responses from Trinidad, the Commission was hesitant to recommend closer union between Trinidad and the Windward-Leeward group. The Commissioners were aware that even before they visited the West Indies there were opponents of federation in the Legislative Council. J.B. Kelshall cautioned the government that the poorer islands could be an economic liability and burdensome to Trinidad: "We do not desire that Trinidad should have tacked on to it a number of colonies that are finding very great difficulty at present to balance their budget."[57] Sir Lennox O'Reilly added that federation was a strategic move by Britain to remove the islands from its administration since they had become an economic burden to the Colonial Office.[58]

Cipriani was willing to accept federation and risk a financial burden to the Colony: "I rather look on it from a broader principle and would welcome the scheme as it is, even if things came to the worst and Trinidad had to carry the smaller islands in the same way as she has done to Tobago." He accommodated the federal proposal with the hope that dialogue with Britain would include the more urgent demand for self-government:

> I am sure that Lord Passfield in his great wisdom can hardly hope that the enlightened West Indies are going to agree to federation without self-government . . . I hope that the Colonies are going to be given a fair and square opportunity to deal with the situation as it is, and not only the small and narrow question of federation is going to be discussed but also the larger question of self-government.[59]

The Closer Union Commission identified certain obstacles which militated against the federation of the Windward and Leeward Islands and Trinidad. For example, the Commission observed, "Trinidad is strongly averse . . . (to) embarking on more experiments in the direction of closer union with other islands. In the curious amalgam of races which comprises its population, of which East Indians form a third, it has its own problems, and requires time to settle down into a coordinated community."[60]

J. Mungal, Vice-President of the EINC, in a memorial (dated 14 February 1933) to the Commission expressed serious reservations on West Indian federation with particular reference to Trinidad,

> As Trinidad has a cosmopolitan population, it would not be our advantage to be allied with any colonies of less importance. Especially in this case of the East Indian cause, which would become merged with that of other social groups and give rise to misunderstanding,

> because of language, customs and habits which are alien to the other groups.[61]

Certain public comments indicate that there was no popular acceptance of the Report of the Closer Union Commission. An article in the pro-labour publication, *the People*, condemned the Commission's Report as "a worthless, insincere, and destructive document" and a "backward step." The author denounced the report as a colonial insult,

> The report is specious, mischievous, and without a single redeeming feature – full of snags . . . and might well have been written by the secretary of the West India Committee in London, by some junior clerk at the Colonial Office, or again by some Unhappy European Exile so journeying in our midst . . . In no single line of the report is there one constructive statement or suggestion, which might be of any help or benefit to the colonies.[62]

In an editorial, the *People* further added that the population in the British West Indies made no request for a Closer Union Commission and thus there was no real need for such an enquiry.[63] The editorial further defined its expectations of the federal principle,

> What we have aimed at and hoped for is a Federal Union of the West Indies, wherein the entire Government and the entire resources might be pooled and controlled by the people under one Federal head, at a central headquarters from which would radiate all executive orders. This was the central idea of West Indians, the great dream of a United West Indies.[64]

Marryshow was critical of the members of the Closer Union Commission. He predicted the failure of their work and described the Commissioners as "third raters and not statesmen."[65] The Grenada Legislative Council agreed with his condemnation of the Commission and subsequently rejected the Report.[66] Marryshow expressed optimism that a change of government would facilitate a more sympathetic policy towards constitutional development in the colonies "I believe that a Socialist Government will be in power in Great Britain before long, at which time the West Indies ought to move up to a respected status in the British Commonwealth of Nations."[67]

The Report of the Closer Union Commission was finally shelved by the Colonial Office. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, P. Cunliffe-Lister, informed the House of Commons that it was not practicable to proceed with a scheme of closer union. This was due to the divergence of opinion in the Windward and Leeward Islands, and particularly the initial expenses involved in the inauguration of the federal plan.[68] Indeed, no island wanted to surrender control of its finances nor was there willingness to accept a reduced constitutional status.

The failure of the Closer Union Commission to find an acceptable federal formula for the Caribbean was not enough to quench Britain's stubborn pursuit of that ideal. Therefore, further Commissions and experimental schemes dominated the period 1933–1958. One of the most important was the Moyne Commission (1938–1939) which examined the political factors at work during the labour disturbances of 1937–1938 in the Caribbean.

The Commission recognized the West Indian concern for self-government and the increasing agitation of the elected members in the various legislatures against colonial governance. In support of colonial rule, the Commission was careful not to recommend the increase of the elected element in local legislatures. While adult suffrage was advisable, it was to be granted only in instalments at the discretion of the Colonial Office. The Commission suggested a continuation of efforts for the unification of the colonies, and promoted the oft-repeated formula for the federation of the Leeward and Windward Islands.

Labour was disturbed when at the outbreak of World War II, Britain shelved the report of the Moyne Commission. This signified a further delay in important issues in Caribbean politics such as adult suffrage and self-government. The delay also implied Britain's deferral of a major recommendation that £1,000,000 be spent on welfare in the West Indies. Albert Gomes, of the FWTU, described Britain's action as a "subtle insult" to the West Indian colonies with its unnecessary delay in granting self-government to them "The longer self-government is postponed the better... the Mother Country was not willing to attend to the neglected offspring... diverting attention from political and constitutional reform."[69] Rupert Gittens, President of the Public Works and Public Service Workers Union, also expressed dismay at the shelving of the Commission's Report: "What everyone throughout the West Indies had been looking for was some form of self-government, an admission of the mass of the population to Citizenship."[70]

The Governor, Sir Hubert Young, sent a despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies indicating that "disappointment is felt in certain

quarters that the Royal Commission (Moyne) did not recommend political federation and self-government for the British West Indies." Cipriani added in the Legislative Council that changes in the constitution were long overdue with self-determination as the ultimate goal "no honest-minded and big-hearted West Indian will ever be satisfied with an urge to Dominion status and in that I am sure that every fair-minded and bighearted Englishman shares our hopes and ambitions." Cipriani was cautious and sought to prevent misunderstanding by outlining his concept of self-government,

> I wish to dissociate myself and my friends and followers with any one of those extraordinary extremist propositions which call for severance from the British Commonwealth of Nations. If we are to have self-government we are to have it like our bigger sisters, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and others well within the British Commonwealth of Nations.[71]

This was reiterated by Butler in his election manifesto of 1946. Butler made an appeal to Britain that Trinidad and Tobago be recognized and treated equally as other colonies as Australia and South Africa.[72]

Labour: Federation . . . yes; self-government . . . first

It is obvious that the West Indian Conferences and Commissions on Federation were initiated in harmony with particular objectives of the Colonial Office. If such initiatives had been under the direction of West Indian leaders, then self-government would certainly have been accorded greater significance. Indeed, labour was consistent in its appreciation of the value of Federation for the region but it demanded self-government as a pre-requisite for the political integration of the British Caribbean colonies, which the Colonial Office was as yet unwilling to concede.

An inflexible position was articulated by Cipriani with his insistence that self-government and federation were "indissoluble partners."[73] In an article in the *Beacon,* he stated the opinion of labour in Trinidad but indicated some measure of consensus with the other islands on the primacy of self-government,

> Speaking on behalf of Trinidad, and of my Labour friends, in the other parts of the B.W.I., we are agreed on one common

> platform . . . and that is that no system of Federation will be acceptable to these Colonize, in the absence of these two main essentials:– (a) FULL MEASURE OF REPRESENTATION WITH DOMINION STATUS, and (b) ADULT FRANCHISE.[74]

Britain did not hesitate to shift to nationalist leaders the responsibility for any delay in granting self-government to the colonies. S.M. Campbell of the Colonial Office, in defending British reluctance to concede to Cipriani said,

> The great weakness in the case of self-government in Trinidad lies (and this point was forcibly brought out in the meeting in Dr. Shiels' room in the House of Commons last Summer, at which Captain Cipriani was present and Sir Gilbert Grindle attended) in the fact that none of its advocates have ever put pencil to paper and worked out any scheme for consideration.[75]

Campbell's rationale was specious since it made little practical sense for advocates of West Indian self-government to advance any detailed scheme unless the British Government first indicated that it was willing to entertain proposals for self-government.

In 1932, the Imperial Advisory Committee asked Cipriani to devise a plan for self-government whereupon he submitted a memorandum which emphasized the need for "a full measure of representation" coupled with Dominion status which would be "free and unfettered from every vestige of existing Crown Colony rule."[76] Lord Olivier casually dismissed Cipriani's proposals and indicated that he (Olivier) did not believe the British West Indies was politically advanced enough to have a federation: "I think that Cipriani rather overbluffs his hand . . . I do not think the immediate demand for a Federal Dominion of the West Indies on the basis of responsible Government founded upon adult suffrage is one of the lines to which the Labour Party should first devote its attention."[77]

An essential element of British colonial policy was its insistence that power could not be transferred legitimately if it were given to an inexperienced ruling class.[78] Indeed, Britain was slow to recognize that nationalist politicians in the West Indian colonies constituted the appropriate responsible political class. There was little confidence in them as "successors of colonial authority." British policy makers were determined to leave behind in each country a locally-trained official class which also had faith in good government. Colonial opinion

regarded West Indians as being incapable and unprepared; therefore the "guiding hand of imperialism" ought to continue its paternalistic role to avert the great horror of "premature independence."[79]

The Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), an umbrella trade union body in Trinidad of which Rienzi was President, submitted a memorandum to the Royal Commission of 1938. CIO asserted its determination to achieve independence for the region: "It hopes that it would not be necessary for the peoples in these parts to resort either to the methods adopted by the peoples of North America, which has lost that Colony to the Crown, or to emulate the struggles of the people in Southern Ireland, Egypt or India, in order to induce the imperial Parliament to grant to these Colonies the right of Self-Determination."[80] The issue of self-government in Trinidad was also emphasized,

> The Committee invites the Commission to recommend that an Imperial Act be passed setting up a new Constitution for Trinidad with a purely elected Legislature based on manhood suffrage, and an Executive to be elected by such Legislature and to be responsible to it. That the property qualifications for membership to the Legislature be abolished.[81]

The preparation of an efficient ruling class in the West Indies to whom responsibility could be transferred was basically neglected by the Colonial Office. The function of colonial trusteeship as guardian of the dependencies had been unprogressive in West Indian administration. If protected peoples in the colonies were to be equipped for political responsibility, then in the West Indies, trusteeship had failed through colonial neglect and the reluctance to surrender power to local leadership. Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies, as late as 1940, acknowledged the urgency for discussions on self-government in the colonies but at the same time he thought that the local leaders were yet to be trained to assume the task of self-determination: "In the first place, we must, as long as we are responsible, give them good government . . . we must in the second place be training the people of the Colonies for ultimate self-government, and that policy we are pursuing steadily, persistently and faithfully throughout the Colonial Empire."[82]

MacDonald referred to "good government," but the British government had never defined for her overseas subjects what were the criteria for the attainment of self-government in the colonies. In contrast to its reluctance to concede self-government to its predominantly

Black colonies in the Caribbean and elsewhere, the British imperial government did not exhibit the same obduracy in making that concession to its colonies in which the population was predominantly White. The required expertize and resources were made available to them in the formulation of appropriate constitutional changes for their benefit. It was not so with the West Indies and almost all the other colonies in the tropics where there were few White settlers, the greater part of the population being non-Europeans or natives of the country.[83]

Indeed, there was little genuine enthusiasm for exporting the "Westminister model" to countries which lacked the presence of British settlers: "Whenever non-white races came under the British sphere of influence . . . it is easier to apply a concept of government which emphasised the role of the administrator."[84] In such countries the preferred form of political responsibility lay in a hybrid British system of administration which decreed the approval of the colonial managers rather than the consent of the governed.

The federal debate (1945)

As previously indicated, it is obvious that labour led the movement for self-government particularly through the efforts of Cipriani and his TWA/TLP. Although not averse to federalism, the focus was primarily on self-government. After a series of British-sponsored commissions, most of which functioned unilaterally, Britain took the unusual step in 1945 to solicit the views of West Indian legislatures on the matter of federation. Even so, Colonel Oliver Stanley, Secretary of State for the Colonies, maintained an inflexible British position and showed no interest in self-government for the Caribbean islands. In his despatch (13 March 1945) he repeated the colonial objective to use federation as a means of transference of British financial obligations to local authorities in the West Indies. In his communiqué, Colonel Stanley advised, "It will no doubt be generally appreciated that financial stability . . . is an essential accompaniment of full self-government . . . . One important responsibility of any federation would, therefore, be to show that the Federal Administration can be carried on without requiring recurrent financial assistance from outside."[85]

On the advice of the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the views and opinions of the Legislative Council on federation be obtained, the Acting Colonial Secretary, E.L. Dos Santos, on 13 July 1945, piloted a resolution to elicit a commitment "that this Council is in favour of the aims of Federation in the British West Indies."[86] In his resolution

Dos Santos evaded the question of self-government as he obviously maintained the position of Colonel Stanley on the primacy of federation for the colonies.

Nevertheless, in the ensuing debates, unofficials, independents and labour gave prominence to self-government as a compulsory prerequisite if federation were to be implemented in the West Indies. In seconding the resolution, Sarran Teelucksingh lauded the efforts of the late Cipriani who championed the cause of both federation and self-government. Gomes added, "We feel that federation must march hand in hand with self-government."[87] He suggested that Trinidad should convene a local conference of representatives of elected bodies from the islands "to have the people of the West Indies speak their minds on this important question of federation." In his amendment to the motion he proposed that a Committee of the Council be appointed to stimulate the movement of West Indian affairs in the direction of federation. In his emphasis on consultation with other legislatures he advised, "The people of the West Indies . . . will not be willing to accept federation merely as a sort of federal design imposed upon the West Indies and created from the remnants of the elected bodies in the various islands."[88]

In supporting Gomes about the need for consultation, Gerald Wight said, "We cannot touch this thing . . . until we have talked it over with representatives from the other islands of the West Indies." Roy Joseph, spoke of the urgency of self-government, which he said was the popular view in the Colony:

> [it is] the view of the masses of the people in this colony, who have long believed in and fervently hoped for federation with self-government. For this is the only way in which we, the people of the British West Indies can hope to command respect as a people of the world.[89]

Sir Lennox O'Reilly, nominated unofficial member, concurred with others in the Council that "self-government and federation – go hand in hand." He lamented the fact that insularity abounded in the West Indies, despite "West Indian characteristics of friendliness and hospitality."[90] O'Reilly ruled out any immediate implementation of federation, since there was need to raise economic and educational standards in the colonies: "Put their economic conditions straight . . . to ensure the economic and social advancement of dependent peoples, and to help them to progress to self-government."

Roodal, the major voice of the TLP in the Legislative Council at this time, added his support for federation but with self-government as a prerequisite for constitutional integration of the West Indian colonies,

> I am advocating for the peoples of the British colonies in the Caribbean – that self-government should come first, and then we would be able to consider the formulation of proposals in favour of the aim of federation . . . I have no desire at the present moment to accept federation before we obtain self-government.[91]

Roodal scoffed at the British proposal for federation within the framework of colonial governance. He affirmed the position that labour espoused in previous decades, and in his rejection of the proposal of Colonel Stanley, Roodal exposed the fallacy of federation under Crown Colony management: "It would be inadvisable for Trinidad to enter into any system of federation if the government of the federal union is still to be Crown Colony rule with the keys to the West Indies in Downing Street . . . Trinidad is not a pauper colony with an irresponsible population."[92]

At the initial meeting of the Caribbean Labour Congress (CLC) held in Barbados (17–27 September 1945), federal proposals constituted a major concern of labour leaders. Ralph Mentor of Trinidad spent little time extolling the virtues of federation as he concluded "it would be a waste of time to have merely a loose federation . . . What was wanted was the transfer of the political power at present exercised at Downing Street."[93]

The Barbados delegates agreed on federalism but with the removal of colonial governance from the British Caribbean. Hugh Springer urged the Conference to support the establishment of a regional organization which should aspire until "the ultimate goal was reached of federation with real autonomy for the whole region."[94] Grantley Adams indicated that matters such as adult suffrage should be considered separately and not be hindered by ongoing federal discussions. Furthermore, he advised that a federal constitution be modelled on the Australian scheme and adapted for the West Indian colonies. He differed from Cipriani who believed that self-government and federation should be achieved simultaneously. In fact, Adams affirmed that "federation should not await the establishment of representative government in every colony. Each colony must work out its own pattern of development."[95] Adams skilfully sought to preserve the privileged position of Barbados' constitutional heritage. It was the only West Indian colony which maintained an elected legislature, and thus enjoyed a higher status than the crown

colonies. Adams supported the federal venture, but not at the expense of the existing constitutional structure.

Richard Hart,[96] the Jamaican delegate, focused on the economic benefits of closer union and hoped that self-government and federation of the colonies would not interfere with preferential trade with Britain. One of the resolutions of the conference was that political federation of the region should occur simultaneously with the development of the region as an economic entity. Hart reassured that "there would be increasing purchasing power by treating the areas as a whole market for local production and with political control we would be able to approach overseas markets and bargain for ourselves."[97]

In anticipation of the British-sponsored Montego Bay federal conference carded for 11–19 September 1947, the Caribbean Labour Congress held its own consultations in Kingston on 3 September 1947. Among the 34 delegates at the meeting of the Congress, there were 27 unionists from the British Caribbean with a few observers from the General Workers Union in Belize and the Socialist Party of Panama. This was an indication of the growing influence of the CLC in the region. The absence of Bustamante and his trade union from the Congress was due to the increasing political tension between himself and Manley in their struggle to attract the votes of labour in the elections of 1944. The Congress advocated the primacy of self-government within a federal framework. Full responsible government for the West Indies was the objective, as in the case of the larger colonies of the Empire which were accorded dominion status. There was consensus that the West Indian islands should unite with British Honduras and British Guiana under one flag for a united Caribbean Commonwealth.[98] Delegates were dissatisfied with Britain's inflexible position on federation without self-government. Manley's contribution summarized the opinion of several delegates "a federated West Indies cannot aim at any smaller immediate objective than dominion status . . . I cannot imagine what we should be federating about if it is not to achieve the beginning of nationhood."[99]

At the Montego Bay Conference, labour leaders unanimously rejected the British proposal of federation as a prerequisite to self-government. Alexander Bustamante, Jamaica's labour-oriented Chief Minister, took his position to the extreme in his forthright insistence that self-government ought to be given prominence even at the expense of federation,

> I personally can see no reason why one day . . . there should not be a federation of the British West Indies, but I must say frankly that I am

> more than suspicious of the motives behind this federation . . . Most of the British West Indian Colonies have been asking for greater self-determination . . . the time has come not just for federation but for self-government.[100]

Grantley Adams supported the federal principle but only with the immediate elevation of the colonies to Dominion status. Antigua's Vere Bird gave his approval to federalism because of its promise of economic development which could be achieved through co-operation at the regional level. Albert Gomes concurred with labour's view that self-government and federation were inseparable in any constitutional package for the colonies. The House of Assembly of the Bahamas rejected any plan for their incorporation into a West Indian federal unit. Instead, they supported the regional agitation for responsible government.

Arthur-Creech Jones, Secretary of State and Chairman of the Conference, in apparent frustration, knowing that his plan was overwhelmingly rejected, sought to placate delegates as he urged support for "a loose confederal association" with a certain measure of constitutional autonomy to the islands. This sharply contrasted with the CLC's perception of the creation of "a strong federal state . . . [as] a vehicle for democratic social growth."[101] For the CLC,

> Federation meant self-government and dominion status, those concepts in turn being conceived as essential instruments for the overall planning and development of the Caribbean area as an integral part of the larger world economy . . . . Official British opinion, on the other hand, throughout viewed federation, not as a vehicle for West Indian self-government, but, overwhelmingly, as a problem of colonial administrative convenience.[102]

The federal initiative for the West Indies was crystallized at the Montego Bay Conference in 1947, but it took a further decade before the federal venture was finally inaugurated. Unfortunately, it would be short-lived. But the drive towards political independence would be inexorable.

Labour had played a vital role in initiating and sustaining the movement for both federation and self-government. The middle class, especially its educated representatives, had since the nineteenth century inaugurated the drive for constitutional reform. By the

mid-nineteenth-century British imperialism was under siege throughout its remaining colonies, especially after India had achieved political independence in 1947.

Caribbean integration: Confederation of labour

Concurrent with the ongoing debate on the constitutional integration of the British West Indian colonies, Labour promoted another critical dimension in inter-territorial relations. Labour advanced the integration process with its own initiatives to create a West Indian working-class organization.[103] The quest for a "confederation of labour" received expression through regional co-operation among working-class organizations aided by mutual visits of labour officials to the various colonies. The Workingmen's Association in Barbados, formed in 1927 by Charles Duncan O'Neal, was an offshoot of the island's first modern political party, the Democratic League. In 1927, Cipriani (of the TWA) and Frederick Roberts (a TUC delegate) visited Barbados and lectured at the hall of the Workingmen's Association, at Passage Road, on the topic of trade unionism.[104]

Labour groups in Trinidad and Grenada had established links with each other, primarily through the efforts of Cipriani and the TWA. Marryshow acknowledged that the Grenada Workingmen's Association was founded as a result of Cipriani's initiative: "They in Grenada heard of the wonderful work that he had been doing here among the workers of this Colony, and they invited him over to Grenada and he spoke to them and there was a hearty response."[105] Marryshow was in high praise for the efforts of the TWA: "Captain Cipriani was not only a big Trinidadian: he was a big West Indian."[106] Fraternal relations among working-class leaders laid the foundations for an informal network of labour in the Caribbean. In 1932, Marryshow and Cipriani, motivated by the urgency to mobilize labour in the Caribbean, visited St Kitts where they encouraged workers to form organizations similar to the TWA and GWA. Subsequently, the St Kitts Workers' League was formed as a working-class organization but to also function for the promotion of political and social reform. On 3 August 1936, Marryshow visited St Vincent on the invitation of George McIntosh, President of the St Vincent Workingmen's Association (SVWCA).[107] In his address at a labour rally comprising 3,000–4,000 persons, he encouraged the working class in St Vincent not only to promote programmes for the advancement of labour but also to actively support the efforts of labour leaders in the quest for self-government.

The need for a confederation of labour organizations in the West Indies was raised at the first British Labour Commonwealth Conference held in England in 1925. The Conference was hosted by the British Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress with participants from England, Ireland, Canada, South Africa and British Guiana. Hubert Critchlow, President of the British Guiana Labour Union (BGLU) represented the Caribbean.[108] Prior to his departure for England, Critchlow visited Trinidad where he secured the support of the labour movement. At a public meeting in Port-of-Spain, Cipriani affirmed that the labour movement in Trinidad was pleased to deliver to Critchlow "the mandate to do whatever in his power lies [*sic*] to help the working people of Trinidad, and to bring about a confederation of labour in the West Indies."[109]

At that Commonwealth Conference, Critchlow made an appeal for labour legislation in the West Indian colonies to address problems of low wages, long working hours and the high cost of living.[110] Indeed, one of the resolutions approved at the Conference related to the need to establish a 48-hour week and workmen's compensation law in all the colonies.[111] Critchlow bitterly attacked the British administration especially "the 'capitalist influence' on the operation of labour exchanges and restrictions on joining trades unions, holding meetings and picketing."[112] He invited the BLP and the TUC to visit British Guiana to attend the annual BGLU Conference carded for January 1926. Basdeo thinks that Critchlow's presence at the Conference was advantageous for labour in the Caribbean "It was Critchlow's appeal which brought F.O. Roberts of the British Labour Party to Trinidad and British Guiana in 1926 to initiate a united West Indian labour movement."[113]

The 1926 Guiana Labour Conference, held at the Georgetown Public Buildings, was convened to initiate a campaign to foster closer collaboration among trade unions in the Caribbean. A major resolution of the Conference called for the formation of "The Guianese and West Indian Federation of Trade Unions and Labour Parties"[114] with responsibility for the consolidation of efforts and the co-operation of the various labour organizations in the colonies. This could successfully be achieved through the formation of a common Caribbean labour agency to serve the region, particularly in producing common solutions for West Indian labour problems. The contingent from Trinidad made proposals for a political federation of the West Indies and for prison reform for the Caribbean islands, competitive examinations for entry into the civil service throughout the West Indies, public education and universal adult suffrage for the colonies.[115] In addressing the conference, Cipriani

advised, "If the colonies were federated and got self-government, the form of constitution must come from the Imperial Government." He therefore proposed a resolution which appealed for a federated West Indies "under a Colonial Parliament with Dominion status."[116]

Basdeo argues that the grandiose plans of the Guiana Conference were not implemented by labour leaders because of their failure to become more independent of advice from London. He thinks that the blame rested upon the Caribbean's working-class leaders such as Cipriani, Critchlow, Webber and Marryshow who were too dependent on England,

> By failing to follow up on the work already undertaken at the 1926 conference, Caribbean labour leaders not only surrendered their power and initiative to British Labour, but also undermined, if not underestimated, their own ability and political potential to organize themselves as an effective social force in Caribbean society. It was the product of lack of self-confidence.[117]

This explanation ignores the reality of colonial power and the severely limited constitutional authority and economic resources which were available to labour leaders in the Caribbean. It is imperative to maintain a realistic appreciation of the power of colonial rule and its authoritarian control of the small islands such as those in the Caribbean. Britain was not prepared to surrender to any pressure-group, particularly working-class leaders. The "political potential" of Caribbean labour leaders in 1926 was merely in its embryonic stage and the loose fellowship of Caribbean labour was certainly inadequate to create a "social force" of any magnitude to challenge the imperial might of Crown Colony governance. The military and police repression of protesting workers during the labour unrest in the 1930s bore testimony to Britain's determination to control the colonies from the imperial centre.

Indeed, it is to the credit of the dynamic labour leaders that they were at least creating a new vision for the Caribbean; therefore, their apparent failure to implement the resolutions of the Guiana Conference was certainly not "the product of lack of self-confidence." In fact, it took unusual courage and determination for labour to emerge as the most vibrant organization which dared to make proposals for the development of the colonies. It is obvious that the British Labour Party and the Colonial Office failed to initiate appropriate political changes for the West Indian colonies which would have aided the fulfilment of such

plans as contained in the British Guiana proposals. West Indian failure in this regard is best understood not in the failure of labour but in the inflexibility and lethargy of the Colonial Office in addressing the needs of the colonies.

The external environment also intensified the burden of West Indian leadership, particularly the crisis of global capitalism in the 1930s and the ravages of the Great Depression. The Depression created economic problems which absorbed the energies of labour leaders in the various colonies and impeded the regionalization movement. In addition, it exposed the inertia and irrelevance of Crown Colony management and it produced justifiable reasons for the revolt of the working class against colonial neglect.

For Britain, international politics directed attention away from the colonies. Since 1929, with the rise of totalitarian dictatorships and the threat of military aggression in Europe, the British Government, both Conservatives and Labourites pursued pacificist policies to conciliate hostile dictatorships.[118] The formation of the dreaded Axis in 1936–1937 between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, and their subsequent pact with Japan created political uncertainty and a threat to European security. This was given primacy by Britain which was not prepared to use its resources on its overseas colonies.

Within the Empire, Britain was unable to contain the spirit of nationalism which demanded recognition of the sovereignty of colonial peoples. In India, Gandhi bravely led the working class in the self-government movement. Even then, Britain grudgingly conceded the Government of India Act in 1935 which provided for a quasi-federal legislature, but she maintained control of military and financial affairs. Similarly, in the Caribbean, labour was motivated by the spirit of nationalism as it directed the movement for self-government against an imperial power whose domestic and global interests made it increasingly difficult to maintain effective control over her overseas Empire.

Labour was persistent. It remained the catalyst for change and sought to mobilize the Caribbean peoples through an integrated labour movement. The second Guianese and West Indian Labour Conference was convened in June 1938. Delegates from Trinidad included Cipriani, A. Gooding and L. Thomas of the TLP, as well as Ralph Mentor and Rienzi of the OWTU. They were given the mandate to map out plans for the co-operation of trade unions among various countries.[119] The presence of the delegation from Suriname, indicated growing support for a regional labour fraternity.

At the Conference, Rienzi proposed the formation of the British Guiana and West Indies Labour Congress (BGWILC) to replace the inactive Guianese and West Indian Federation of Trade Unions and Labour Parties.[120] In addition, he urged the delegates to work for the transfer of economic and political power from the capitalist class to the working class. He also appealed for the nationalization of the sugar and oil industries: "[If] we desire real freedom and the right to live and to pursue our happiness in the Guianas and West Indies, then we must carry out a militant struggle to revolutionise the relationship between man and man-between capital and labour."[121]

Trinidad was the venue for the third Guianese and West Indian Labour Conference which was held in November 1938. The members of the Executive of the newly formed BGWILC comprised representatives from Trinidad, Suriname and British Guiana[122] while Barbados was represented by Grantley Adams. The purpose of the conference was the formulation of a regional perspective for presentation to the Moyne Commission which toured the British West Indies during 1938–1939. The BGWILC expressed its commitment to improve working conditions for labour and to forge stronger bonds of intercolonial solidarity among workers through regular contact with trade unions in the Region.[123]

The fourth British Guiana and West Indian labour conference was held from 28 February to 1 March 1944 in British Guiana. Among the representatives were T.A. Marryshow from Grenada, Grantley Adams of Barbados, Albert Gomes (Deputy Mayor of Port-of-Spain and President of the Federated Workers Trade Union), Cipriani and Vivian Henry of the TLP, and Theo. Jean of the OWTU.[124] At the Conference, the General Secretary of the British Guiana TUC, H.J.M. Hubbard appealed for closer contact among trade unions in the British West Indies. One of the resolutions passed at the conference requested governments in the various colonies to permit the free movement of labour leaders within the West Indian region.

The search for a confederation of labour reached its zenith in 1945 with the formation of the CLC. The founding conference was convened by the Barbados Workers Union primarily to create a strong regional labour movement linking trade unions and labour parties.[125] This was the first labour conference in the West Indies which embraced so many territories and it was the first time there was such direct contact between labour in Jamaica and organizations in the Eastern Caribbean and British Guiana. It was also the first time delegates to a West Indian labour conference came from Antigua, Bermuda, Jamaica, St Lucia and St Vincent, while others represented Barbados, Grenada,

Guyana, Surinam and Trinidad and Tobago.[126] The Congress was the first successful venture in working-class integration at an administrative level, and the only genuinely independent federation of labour organization in the Region.

Labour: International context

The contribution of the CLC to Caribbean development was restricted by international political forces which at the end of World War II, severely undermined labour unity in the Caribbean. Developing countries such as the Caribbean colonies were caught in the diplomatic struggle between the superpowers during the Cold War. By the 1930s, trade unionism had become the most powerful movement in the world with well-established organizations in England, Germany, France, Italy, Russia and the USA. It was inevitable that Washington, the Kremlin and London would have been keen to foster alliances if not manipulate labour.

Both national and international labour were soon swallowed into the vortex of the Soviet-American diplomatic confrontation whose objective was the control of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). In the aftermath of the Paris Congress (25 September 1945), whence the WFTU was founded, it was reported by the US embassy in Moscow that the Soviet delegates in Paris, as well as the Soviet Press, stated categorically that there would be no separation between trade union activities and political aims.[127]

During the period 1945–1949, the WFTU was the scene of an intense engagement in bipolar politics, which reflected the "chasm between the pro-U.S., corporatist 'bread and butter' labor organizations versus many leftist European, Latin American, and Asian trade unions pursuing a wider political agenda thwarting the free enterprise system and bourgeois regimes."[128] Because of the domination of the WFTU by Russia and her allies, Washington and the American Federation of Labor (AFL) depicted the WFTU as a Soviet foreign policy instrument.[129]

The State Department and the AFL responded with their own strategies to create a pro-American or international network of anti-Communist labour unions as "part of a comprehensive plan to integrate the entire world economy under pre-eminent U.S. management." In addition to the US-led divisionist campaign against the WFTU and its efforts to create a rival international federation, US foreign policy included programs to restrict Communist expansion, particularly in economies which would have fallen prey to aid from non-democratic

regimes. The Truman Doctrine ensured that the United States assisted such countries as Greece and Turkey with financial and military assistance against Communist aggression. In addition, under the Marshall Plan, the United States granted billions of dollars to its European allies – England and France, as well as West Germany – to aid recovery from World War II and to protect them from Communist influence.

The split in international labour was inevitable as in 1949, British, Dutch and American unions, along with other non-Communist organizations, withdrew from the WFTU and formed the rival International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICFTU). Thus, the bipolar international political environment had given birth to bipolar trade unionism.[130] These international developments influenced and infiltrated labour in the Caribbean, both in local trade unions and in the regional CLC, as divisions were deepening in the CLC along lines shaped by the Cold War.[131] The polarization in the WFTU was mirrored in the ideological differences among the officers of the Congress. Richard Hart, (a Socialist and anti-imperialist), Secretary of the Congress, supported fully responsible government for Trinidad and Tobago and the West Indian colonies in accordance with the objectives of the Bridgetown and Kingston conferences of the CLC in 1945 and 1947 respectively. On the other hand, Gomes (a former Vice-President of the CLC), opposed full responsible government for the colonies and thereby deviated from the most significant recommendation of the CLC. Grantley Adams, President of the CLC, maintained a pro-colonial stance much to the delight of the Colonial Office who needed the Caribbean delegates to defend British colonial policy in the decolonization debate in Paris in October 1948.

Polarization in labour was reflected not only at the Executive level of the CLC, but also in the local trade union movement in the colonies. In Trinidad, the OWTU and its leadership (Rojas and Mentor) were accused of belonging to the Communist camp and in Jamaica, Bustamante and his Jamaica Labour Party were considered anti-Communist, although neither was affiliated with the WFTU nor the CLC. Much to the dismay of the Colonial Office and the British TUC, not all the Caribbean unions were willing to join the ICFTU. The powerful OWTU and FWTU in Trinidad preferred affiliation with the Communist-dominated WFTU. They justified their position on the grounds that for decades the British TUC was apathetic in promoting affiliation between the TUC and colonial trade unions. Also, in the 1930s, the TUC failed to effectively identify with Caribbean working-class organizations against the powerful Government-capitalist coalition

in the struggle for official recognition and improved standards of labour. Therefore, the offer of financial assistance as promised by Labour Commissioner, Solomon Hochoy, was an inadequate incentive to persuade the local unions to withdraw from the WFTU.

In any case, Britain and the United States, in pursuit of their Cold War policy recognized the strategic importance of Caribbean trade unions in their offensive against international Communism. Indeed, US geopolitics insisted that there be no satellite of Russian politics in the Caribbean. It is evident that exigencies of international politics and the parochialism in local politics created forces in the Caribbean which contributed to the decline and ultimate collapse of Caribbean federalism both at the constitutional and labour levels.

Labour organizations in the British Caribbean served an important role in championing for greater freedom and undermining colonialism. These working-class groups were adamant that self-government and federation be granted to the British West Indies. Ideological differences weakened Labour's voice and prevented a united front in opposing Britain. Interestingly, Britain appeared proactive in organizing various conferences, appointing commissions and publishing reports on the feasibility of self-government and federation. However, these were delaying tactics that frustrated labour leaders.

Conclusion

In the British Caribbean, Labour constituted the most effective single force in the process of decolonization, and in Trinidad it was the TWA/TLP and successive labour organizations which piloted the movement for self-government. Labour challenged the autocracy of colonial rule and was unyielding in the campaign for adult franchise and representative government, which were the two fundamental ingredients for the dissolution of colonialism. Although labour organizations were for decades denied official recognition, leaders were relentless in dialogue with the Colonial Office in the campaign for Home Rule. Their delegations and memorials to colonial administrators, leadership of the masses and struggle in a legislature which denied them political authority, bear testimony to their fearless initiatives against imperial governance and capitalist exploitation.

In the post-World War I period, the rise of independent states along national lines became a feature of European politics as the Czechoslavaks, Poles, Yugoslavs and Rumanians, Finns and Estonians established democratic republics and gave credence to the self-determination movement in other small countries. Certain West Indians who served in the war subsequently associated with labour organizations and promoted the campaign for democracy in the British Caribbean. Indeed, it was Labour which introduced democracy in Caribbean politics, serving as the real architect of a free Caribbean society, and the singular force which successfully undermined colonial governance. Democracy was neither a gift to the West Indian colonies bestowed by imperial Britain nor it was granted out of good intentions. Instead, it was consistently and brazenly demanded by Labour. Delayed responses produced the aggression as demonstrated in the social upheavals of the 1919–1920 and the 1937 riots. Labour led the

conflict against imperial Britain which for centuries had claimed both land and people as part of its Atlantic manor.

In the twentieth century, labour initiated the movement for economic liberation which was a vital component in the process of decolonization. The accelerated struggle against capitalist imperialism accounted for significant progress in the recognition of the working class within the economic system. In its resistance against capitalist exploitation particularly in the oil and sugar industries, the militant working class expressed its anguish in successive waves of defiant protests against chronic labour-related injustices, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s. While trade unions and humanitarian organizations in the metropole challenged imperialist economic systems and the tendency of laissez faire to promote capitalism at the expense of the working class, it was Labour in Trinidad which condemned and defied British capitalist domination of the island's economy.

The introduction of labour legislation contributed to the dismantling of a system in which the employer class unilaterally controlled labour. Labour-law reform was to a very large extent due to the agitation of the working class and not so much to the magnanimity of either the colonial government or the employer class. The gradual recognition of trade unions and the introduction of Arbitration Units and Wage Committees in the colony were due to the radical protests and demonstrations which were initiated by Labour. Under labour duress, the alliance of government and capitalist interests were persuaded, although reluctantly, to devise systems which would remove the absolute domination of workers by the employer class.

Social stratification with its accompanying discrimination and divisiveness was a distinguishing feature of British West Indian colonial society. It was promoted by the White ruling elite not only to ensure easy governance but also to obstruct the social mobility of the small middle class, but especially the African and Indian working class. Social divisions at the lower stratum were promoted by the dominant economic, administrative and military elites, as a control strategy to keep the masses fragmented and suspicious of one another.

It was Labour which sought to dismantle colonial social stratification and its explicit promotion of class consciousness. The working class laid the foundations for peaceful co-existence and tolerance among the racial groups, particularly the non-Whites who belonged to the most populous lower social stratum. The efforts of Labour under the guidance of Rienzi to bring together African oil workers and Indian sugar labourers contributed to the diminishing tension and mistrust between the

two races which originated with indentureship but was exploited by the White ruling class to keep the working class divided.

Both slavery and indentureship were dehumanizing forces. One of the worst crimes of European colonialism was the imposition of systems which for centuries denied dignity to the enslaved African. Leaders such as Rienzi, Roodal and Teelucksingh assisted working-class Indians in the restoration of self-confidence and self-dignity, some of which was eroded under conditions of indentureship. In seeking to combat concepts and assumptions such as ethnic inferiority which debase and alienate the races, Labour promoted collaborative efforts among both these racial divisions of the working class.

In the struggle to dismantle a rigidly stratified colonial society, Labour dared to expose and denounce colonial strategies which promoted White domination. It proved to be an onerous task against a system which permitted a White South African manager to refer to oil workers as black dogs who could only bark but could not bite.[1] Labour denounced uncaring White British managers and overseers in sugar estates who were devoid of humanitarian concerns as they exploited Indian labour. Working-class leaders took the initiative to discredit and embarrass supporters of institutionalized racism which blatantly reserved, for English personnel, all major offices in the Civil Service while qualified non-Whites were denied promotion. In addition, Labour denounced official policy which reserved certain positions exclusively for Whites, to ensure the retention of legislative and constitutional power by the ruling class.

In the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, governmental and humanitarian organizations in Britain introduced protective welfare measures for their working class. Social reforms included workers' rights in strikes or lockouts, prevention of the employment of young children, safeguards against industrial accidents, workmen's compensation, minimum wages, unemployment insurance, family allowances, sickness insurance and old-age pensions.[2] While the Lloyd George[3] administration and successive British governments promoted extensive social reforms in England in the early twentieth century, little was done to introduce such reforms in the West Indian colonies.

The colonial governments which managed the West Indian islands were motivated to consider social reform only through the anger, protest and agitation of the working class. The welfare of the working class was not the concern of the oligarchical State, and the misery and squalor of the underclass, as well as the exploitation of labour by capitalist

interests, were virtually ignored by the government. Since the colonial government failed to introduce social reforms in Trinidad, it was Labour which led the campaign serving as the social conscience of the colony. In times of crisis, such as during the world wars and the Depression of the 1930s, there was little State intervention to alleviate the suffering of the masses in the colonies. Therefore, the onus was on labour organizations to make representations to the government for the relief of the poor and dispossessed. Although the working class was represented in the Legislative Council and isolated from political power under a limited constitution, yet, Labour was a significant voice of concern and protest against the excessive luxury of the small ruling-class and governmental indifference to poverty and social deprivation.

Because of its prominent role in the process of decolonization, the working class felt the impact of metropolitan repression. The armed forces were peremptorily invoked with impunity against working-class resistance to the combined injustices of imperialist rule and capitalist exploitation. Labour's emergence as an organized class in the early twentieth century was viewed with suspicion by colonial rulers even though the latter had at their disposal all the constitutional and military systems of control and domination. The colonial world was cut into between the settler/expatriates who constituted the governing race and the oppressed class who constantly struggled for liberation. The settler/expatriate used the militia to uphold his rule of oppression, therefore his official go-between and spokesman was the police or the soldier to communicate his will to the oppressed.[4] The British Caribbean was not a region of White settler society as the United States, Canada or Australia, but numerous absentee landlords virtually owned the plantation colonies of the Caribbean.

Governmental obduracy was bolstered by the menacing presence of British naval squadrons which patrolled the Caribbean and responded when summoned to Trinidad for the 1903 Water Riots, the 1919–1920 disturbances and the 1937 labour rebellion. State suppression of the working class was institutionalized through legislative measures such as the Habitual Idlers' Ordinance, the Seditious Publications Ordinance and the emasculated Trade Union Ordinance which had initially outlawed strikes and gave no protection for actions in tort as provided for in British trade unionism. State harassment of labour included police surveillance at public meetings of the working class, searching of union offices by the police and the purging of labour leadership as militant Caribbean labour leaders either faced deportation or were refused entry into the colony. When deemed expedient, the State had little

hesitation in mobilizing its armed forces against unarmed masses during working-class protests and demonstrations.

The professional middle class had since the nineteenth century been advocating the need for constitutional reform, and in a limited way they represented the interests of the disadvantaged and inarticulate masses. But eventually, it required the direct action of the masses themselves and the emergence of an organized working-class movement to provide the essential internal dynamic that would precipitate both constitutional reform and progressive labour legislation in the colony. In the subsequent attainment of responsible government for the colony, no battle was fought at Marlborough House, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies was no longer an imperial foe. Therefore, this study recognizes that the nationalist movement in Trinidad and Tobago in the post-World War II era merely constituted the final step in the liberation process which was in its incipient stage in the post-emancipation period but was given direction and brought to its dénouement by the labour movement during the most perilous and hazardous stages in decolonization between 1919 and 1946.

The true soldiers of the movement for responsible government, the precursors of independence and the true pioneers and martyrs of nationalism belong to the labour movement of the pre-1956 era. Among the scarred warriors for economic, social and political liberation, preeminence belongs to Howard-Bishop, Cipriani, Roodal, Rienzi and Butler and the cadre of labour leaders who with the masses of the African and Indian working class gallantly took the struggle to their colonial masters. This, combined with changing global conditions, especially World War II, would induce a weakened British imperial government to embark on its retreat from Empire to Commonwealth.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Composition of the Legislative Council on 12 December 1924

Official members

Sir Horace Byatt – Governor, President
T.A. Vans Best – Colonial Secretary
W.C. Huggard – Attorney General
H.B. Walcott – Treasurer
R.H. Furness – Solicitor-General
Colonel G.H. May – Inspector General of Constabulary
M.A. Murphy – Director of Public Works
K.S. Wise – Surgeon-General
Lieutenant Colonel A. De Boissiere – Protector of Immigrants
T.R. Cutler – Collector of Customs
W.G. Freeman – Director of Agriculture

Unofficial members

Sir H.A. Alcazar
A. Fraser
A.H. Wight
Reverend C.D. Lalla

Appendix 2: Composition of the Legislative Council in February 1925

Official members

Sir Horace A. Byatt – Governor, President
T.A. Vans Best – Colonial Secretary
R.H. Furness – Acting Colonial Secretary
H.B. Walcott – Treasurer
Walter Harragin – Acting Solicitor-General
Colonel G.H. May – Inspector General of Constabulary
M.A. Murphy – Director of Public Works
K.S. Wise – Surgeon-General
Lieutenant Colonel A. de Boissiere – Protector of Immigrants
T.R. Cutler – Collector of Customs
W.G. Freeman – Director of Agriculture

J. Powter – General Manager of Railways
G. Mackay – Director of Education

Unofficial members

Sir H.A. Alcazar
A.B. Carr
G.F. Huggins
A.H. McShine
L.A.P. O'Reilly

Elected members

C.H. Pierre – St David, St Andrew, Nariva and Mayaro
T.M. Kelshall – Victoria
J.A.A. Biggart – Tobago
A.A. Cipriani – Port-of-Spain
E.R. Clarke – St Patrick
A.V. Stollmeyer – St George
S. Teelucksingh – Caroni

Appendix 3: Results of the 1925 elections

Port-of-Spain

A.A. Cipriani*	2,557
R.T. Rust	910
G. Johnston	378
Total voters	4,004

Caroni

S. Teelucksingh	491
E.A. Robinson	235
Total voters	726

St Patrick

A.A. Sobrian	269
E. Radcliffe-Clarke	314
Total voters	583

St George

A.V. Stollmeyer*	707
A. Cory-Davies	206
Total voters	913

Two candidates were unopposed

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*Labour candidates

Victoria
T.M. Kelshall
Eastern Counties
C.H. Pierre*

Appendix 4: Voter's register list showing the number of voters in 1928

Port-of-Spain	7,550
County of St George	2,916
County of Caroni	2,190
County of Victoria	2,744
County of St Patrick	1,933
Eastern Electoral District	2,833
Ward of Tobago	1,661
Total electors	21,827

Source: *Trinidad Guardian* 14 January 1928

Appendix 5: Results of the 1928 Elections

Four constituencies were uncontested as the candidates were unopposed

Port-of-Spain
A.A. Cipriani*

St George
F.E.M. Hosein*

Victoria
T.M. Kelshall

Eastern Counties
C.H. Pierre

Caroni

S. Teelucksingh*	623
A.E. Robinson	358

St Patrick

T. Roodal*	691
A.A. Sobrian	251

*Labour candidates

Tobago

J.A. Biggart	361
A. Bonnett*	55

Appendix 6: List of candidates, their affiliation and the electorate in the 1933 elections

Port-of-Spain (electorate 8,835)

Cipriani (Socialist)*

Eastern Counties (electorate 2,828)

C.H. Pierre

St George (electorate 3,651)

Paul Bissessar (unknown)
A.C.B. Singh (Independent Socialist)
Aldwyn Maillard (Socialist)*

(F.E.M Hosein returned unopposed in the last election)

Victoria (electorate 3,436)

T.M. Kelshall (Independent)
Harold Mahabir (Socialist)*
Harold Piper (Independent Socialist)

(Kelshall returned unopposed in the last election)

St Patrick (electorate 3,031)

T. Roodal (Socialist)*
Premchand Bunsee (Independent Socialist)

Caroni (electorate 2,384)

E.A. Robinson (Independent)
S. Teelucksingh (Independent Socialist)

Tobago (electorate 1,657)

Isaac Hope (Independent)
George F. Samuel (unknown)
John Isaac King (Independent)

Source: *Trinidad Guardian* 5 January 1933

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*Labour candidates

Appendix 7: Results of the 1933 elections

Three constituencies were uncontested – Port-of-Spain, St Patrick and the Eastern Counties

Victoria

T.M. Kelshall	791
Harold Piper	517
Dr Harold Mahabir*	764

St George County

M.A. Maillard	750
A.C.B. Singh	159

Tobago

I. Hope	346
J. King	117

Appendix 8: Results of the 1946 elections

South Port-of-Spain

Electors on list	22,822
R.S. Garcia	92
Aubrey James	952
C.B. Mathura	1,356
John N. Periera	1,228
Alfred Richards	1,362
Patrick Solomon	4,240

North Port-of-Spain

Electors on list	21,326
T.U. Butler	1,984
A. Gomes	5,212

San Fernando

Electors on list	14,121
Adolphus George	67
Roy Joseph	5,841
Ralph Mentor	1,784

St George

Electors on list	65,351
F.A.M. Brunton	862

*Labour candidates

Charles H. Buddhu	498
Vivian Henry	1,116
M.I. Julien	1,395
Chanka Maharaj	8,056
Mitra Sinanan	5,975
Norman W. Tang	4,344

Caroni

Electors on list	28,640
C.C. Abidh	7,321
Simbhoonath Capildeo	5,692
Sarran Teelucksingh	2,117

Victoria

Electors on list	40,469
George Fitz-Patrick	712
Ranjit Kumar	13,328
Edward A. Lee	2,002
McDonald Moses	4,420
David Pitt	3,708

St Patrick

Electors on list	33,411
John Kelshall	3,468
Sirjue Lutchman	1,726
John Rojas	3,401
Timothy Roodal	13,619
Amos N. Thomas	184

Eastern Counties

Electors on list	21,863
Victor Bryan	5,215
Mohammed A. Khan	126
Joseph Moonan	4,502
Babooram Nathai	749
Edward V. Wharton	2,112

Tobago

Electors on list	11,509
George de Nobriga	605
Laurence E. Edwards	1,674
Raymond Hamel-Smith	515
Robert H. Harrower	962
Alphonso James	4,318
George F. Samuel	31

Appendix 9: Parties and their candidates contesting the 1946 elections

Trinidad and Tobago Trades Union Council and Socialist Party of Trinidad and Tobago

Victor Bryan*	Eastern Counties
C.C. Abidh*	Caroni
John Rojas	St Patrick
Ralph Mentor	San Fernando
McDonald Moses	Victoria

The British Empire Workers' and Citizens Home Rule Party

T.U.B Butler	North Port-of-Spain
Timothy Roodal*	St Patrick
Joseph Moonan	Eastern Counties
Chanka Maharaj*	St George
Alfonso James*	Tobago

The Progressive Democratic Party

Raymond Hamel-Smith Tobago

The United Front

Albert Gomes*	North Port-of-Spain
Dr Patrick Solomon*	South Port-of-Spain
Roy Joseph*	San Fernando
Dr David Pitt	Victoria
Jack Kelshall	St Patrick
Laurence Edwards	Tobago
Norman Tang	St George
Simboonath Capildeo	Caroni

Appendix 10: Results of the 1950 elections

Party	Candidates	Members elected to the Legislative Council
BEW+CHRP	17	6
Caribbean Socialist Party	13	2
Trinidad Labour Party	12	2
Trinidad and Tobago Trades		

*Elected to serve in the Legislative Council

(Continued)

Party	Candidates	Members elected to the Legislative Council
Union Council	6	0
Political Progress Group	2	2
Independents	91	6
Total	141	18

Notes

Introduction: Labour in the Nineteenth Century

1. Physiocrats were the eighteenth-century French economists, for example Comte de Mirabeau. They advocated the abolition of mercantilist restrictions on trade and industries; they promoted free trade enterprise, as well as the removal of duties and customs barriers; and advocated the non-interference of government in trade matters.
2. Carlton Hayes, Parker Moon and John Wayland, *World History* (New York: Macmillan, 1957) 540.
3. "Manchester School" is the term used to denote ideas of free trade advocated by the Chamber of Commerce in Manchester, England.
4. H.A.L. Fisher, *A History of Europe* (London: Arnold Publishers, 1936) 1012.
5. Eric Williams, *History of Trinidad and Tobago* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964) 96.
6. Martin Klein, "Slavery, the International Labour Market and the Emancipation of Slaves in the 19th century," *Slavery and Abolition* 15 (1994): 212.
7. The term "African" identifies persons of African ancestry, whether slaves or their descendants. The term is preferred to other epithets as "Black" or "negro" in order to avoid any derogatory connotations. For the period under review, the terms "Afro-Trinidadian" and "Afro-Caribbean" are anachronisms. In this study, migrants from India and their descendants are referred to as "Indian." The term "White" is used in reference to Europeans inclusive of persons of Spanish, French or English extraction.
8. O.N. Bolland, *The Politics of Labour in the British Caribbean* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2001) 3.
9. Harold J. Laski, *A Grammar of Politics* (London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1963) 178.
10. Bridget Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad 1783–1962* (London: Heinemann, 1981) 88.
11. Cited in Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 84.
12. The British government advised colonies to adopt the metayer system. The metayer was induced to cultivate sugarcane: "He received in return for his labour one half of the sugar made, and a bottle of rum for every barrel of sugar, on condition that all molasses had been used in the distillery; but he had, of course, to pay the whole costs of cultivation and manufacture." One of the disadvantages of the system was that the metayer cultivated land only when it was profitable for him. He did not manure the ground, and when production fell he moved to other fields. There was no real sustainable farming. Edward W. Daniel, *West Indian Histories* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1948) 267–268.
13. Harold Courlander, *A Treasury of Afro-American Folklore* (New York: Smithmark Publishers, 1996) 1–2. See also Sidney W. Mintz, "The Caribbean

as a Socio-cultural Area," Michael M. Horowitz (ed.) *Peoples and Cultures of the Caribbean: An Anthropological Reader* (New York: Natural History Press, 1971) 26.

14. Mats Lundahl, "The Rise and Fall of the Haitian Labour Movement," Malcolm Cross and Gad Heuman (eds.) *Labour in the Caribbean: From Emancipation to Independence* (London: Macmillan, 1988) 89.
15. Michiel Baud, "The Struggle for Autonomy: Peasant Resistance to Capitalism in the Dominican Republic, 1870–1924"; Cross and Heuman 121.
16. Bolland *Politics of Labour* 45.
17. W. Arthur Lewis, *The Evolution of the Peasantry in the British West Indies* (Manuscript in West Indiana, University of the West Indies, Trinidad) 13. For more on the peasantry, see Woodville K.Marshall, "Peasant Development in the West Indies Since 1838," *Social and Economic Studies* 17 (1968): 252–263. Woodville K. Marshall, *The Post-Slavery Labour Problem Revisited* (Mona: The University of the West Indies, 1991).
18. Of this, total £1,039,119 was allocated to Trinidad. See Gertrude Carmichael, *The History of the West Indian Islands of Trinidad and Tobago 1498–1900* (London: Alvin Redman, 1961) 185. Williams noted: "The Parliament, itself full of members who owned estates in the West Indies and had drawn on the compensation paid for the slaves." Williams 93.
19. Michael Craton, "Continuity Not Change: The Incidence of Unrest among Ex-Slaves in the British West Indies, 1838–1876," *Slavery and Abolition* 9 (1988): 146.
20. Carmichael 189.
21. Sidney W. Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1974) 150–151.
22. Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes (Abridged) 1647–1650* (Jamaica: Extra Mural Department, University College of the West Indies, n.d) 10.
23. Kusha Haraksingh, "Control and Resistance among Overseas Indian Workers: A Study of Labour on the Sugar Plantations of Trinidad, 1875–1917," *Journal of Caribbean Studies* 14 (1981): 4.
24. Cross and Heuman 5. During 1912–1924, approximately 250,000 Haitians and Jamaicans were imported into Cuba to work in the sugar industry due to "a sudden dearth of sufficiently willing workers." Mintz, "The Caribbean as a Socio-Cultural Area" 31.
25. Primary waves of migrant labour to Trinidad: 1839–1849, 10,278 West Indians; 1846–1850, 1,298 Portuguese from Madeira; 1853–1866, 2,500 Chinese; 1845–1917, 145,000 East Indians.
26. Brereton 107.
27. G. Tikasingh, "The Establishment of the Indians in Trinidad 1870–1900," PhD dissertation, University of the West Indies, St Augustine, 1973, 246. In Montserrat, Dominica, Grenada, Nevis and St Vincent, the estates were either reduced to production for local consumption or forced to close down. Elisabeth Wallace, *The British Caribbean: From the Decline of Colonialism to the End of Federation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977) 8.
28. Kelvin Singh, *Bloodstained Tombs: The Muharram Massacre 1884* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1988) 17.

29. Canboulay was the procession of lighted torches associated with Carnival. The government sought to prohibit the festival which produced social disorder.
30. Singh, *Bloodstained Tombs* 15.
31. Williams 180.
32. Brereton 142.
33. For more on the middle-class reformers, see William Smith, "Advocates for Change within the Imperium: Urban Coloured and Black Middle Class Reform Activists in Crown Colony Trinidad, 1880–1925," PhD dissertation, University of the West Indies, St Augustine, 2000.
34. See Brinsley Samaroo, "Cyrus Prudhomme David: A Case Study in the Emergence of the Black Man in Trinidad Politics," *Journal of Caribbean History* 3 (1971): 80–81.
35. After the emancipation of slaves, the British Parliament encountered increased disagreements with the governments in the colonies. As a result, the British Parliament decided to get rid of the Old Representative System that was existing in the British West Indies and replaced it with the Crown Colony government
36. Alvin Majid, *Urban Nationalism: A Study of Political Development in Trinidad* (Florida: University of Florida Press, 1988) 62.
37. Ibid. 46.

1 The Pioneers: Organized Labour, 1894–1920

1. Brereton 144.
2. Selwyn Ryan noted that there was a "Trinidad Working Men's Club" founded by Claude Phillips in 1877, "but it did not last any length of time." Selwyn Ryan, *Race and Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago: A Study of Decolonization in a Multiracial Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972) 26. Wendy Charles quoted Ryan in her thesis, but she added no further information. See Wendy Charles, "Labour and Protest and Colonial Control in Trinidad 1839–1840," MA thesis, McGill University, 1980, 31. Both Ryan and Charles provided no evidence to support the existence of such an organization. It is possible that Ryan's "Trinidad Working Men's Club" may have been the "Workingmen's Reform Club" of 1897, and "Claude Phillips" may have been "Charles Phillips" of 1897. In the historiography examined, there are no other references to any such organization in 1877.
3. E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1962) 209.
4. Brinsley Samaroo, "The Trinidad Workingmen's Association and the Origins of Popular Protest in a Crown Colony," *Social and Economic Studies* 21 (1972): 206. Craft societies or trade "clubs" consisting of skilled workers functioned as the early trade unions (craft unionism) in England. There were clubs for particular skills such as carpenters, bricklayers, bookbinders, shoemakers and engineers. London was the centre of these older craft clubs and workers' associations.

5. Despatch from Acting Governor C.C. Knollys to Joseph Chamberlain. Trinidad Despatch no. 368, 24 November 1896. CO 295/375. Also *Port-of-Spain Gazette* 31 October 1896, 14 November 1896 (hereafter cited as *POSG*).
6. *Mirror* 7 May 1906.
7. Despatch from Knollys to Chamberlain. Trinidad Despatch no. 368, 24 November 1896. CO 295/375.
8. *POSG* 14 November 1896.
9. Samaroo, "Workingmen's Association" 207. Brereton 148.
10. Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 192.
11. Ron Ramdin, *Chattel Slave to Wage Earner: A History of Trade Unionism in Trinidad and Tobago* (London: Martin Brian and O'Keeffe, 1982) 46. O.N. Bolland, *On the March: Labour Rebellions in the British Caribbean, 1934–1939* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1995) 21. Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 192.
12. *Report of the West India Royal Commission* Appendix C vol. 2, Trinidad, British Parliamentary Papers, 1898 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1971) 303.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. *POSG* 17 October, 31 October 1896. *West India Royal Commission* 48.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. *West India Royal Commission* 349.
19. Ibid.
20. Brereton 147–148.
21. Samaroo, "Workingmen's Association" 208.
22. *San Fernando Gazette and Trinidad News* 2 January 1894. Also *POSG* 21 December 1894.
23. Samaroo, "Workingmen's Association" 208. Also Brinsley Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development in Trinidad 1898–1925," PhD dissertation, University of London, 1969, 109.
24. *Mirror* 10 February 1906.
25. Despatch from Acting Governor Gilbert Carter to the Earl of Elgin, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Trinidad Despatch no. 222, 18 June 1907. CO 295/441.
26. Report of the General Manager and Chief Engineer of Railways on 5 June 1907 in Enclosure no. 2 in Trinidad Despatch no. 222, 18 June 1907. CO 295/441.
27. Ibid.
28. *Hansard* (Commons Debates) 4 March 1909.
29. Resolution of the TWA, 10 May 1909. Sub-enclosure in Trinidad Despatch no. 180, 26 May 1909. CO 295/451.
30. Minute by Surgeon General, H.L. Clare, 22 May 1909. Enclosure no. 2 in Trinidad Despatch no. 189, 28 May 1909. CO 295/451. Minute by Director of Public Works 27 May 1909. Enclosure no. 3 in Trinidad Despatch no. 189, 28 May 1909. CO 295/451.
31. *Hansard* (Commons Debates) 17 June 1909.
32. Protest of this Association in connection with Reciprocity with Canada (signed by Alfred Richards and Adrien Hilarion), 5 January 1910. Enclosure

in Trinidad Despatch no. 7, 10 January 1910. CO 295/457. The TWA's memorial was submitted again, in early 1911, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Enclosure in letter from J. Pointer to L. Harcourt, 14 February 1911 CO 295/472.

33. The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company dealt with the coal shipments from Southampton to the West Indies. Its central coaling depot was St. George's Grenada. The Company also managed the Royal mail service to the West Indies. This service was essential to the merchant-business elite who required efficient communication to support their European trading links.
34. Memorandum of the TWA (signed by Richards and Hilarion), 13 January 1911. Enclosure in a letter from Pointer to Harcourt, 14 February 1911. CO 295/472.
35. "Memorandum From This Association On The Tendency of The Present Administration on the Proposed Extra Taxation" (signed by Richards and Hilarion), 23 March 1911. Enclosure no. 1 in Trinidad Despatch no. 274, 6 July 1911. CO 295/466.
36. *Mirror* 17 April 1913.
37. Confidential Despatch from Governor G. Le Hunte to L. Harcourt, 30 October 1911. CO 295/468.
38. Memorandum of this Association With Regard to Blacks and Whites (signed by Richards and Hilarion), 9 January 1914. Enclosure no. 1 in Trinidad Despatch no. 36, 26 January 1914. CO 295/490.
39. Ibid.
40. The ability of the TWA to attract mass meetings of the working class, and the affiliation of the Association with the BLP made it one of the colony's vibrant political bodies during that era. See Kelvin Singh, *Race and Class Struggles in Colonial State: Trinidad 1917–1945* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press; Kingston: The Press, University of the West Indies, 1994) 10.
41. Barry Simpson-Holley, "Members for Trinidad," *Journal of Caribbean History* 6 (1973): 83. Also Neal Malmsten, "The British Labour Party and the West Indies, 1918–1939," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 5 (1977): 174.
42. Summerbell, a printer from Sunderland was a member of the Independent Labour Party and staunch socialist. Simpson-Holley 83. Also Majid 219.
43. Minute by Acting Governor S.W. Knaggs on "Resolutions of Trinidad Workingmen's Association," 21 March 1908. CO 295/444.
44. Resolution no. 2 (signed by Richards and Hilarion) in Despatch from Acting Governor S.W. Knaggs to the Earl of Elgin, 21 March 1908. CO 295/444.
45. *Hansard* (Commons Debates) 31 March 1908.
46. Ibid. 28 July 1908.
47. Ibid. 17 March 1909.
48. Sahadeo Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Labour Reform in Trinidad 1919–1939* (San Juan: Lexicon Trinidad Limited, 2003) xviii. Also Samaroo, "Workingmen's Association" 208. Summerbell was the parliamentary representative for Sunderland/Durham and Joseph Pointer was a Member of Parliament for Altercliffe/Sheffield. Charles 40–41.
49. Charles 43. Also Sahadeo Basdeo, "Dynamics in the Rise of Labour Organizations and Early Craft Unions in the British Caribbean 1897–1914." Paper

read at the annual conference of the Association of Caribbean Historians, 1984, Barbados, 10. The letterhead of the Association stated its representative was "Mr. J. Pointer, M.P." and that the TWA was affiliated to the "Parliamentary Labour Party, England." For instance, see TWA's correspondence in Enclosure no. 1 in Trinidad Despatch no. 9, 6 January 1913. CO 295/481. Also Enclosure no. 1 in Trinidad Despatch no. 102, 10 March 1919. CO 295/520.

50. Simpson-Holley 91. Also Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* xix.
51. *Mirror* 3 October 1912. For more on Pointer's visit see Singh, *Race and Class* 10–11.
52. *Mirror* 3 October 1912.
53. Magid 219.
54. Ibid. 220. Among the resolutions passed at the meeting in Port-of-Spain was an appeal for elected members in the Legislative Council and the return of the Borough Council to an elected basis. Brereton 153. Pointer was instrumental in airing the issue of the Borough Council in the House of Commons. *Hansard* (Commons Debates) 27 June 1912.
55. Singh, *Race and Class* 11.
56. *POSG* 14 November 1896.
57. *West India Royal Commission* 301.
58. See Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 21.
59. *West India Royal Commission* 302.
60. *Hansard* (Commons Debates) 1 November 1906.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid. 31 March 1908. For more on Summerbell's contribution see *West India Committee Circular* 11 June 1907 (thereafter cited as *WICC*).
63. *Hansard* (Commons Debates) 6 November 1906.
64. Ibid.
65. Hansard (Commons Debates) 28 July 1908. See also *WICC* 18 August 1908.
66. Hansard (Commons Debates) 11 March 1909.
67. Resolution no. 1 (signed by Richards and Hilarion) in Despatch from Knaggs to the Earl, 21 March 1908. CO 295/444.
68. Minute by the Protector of Immigrants 16 March 1908. Enclosure no. 6 in Despatch from Knaggs to the Earl, 21 March 1908. CO 295/444.
69. For instance see reports of officials in Enclosure no. 2 in Trinidad Despatch no. 368, 24 November 1896. CO 295/375. Also Enclosure no. 2 in Trinidad Despatch no. 335, 15 August 1912. CO 295/476. Enclosure no. 2 in Trinidad Despatch no. 36, 26 January 1914. CO 295/490.
70. *Report of the Committee on Emigration from India to the Crown Colonies and Protectorates* Part 2, Minutes of Evidence (London: HMSO, 1910) 230 (Also known as the *Sanderson Commission*). Lord Sanderson headed the Commission which was appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl of Crewe, on 3 March 1909, to study the question of the Indian presence in the British colonies.
71. *Sanderson Commission* 231.
72. Ibid. 232.
73. Ibid.
74. Brereton 113.

75. Memorial of the TWA (signed by Richards and Hilarion), 25 January 1911. CO 295/472.
76. Memorandum from this Association on the tendency of the present Administration and on the proposed extra taxation, 23 March 1911 (signed by Richards and Hilarion). Enclosure no. 1 in Trinidad Despatch no. 274, 6 July 1911. CO 295/466.
77. Letter from Urbain Lewis to Governor George Le Hunte, 12 January 1912. Enclosure in Despatch from Hunte to Harcourt. Trinidad Despatch no. 157, 15 April 1912. CO 295/474.
78. Letter from Lewis to Hunte, 12 January 1912. Enclosure in Despatch from Hunte to Harcourt. Trinidad Despatch no. 157, 15 April 1912. CO 295/474.
79. No first name is recorded in the correspondence for Borrowsau who resided at Cunupia. No details were given of the charges against him.
80. Sub-enclosure no. 2, petition addressed to Hunte, from Lewis in Despatch from Hunte to Harcourt. Trinidad Despatch no. 157, 15 April 1912. CO 295/474.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Letter from S.W. Knaggs to Lewis, 11 January 1912. CO 295/474.
85. Memo from Secretary of the TWA to Harcourt, (Secretary of State for the Colonies), 30 December 1912. Also, on 8 January 1913, the Colonial Secretary, Knaggs, acknowledged the receipt of the Association's letter (*Mirror* 13 January 1913). For the response of the upper class to the cessation of indentureship, see Kelvin Singh, "The Abolition of Indian Indentureship and Response of the Planter Interests in Trinidad," *Journal of Caribbean History* 21 (1987): 45–54.
86. Additional Memorandum of this Association on Immigration (signed by Richards and Hilarion), 24 December 1912. Enclosure in Despatch from Hunte to Harcourt. Trinidad Despatch no. 510, 31 December 1912. CO 295/477.
87. This letter from the Secretary of the TWA was sent to the Colonial Secretary and then forwarded to the Secretary of State of the Colonies. The letter was acknowledged by the Colonial Secretary on 5 March 1913. *Mirror* 17 April 1913.
88. *Mirror* 17 April 1913.
89. Printed notice from the TWA (signed by J. Sydney de Bourg and Montgomery E. Corbie), 13 November 1896. Enclosure no. 1 in Trinidad Despatch no. 368, 24 November 1896. CO 295/375.
90. Minute by Acting Governor C.C. Knollys. Trinidad Despatch no. 368, 24 November 1896. CO 295/375.
91. Minute by Knollys. Trinidad Despatch no. 368, 24 November 1896. CO 295/375.
92. Despatch from Knollys to Joseph Chamberlain. Trinidad Despatch no. 368, 24 November 1896. CO 295/375.
93. Despatch from Hunte to Harcourt. Trinidad Despatch no. 157, 15 April 1912. CO 295/474.

94. *Mirror* 13 January 1913.
95. Despatch from Knaggs to Harcourt, 15 August 1912. CO 295/476.
96. Minute by Hunte, 31 December 1912. CO 295/477.
97. Report of Inspector of Police (signed by M. Costelloe), 26 February 1919 in Enclosure no. 2, Despatch from Governor J.R. Chancellor to Viscount Milner. Trinidad Despatch no. 102, 10 March 1919. CO 295/520.
98. Memorandum from P. McGuire, 24 November 1896 in Despatch from Knollys to Chamberlain, Trinidad Despatch no. 368, 24 November 1896. CO 295/375.
99. The notice was published in the *Mirror*. See Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development" 109.
100. Sub-enclosure in Enclosure no. 2 in Trinidad Despatch no. 281, 18 June 1919. CO 295/521. The activities of another African, F.E.M. Hercules, was being monitored by H.D. Baker, the local US consul. Baker forwarded an unfavourable report to Robert Lansing, Secretary of State for the United States; but a group of citizens responded informing Lansing that Baker's report was "extremely untrue and insolent." *Federal Surveillance of Afro-Americans (1917–1925): The First World War, the Red Scare and the Garvey Movement Reel* 18, Casefile 811.108/913.
101. Ramdin 47. Also Samaroo, "Workingmen's Association" 210.
102. See Samaroo, "Workingmen's Association" 210.
103. Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development" 129–130.
104. Report of the Inspector of the Constabulary in Enclosure no. 1 in Trinidad Despatch no. 180, 4 May 1909. CO 295/451.
105. Despatch from Acting Governor W.M. Gordon to Milner,18 June 1919. CO 295/521.
106. Basdeo, "Early craft unions" 11.
107. Brereton 153. Also Ramdin 47.
108. *Mirror* 14 July 1914.
109. Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development" 129–130.
110. Ramdin 51.
111. Samaroo, "Workingmen's Association" 210. Also Ramdin 51. Bolland, *On the March* 22.
112. *Trinidad Guardian* (hereafter cited as *TG*) 10 July 1918. Also Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development" 143–144.
113. Ramdin 51.
114. Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 2.
115. Despatch from Chancellor to Walter H. Long (Member of Parliament, MP) Trinidad Despatch no. 123, 13 April 1917. CO 295/511.
116. *TG* 12 March 1919. In the aftermath of the protest, Ben Spoor informed the House of Commons that as early as December 1917, signalmen seeking wages presented a petition to the Trinidad Government Railway. They did not receive any reply and presented another petition in June 1918. The Assistant Manager refused their request for a wage increase. Another futile attempt was made in February 1919 and in March 1919 when the petitioners sought an interview with the General Manager but "they were turned away with contumely." *Hansard* (Commons Debates) 10 March 1920.

117. See Ramdin 45. Samaroo, "Workingmen's Association" 212. Singh, *Race and Class* 15.
118. The first branch of the TWA outside Port-of-Spain was established in Couva in 1909. The San Fernando branch was formed in November 1919.
119. Brereton 161.
120. *Council Paper* no. 125 of 1920, 11.
121. *Wages Committee 1919–1920* Appendix 1. Also Ramdin 45. Samaroo, "Workingmen's Association" 212. Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development" 141. Singh, *Race and Class* 15.
122. David Headley, *Labour and Life* (Trinidad: Trinidad Workingmen's Association, 1921) 4.
123. Secret Despatch from Chancellor to Milner, 7 December 1919. CO 295/521. Also Chancellor Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.
124. Secret Despatch from Chancellor to Milner, 7 December 1919. CO 295/521. Also Chancellor Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University. The agent's name was given as Webster. The workers on the Port-of-Spain waterfront were from St. Vincent, Grenada, St. Kitts, Petit-Martinique, Barbados and Carriacou. Rennie 17.
125. Secret Despatch from Chancellor to Milner, 7 December 1919. CO 295/521.
126. Ibid., Also Chancellor Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.
127. *TG* 21 March 1920.
128. *TG* 5 December 1919. *TG* 10 December 1919.
129. Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development" 150. Also Samaroo, "Workingmen's Association" 215.
130. Copy of Report by Acting Magistrate Warden of Tobago, 7 December 1919. Enclosure no. 1 in Confidential Despatch 24 January 1920. CO 295/526. For more on the disturbances of early December 1919 see *WICC* 25 December 1919. Also *TG* 9 December 1919. *POSG* 7 December 1919. Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development" 148. Samaroo, "Workingmen's Association" 214.
131. Confidential Despatch from Chancellor to Milner, 24 January 1920. CO 295/526. Also Chancellor Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.
132. Ibid.
133. Secret Despatch from Chancellor to Milner, 7 December 1919. CO 295/521. Also Chancellor Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.
134. Confidential Despatch from Chancellor to Milner, 22 December 1919. CO 295/521. Also Chancellor Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.
135. Ibid.
136. Singh, *Race and Class* 32. See also Jerome Teelucksingh, "Trinidad, Labor Protest," in Immanuel Ness (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest* (Blackwell Publishing, 2009) 3318.
137. Despatch from Chancellor to Milner, 21 January 1920. CO 295/526.
138. Despatch from Chancellor to Milner, 21 January 1920. CO 295/526., Also Chancellor Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.
139. Paraphrase Telegram from Chancellor to Milner, 8 January 1920. CO 295/526.
140. Brereton 163.

2 Early Years: The Trinidad Workingmen's Association

1. Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 140. Sahadeo Basdeo, *Labour Organisation and Reform* 39.
2. Kiely argued that Cipriani was chosen as a "neutral, white man" to "unite the Creole and Indian working class." Ray Kiely, *The Politics of Labour and Development in Trinidad* (Kingston: The Press, University of the West Indies, 1996) 68.
3. He was born in Demerara, British Guiana in 1873 and arrived in Trinidad in 1903.
4. Report by Detective Inspector M. Costelloe on W. Howard-Bishop, 9 July 1921. CO 295/537.
5. Ibid.
6. Copy of letter from Inspector Albert Kirchner to the Chief Inspector, 15 February 1922. CO 295/545.
7. Ibid.
8. Letter from D. Headley (President) and Thomas Blackwell (Secretary) to Secretary of the British Labour Party, 7 July 1921 in William Howard-Bishop, *Trinidad in Parliament: The Political, Social and Industrial Situation – Being a Report Presented to the Executive Committee of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association (Incorporated), Affiliated to the Labour Party of England* (London: National Labour Press Limited, 1921) 1.
9. Secret Despatch from Governor S.H. Wilson to Winston Churchill, 30 September 1922. CO 295/543.
10. Susan Campbell, "'En'less Pressure': The Struggles of a Caribbean Working Class in their International Context Trinidad 1919–1956," dissertation, Queen's University, 1995, 66.
11. *Labour Leader* 3 February 1923.
12. Ibid. 7 March 1925.
13. See Ibid. 24, 28, 31 March 1925.
14. Ibid. 24 March, 7 April, 11 April 1925.
15. Ibid. 25 April 1925.
16. Secret Despatch from Governor H.Byatt to Lieutenant-Colonel L.S. Amery, 21 December 1927. CO 295/563. The telegram stated, "Greetings Soviet Workers. Congratulations. Achievements ten years successful Government. Trinidad Workers pledge support. Struggle for world socialism – San Fernando Trinidad." See also Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 152.
17. Letter from Byatt to C.R. Darnley, 11 January 1928. CO 295/563.
18. Ibid.
19. Cipriani visited and addressed the Sangre Grande and Toco branches at their anniversary celebrations. *Labour Leader* 1 September 1928, 13 October 1928. In March 1929, members of the Sangre Grande Branch, Alston Bousigard, Lawrence Bartholo and Ralph Mentor visited the Manzanilla branch. *Labour Leader* 16 March 1929. Isaiah Joseph (President of Arouca branch) and S. Byam (Chaplain of the TWA) visited the Carapichaima branch on 15 April 1929. *Labour Leader* 27 April 1929. During 1928–1930, Cipriani and the Executive of the TWA joined in the anniversary celebrations of branches in Princes Town, Diego Martin and Arima, and Carpenter

and Porter sections. *Labour Leader* 1 September, 13 October 1928, 1 June, 29 June, 9 November 1929, 18 January 1930.
20. *Labour Leader* 4 February 1928.
21. Interview with D. Seecharan (grandson of Henry Seecharan), 12 September 2000. Tabaquite. See also *Labour Leader* 19 October 1929.
22. See *Labour Leader* 18 January 1930.
23. Ramdin 78.
24. *Labour Leader* 18 February 1928, 24 August 1929. James noted that there were 42 branches of the TWA in 1928 and 98 branches in 1932. C.L.R. James, *The Life of Captain Cipriani-An Account of British Government in the West Indies* (Nelson, Lancaster: Coulton and Company, 1932) 40.
25. Ramdin 78. Also Lewis, *Labour in the West Indies* 19. In the early 1930s, the colony had an estimated population of 450,000 persons.
26. Letter from A.Cipriani to W.Citrine, Marjorie Nicholson Files, TUC Library, U of North London.
27. *The People* 15 April 1933.
28. R. Reddock, "The Trinidad and Tobago Labour Movement: A Vision for the Future," *Caribbean Labour Journal* 3 (January 1993): 8.
29. Ramdin mentioned a Bakers' Association in Port-of-Spain. Ramdin 48.
30. *Labour Leader* 13 December 1930.
31. Ralph de Boissière, *Glory Dead* (London: Picador, 1981) 95, 208.
32. *Labour Leader* 5 April 1924. In 1922, during his trip to England, Howard-Bishop met with Ben C. Spoor, to discuss such issues as the 8 hour day, the Seditious Publications Bill and representative government. *Labour Leader* 2 September 1922.
33. *Labour Leader* 18 July 1925.
34. Ibid. 12 May, 28 July 1923.
35. The conference was held at the Trinidad Co-operative Bank in Chaguanas. *Labour Leader* 22 March 1924.
36. *Labour Leader* 5 May 1925.
37. Ibid. 23 May 1925.
38. Ibid. 15 November 1930, 7 March, 16 May 1931.
39. Ibid. 12 March 1927.
40. Ibid. 11 January, 15 January 1930.
41. V.S. Naipaul, *Three Novels – Mystic Masseur, The Suffrage of Elvira and Miguel Street* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982) 167.
42. *Labour Leader* 26 January, 2 February, 9 November 1929, 21 June 1930, 24 January, 1 August 1931.
43. Ibid. 26 September 1931. The Grand Riviere branch had its banner blessed at the Grand Riviere E.C. Church. *Labour Leader* 6 July 1929. The Leeward Division of the Tobago branch blessed its banner at the Bethel Moravian Church. *Labour Leader* 12 July 1930. Rev. Allan Dean blessed the banner of the Delaford section. *Labour Leader* 18 April 1931.
44. Sarran Teelucksingh (Vice-President of the TWA) attended the initial meeting. *Labour Leader* 3 April 1926. The new group in the colony was known as the "Fabian Society, Trinidad Branch."
45. *Labour Leader* 24 August 1930.
46. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1965) 46.

47. Walter Rodney, *A History of the Guianese Working People 1881–1905* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1981) 62, 63.
48. He petitioned the Governor for clemency but died of ill-health in prison in 1824.
49. In Britain in the fourteenth century, working men and women were not treated on equal terms. As early as 1388, the government passed a statute which established a lower wage for women. For instance, women labourers and dairymaids received lower wages than male workers who were cowherds and ploughmen. Sheila Lewenhawk, *Women and Trade Union: An Outline History of Women in the British Trade Union Movement* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977) 4. Employers usually justified lower wage rates with the assumption that women did less work and it was of an inferior quality. Lewenhawk 39.
50. Rhoda Reddock, *Women, Labour and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago – A History* (London: Zed Books, 1994) 100.
51. Ibid. 174.
52. Ibid. 124.
53. Ibid. 174.
54. *TG* 28 August 1927. Also Reddock, *Women, Labour and Politics* 174.
55. See *Labour Leader* 27 April 1929.
56. For more on the Fabians in Britain see E.J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men* (Oxford: Blackwell,1986) 250–268.
57. Reddock, *Women, Labour and Politics* 174. In Grenada, Marryshow, a journalist and sympathizer with the working class, also championed the equality of women, "from (sic) these small colonies the women section of the population is diminishing frightfully by emigration to larger fields. Something should be done to stay their footsteps and the obligation falls heavily upon us to make conditions equal for them at home." *The West Indian* 13 February 1920 cited in Jill Sheppard, *Marryshow of Grenada: An Introduction* (Barbados: Letchworth Press, 1987) 14.
58. Walter Citrine, ed., *Report of Proceedings at the 58th Annual Trades Union Congress, Bournemouth*. 6–11 September 1926 (London: Co-operative Printing Society, 1926) 255.
59. See *Labour Leader* 19 February 1927, 25 June 1927, 11 February 1928.
60. Ibid. 20 June 1931.
61. Ibid. 22 February 1930. Those elected were: Theresa Ojoe (President), Leonise Delzine (Secretary), Jane Ojoe (Assistant Secretary), Leonora Sharpe (Treasurer) and the Committee of Management included Mary Hinds, Eldica Weeks, Mary Kennedy and Henrietta McCollin. *Labour Leader* 17 January 1930.
62. *Labour Leader* 21 February, 11 April 1931.
63. Ibid. 11 April 1931.
64. Reddock, *Women, Labour and Politics* 135.
65. Bolland, *On the March* 84.
66. Rhoda Reddock, *Elma Francois: The NWCSA and the Workers Struggle for Change in the Caribbean in the 1930s* (London: New Beacon Books, 1988) 10–11.
67. Headley had formerly been active in the Young Communist League in the United States and the National Maritime Union. Bolland, *On the March* 84.

68. Bolland, *On the March* 84. On 20 July 1934, there was a plan (thwarted by the police) for protesting Indians from the estates in Central to join with the hunger marchers of the NUM. Bolland, *On the March* 85. On 23 July, a similar demonstration took place at Tunapuna. See *POSG* 24 July 1934.
69. Other founding members in the NUM were Jim Barrette and Dudley Mahon (a cook at the Port-of-Spain Hospital). Reddock, *Elma Francois* 12–13. Also Reddock, *Women, Labour and Politics* 135. Kiely 72. Rupert Gittens who had been deported from Marseilles for his activities with the French Communist Party and Clement Payne were other prominent figures in the NUM. Bolland, *On the March* 85.
70. Bolland, *On the March* 85.
71. Ibid.
72. Reddock, *Elma Francois* 17.
73. Oilfield Workers' Trade Union, *Fortieth Anniversary July 1937-July 1977* (San Fernando: Syncreators, 1977) 45.
74. *The Vanguard* 19 June 1966.
75. *Labour Leader* 4 January 1930. During this visit to Tobago, thirteen branches of the TWA were established. James 40.
76. *Labour Leader* 18 January 1930.
77. Ibid. 8 February 1930.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid. 31 May 1930.
80. This includes Charles Atkinson's "Amalgamated Building and Woodworkers' Union," see Chapter 8 of thesis. "Trade Union" is defined as an organization of employees, usually wage earners, in specific occupations or, a combination of skills and crafts under an omnibus arrangement. As a workers' organization, the trade union seeks to advance the mutual economic interests of members through negotiations with employers particularly with regard to wages and working conditions.
81. The TUC had more than 100 affiliated unions. It was a federal body comprising independent trade unions, each being autonomous especially in matters of collective bargaining. Hugh Armstrong Clegg, *A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 94,117.
82. Letter from Helena Manuel to the TUC, 1 July 1928. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
83. Copy of letter from Manuel to the Acting Governor, S.M. Grier, enclosed in letter from Sassenbach to Citrine, 4 February 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
84. Letter from W.J. Bolton, International Department, TUC General Council to Captain W.H. Coombs, of The Officers (Merchant Navy) Federation, London, 26 March 1936. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
85. Letter from Manuel to Sassenbach, 15 August 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
86. In correspondence the IFTU and TUC would refer to Manuel's union as "The Trinidad and Tobago Trade Union Centre" and not as the "Trinidad and Tobago National Trade Union Centre."
87. Letter from Manuel to Citrine, 6 January 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.

88. Letter from Manuel to Citrine, 6 January 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick. In August 1930, Manuel wrote to Sassenbach, "Our Capital which is our income would have increased, but owing to our Local Government which is opposing us, we are under strong pressure by them." Letter from Manuel to Sassenbach, 15 August 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
89. Letter from Citrine to Manuel, 27 January 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick. In February 1930, Manuel's Trade Union Centre had reportedly received mention in the IFTU's "Press Report." Letter from Manuel to Citrine, 11 February 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
90. Letter from Citrine to Manuel, 5 March 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
91. Copy of undated latter from Manuel to the IFTU replying to an enquiry from the IFTU on 28 March 1930 regarding the refusal of British authorities to recognize her union. Both pieces of correspondence were enclosed in a letter from Manuel to Citrine, 23 April 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
92. Letter from Manuel to Sassenbach, 15 August 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
93. Letter form Citrine to Cipriani, 6 March 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
94. Letter from Cipriani to Citrine, 24 March 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick. Sassenbach, General Secretary of the IFTU, wrote to the TUC on 2 May 1930, "Captain Cipriani has never troubled about us at all. Our impression from the letter is that he is not very friendly with the British trade unions." Letter from Sassenbach to the TUC General Council, 2 May 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
95. Letter from Sassenbach to Citrine, 15 September 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
96. Reddock, *Women, Labour and Politics* 134.
97. Letter from Cipriani to Citrine, 24 March 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
98. Among the documents seized–correspondence on the Foreign British Seamen's and Firemen's Membership, Rules and Weekly contributions. Also taken was the foreign ITF Constitution and Book of Rules. Letter from Manuel to Sassenbach, 9 October 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
99. Letter from Sassenbach to Citrine, 7 November 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick. Also Ramdin 77.
100. Copy of one-page findings labelled "Private and Confidential" 25 September 1930. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
101. Ibid.

3 Involvement of Labour in Politics, 1925–1938

1. *Labour Leader* 2 September 1922. For more on Bishop's trip see Singh, *Race and Class* 48.

2. *Labour Leader* 26 August 1922.
3. Williams 219.
4. Other colonies which granted limited representative government were St Vincent, St Lucia and Dominica.
5. Patrick Emmanuel, *Crown Colony Politics in Grenada 1917–1951* (Bridgetown: ISER,1978) 72.
6. Williams 220.
7. Some Indian women were able to vote as they owned small pieces of land in rural areas. Singh, *Race and Class* 67.
8. Morley Ayearst, *The British West Indies* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960) 80.
9. Ibid. 81.
10. Brereton 139.
11. Victoria and the Eastern Counties were uncontested.
12. Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development" 187.
13. Albert V. Stollmeyer belonged to the White upper class and was a large cocoa proprietor with an extensive estate along the Santa Cruz Valley. Charles Henry Pierre was a person of mixed descent (African and Indian–'dougla') practised as a barrister in Port-of-Spain. He resided at St Augustine, north of the eastern Main Road. Evila Philip, personal interview, 25 February 2003. (She was 92 years old and lived at Henry Pierre Terrace, on lands formerly owned by Henry Pierre).
14. Ayearst 187.
15. Ibid.
16. Augustus Bharat Gobin, a popular resident of Chaguanas, owned a rumshop and dry goods store. He owned lands in Chandernagore; at Raghunanan Road in Enterprise; and Todd's Road in Longdenville where he cultivated a small cocoa estate. Participation in politics was limited to his tenure in the Caroni Local Board. Basdeo Bhagwat, personal interview, 28 February 2003. Bhagwat lived opposite to Gobin's home in Chaguanas.
17. *POSG* 28 January 1928.
18. The executive supported Mahabir's candidacy to attract Indian votes.
19. *TG* 28 December 1932.
20. Ibid. 12 January 1933.
21. *TG* 24 January 1933. Also Basil Ince, "Politics Before the People's National Movement: A Study of Parties and Elections in British Trinidad," dissertation, New York University, 1966, 101.
22. Harold Piper received 517 votes and Harold Mahabir obtained 764 votes.
23. Ince 67.
24. *Labour Leader* 17 January 1925. For a brief overview of the elections in the 1920s and 1930s see Kirk Meighoo, *Politics in a 'Half-Made Society: Trinidad and Tobago, 1925–2001* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003) 10–13.
25. *POSG* 21 January 1928.
26. Ince 99–100.
27. *Sunday Guardian* 29 January 1933.
28. *TG* 2 February 1933.
29. *POSG* 21 January 1921.
30. *TG* 7 January 1933. Robinson had the support of sugar interests as well. Captain W.F. Watson of Waterloo Estate indicated at an election meeting

that Robinson's legal training would be an asset in the Legislative Council. *TG* 14 January 1933.

31. *People* 15 January 1938.
32. *POSG* 8 January 1938.
33. E.R. Blades, personal interview, 7 February 2001.
34. *TG* 8 December 1932.
35. *East Indian Weekly* 17 December 1932. *TG* 22 January 1933.
36. In addition to the use of school buildings as the venue for public buildings, there were other strategically located centres which were regularly used – Liberty Hall, Prince Street, and Woodford Square in Port-of-Spain; the London Electric Theatre, Woodbrook; the Theatre Hall, Chaguanas; the Princes Town Drill Hall and the Town Hall, San Fernando.
37. Brereton 166–167. Blades, later to be prominent in the leadership of the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union, attended some of these meetings and attested to the regular presence of hecklers, supporters of both candidates and their rivals. Blades interview.
38. *TG* 8 January 1925.
39. *Labour Leader* 24 January 1925.
40. *TG* 9 February 1928.
41. Ibid. 6 January, 15 January 1938.
42. Ince 58. Ince considered the TWA to be a pseudo-party.
43. *TG* 12 February 1928.
44. *POSG* 26 January 1928.
45. *TG* 1, 6, 11, 18 January 1925.
46. Ince 48. Also Samaroo, *Constitutional and Political Development* 191.
47. *Labour Leader* 14 February 1925.
48. *TG* 12 February 1928.
49. The headline was "Reds Return Roodal" *TG* 12 February 1928.
50. *People* 29 January 1938.
51. *TG* 20 January 1933.
52. Ibid. 31 January 1933.
53. Ibid. 6 January 1938.
54. *People* 29 January 1938.
55. *Sunday Guardian* 23 January 1938.
56. *People* 29 January 1938.
57. The slogan "Trinidad for Trinidadians" was used in the 1890s in the early reform movement. Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development" 185. See also Ramdin 72.
58. *TG* 17 January 1925.
59. *Labour Leader* 26 July 1924.
60. *TG* 3 January 1925.
61. *Labour Leader* 18 June 1927.
62. Ibid. 13 September 1924.
63. *TG* 8 January 1925. Although they were disenfranchised, the masses identified with labour's appeal as expressed by calypsonian Lord Mentor (Mentor Trimm) who sang during the 1925 elections:

    Gal, who you votin' for?
    Response: Cipriani

We don't want Major Rust to make bassabassa here,
Response: Cipriani. We don't want no Englishman, we want Trinidadian.
Response: Cipriani.

Cited in Gordon Rohlehr, *Calypso and Politics in Pre-Independence Trinidad* (Port-of-Spain: Gordon Rohlehr, 1990) 107 (Bassabassa is a local expression for 'confusion').

64. This occurred on 18 January 1925 at an election meeting at Maracas Government school. *TG* 20 January 1925.
65. Ibid. 20 January 1925.
66. Ibid. 6 January 1938. An editorial in the *Trinidad Guardian* entitled "Pre-Election Promises" criticised Rienzi for placing self-government and universal suffrage at the bottom of the list. *TG* 8 January 1938.
67. *Labour Leader* 14 January 1925.
68. *POSG* 14 January 1928.
69. See Ibid.14 January, 29 January 1928.
70. Ibid.14 January 1928.
71. Ibid.
72. *Council Paper* no. 107 of 1926, 20.
73. Men employed on rigs received 80 cents for 12 hours of work, whilst an ordinary labourer on the oilfield received either 80 or 72 cents for 9 hours. *Council Paper* no. 50 of 1926, 20–21.
74. Report by Sir Thomas Holland (laid before the Legislative Council on 19 October 1928), *Council Paper* no. 86 of 1928, 23.
75. *Council Paper* no. 86 of 1928, 14.
76. Ibid. 23.
77. Annual General Report for 1927 in *Council Paper* no. 81 of 1928, 23.
78. *Sanderson Commission* 26. For more on the complaints of Indians see evidence given by George Fitzpatrick and F.E.M Hosein. *Sanderson Commission* 312, 385.
79. David was the first African to be nominated as an unoffical in the Legislative Council in 1904. The second such nomination was Emmanuel Lazare in 1921.
80. *Sanderson Commission* 217.
81. Ibid. 101.
82. Brinsley Samaroo, John La Guerre and George Sammy, *East Indians and the Present Crisis* (San Juan: Print-Rite, 1973) 2.
83. *Hansard* 15 February 1924.
84. Rev. C.D. Lalla, (born 16 December 1880, at Brechin Castle Estate; died 21 June 1958). Among the unofficial nominees, Lalla would have been closest to the needs of the Indian working class. He was born of indentured parents. Lalla spent some time as a teacher in the Canadian Mission schools in the sugarbelt of Central Trinidad. He served as a Government examiner particularly for persons qualifying as Hindi interpreters in the various courts of the colony. Also, he was founder of the East Indian National Congress. He was one of the founders of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago and for 30 years served as President of the Bee Keepers' Association.

85. Despatch from L.S. Amery to Governor Sir H.A. Byatt, 18 May 1925. Confidential Despatches from the Secretary of State to the Governor 1923–1925. National Archives, Trinidad.
86. Despatch from Amery to Byatt, 18 May 1925. Confidential Despatches from the Secretary of State to the Governor 1923–1925. National Archives, Trinidad.
87. The EINC claimed to have provided some measure of political representation for Indians. Sarran Teelucksingh, a member of the EINC, was reportedly elected through predominantly Indian support in the Central districts where the Congress was influential.
88. Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development" 187.
89. *POSG* 30 December 1924. Samaroo, "Constitutional and Political Development" 187.
90. Teelucksingh was a proprietor owning businesses which included the blending of rum for distribution to shops. He also owned a dry goods store in Couva and operated the first rural tarpaulin cinema which he took to several villages. Godfrey Teelucksingh, personal interview, 27 April 2001 (Godfrey is the son of Sarran Teelucksingh).
91. *POSG* 11 January 1925. See also Singh, *Race and Class* 128.
92. Singh, *Race and Class* 128.
93. *TG* 15 January 1925.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Singh, *Race and Class* 129.
97. This figure was cited by a speaker, Sinanan, at an election meeting in Fyzabad. *POSG* 29 January 1928.
98. *POSG* 4 January 1933.
99. In 1937 Ralph Mentor served on the Executive of the OWTU with Rojas, Rienzi and Blades and was actively involved in the unionization drive. Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 270. The Mentor family originally came from Tobago and settled in the Ortoire-Manzanilla area. Later, younger members of the family made their home in Sangre Grande. Today family members live in Tobago, Sangre Grande and Ortoire. Another relative, Hugo Mentor, was identified with labour and served as the Assistant Editor of the *People*. He and Rienzi attempted to establish a political party – The West Indian National Congress. It was envisaged that this party would incorporate trade union perspectives but unfortunately the venture was short-lived.
100. *POSG* 4 January 1933.
101. Ibid.
102. There were three Pundits, Dinnanath Tewari, Goberdhan and Ramlogan; the other delegates were Aiknath Ramcharan, Charles Ramkhalawan, Dr C.W. Chandisingh. *TG* 10th January 1933.
103. Singh, *Race and Class* 135.
104. Ibid. 136.
105. Ibid.
106. Letter from Byatt to Amery, 21 December 1927. CO 295/563.
107. See Singh, *Race and Class* 129.
108. *Labour Leader* 10 January 1925.

109. *TG* 8 January 1933. For more on Madeleine Slade, see Louis Fischer, *Gandhi: His Life and Message for the World* (New York: New American Library, 1964) 91–92.
110. *TG* 31 January 1933.
111. See K.O Laurence, "Council, Assembly and Taxation in Tobago 1793–1815." Paper read at the Association of Caribbean Historians, April 1990, U of the West Indies, St Augustine.
112. *Labour Leader* 6 September 1924. Since there were no newspapers published in Tobago, the Port-of-Spain based media included columns on Tobago affairs with limited electoral coverage. There were reports in the *Trinidad Guardian* while the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* had a regular column "Tobago Tidings" and the *Labour Leader* carried reports in its "Tobago News" column.
113. *Labour Leader* 16 September 1924.
114. Ibid. 1 November 1924.
115. Ibid. 13 September 1924.
116. *TG* 12 February 1928.

4 Labour's Voices in the Legislative Council, 1925–1938

1. The Executive Council consisted of the Governor, the Colonial Secretary, Attorney General and Colonial Treasurer.
2. Ayearst 79. Gordon K. Lewis, *Growth of the Modern West Indies* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968) 198–199.
3. Paul K. Sutton, ed., *Forged From the Love of Liberty: Selected Speeches of Dr. Eric Williams* (Port-of-Spain: Longman Caribbean, 1981) 128.
4. Teelucksingh withdrew his support for Cipriani after the debate on the Divorce Bill in 1931. The Executive of the TWA had agreed to maintain a low profile in the Divorce controversy between the government and the Catholic Church, the latter being against the Bill. During the debate in the Council, Cipriani was persuaded by the Church and French Creoles to oppose legislation, while Teelucksingh and Roodal voted in support. See Brereton 170. See also Hewan Craig, *The Legislative Council of Trinidad* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952) 107–120. James 82–100.
5. *Hansard* 29 May 1925.
6. James 66.
7. *Hansard* 10 May, 29 November 1929.
8. Patrick Lewis, "A Historical Analysis of the Development of the Union-Party System in the Commonwealth Caribbean, 1935–1968," dissertation, University of Cincinnati 1974, 15.
9. *POSG* 14 April 1928.
10. For a comprehensive analysis of the eight-hour day see Singh, *Race and Class* 102–109. Among major issues raised in the Legislative Council, Williams identified old age pensions, the nomination system, minimum wages and foreign labour. See Williams 223. Brereton included the eight-hour day, child labour and workmen's compensation. Brereton 168.
11. Williams 223.
12. Petition signed by A.A. Cipriani, Sarran Teelucksingh, C. Henry Pierre, A.V. Stollmeyer and T.M. Kelshall. Cipriani referred to this petition in his

contribution in the Legislative Council in 1930 during the debate on his motion requesting the Secretary of State to appoint a Royal Commission to consider the matter of responsible government for Trinidad and Tobago. *Hansard* 14 November 1930.

13. *Hansard* 14 November 1930.
14. Ibid. In 1932 James praised Cipriani: "During the last eighteen years, he has been engaged in a series of struggles against the bad manners, the injustice, the tyranny, and the treachery of Crown Colony Government." James 1.
15. *Hansard* 14 November 1930.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid. Greek: "hoi aristoi" plural: the nobility, the aristocrats.
21. *Hansard* 14 November 1930.
22. Ibid. 1 April 1938.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Between 1819 and 1847 Parliament passed a series of "Factory Acts" dealing with child labour. (In1819 child labour was limited to 12½ hours per day and there was a minimum age of nine years for children employed in cotton mills. In 1842 Parliament banned the employment in the coal pits, of girls and boys under the age of ten years. And, in1847 the Ten Hour Act limited the hours of labour for children below 18 years of age). Fisher 897.
27. Administration Report of the Protector of Immigrants for 1920. *Council Paper* no. 55 of 1921, 15. R. Henderson was Manager of the Forres Park Sugar Estate. The owner of the Non Pareil Estate was E. A. Robinson.
28. See Brereton 178.
29. Citrine 255.
30. The members of the Committee were Matthew A. Murphy (Chairman), A. de Boissiere, L.A.P. O'Reilly, Alex. Fraser, A. Cipriani and A.V. Stollmeyer. *Council Paper* no. 50 of 1926, 8.
31. *Council Paper* no. 50 of 1926, 23.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. *Hansard* 9 December 1927. Also Williams 212. Report of Select Committee of the Legislative Council. *Council Paper* no.50 of 1926, 29. Singh, *Race and Class* 105.
36. *Council Paper* no. 50 of 1926, 30. Also Williams, 213. Another sugar planter, Knox, who was also interviewed by the Select Committee, supported the employment of children in the fields. See *Council Paper* no. 50 of 1926, 31–32. Singh, *Race and Class* 105. Also James 42–45.
37. *Council Paper* no.50 of 1926, 11.
38. Sylvia Moodie-Kublalsingh, *The Cocoa Panyols of Trinidad: An Oral Record* (London: British Academic Press, 1994) 11.
39. Isaac Ashby, personal interview, 26 November 2002 (Ashby was 81 years old).

40. Ashby interview. The Felicite Estate was privately owned and later purchased by Caroni Limited. Ashby worked from 7.00 a.m to 5.00 p.m and had a lunch-break for one hour.
41. Samuel Cowri, personal interview, 26 November 2002 (Cowri was 88 years old).
42. The Ordinance was assented to on 19 April 1927 by Governor W.B. Jackson. The exceptions to the legislation was that a child under twelve years of age, could be employed if under detention in a certified Industrial school or orphanage or obtaining instruction in manual labour at a school. Secondly, the legislation would not apply if members of the same family are engaged in business/work. Clauses 8 and 9.
43. "An Ordinance to prohibit the employment of children under twelve years of age" Clause 4.
44. *Hansard* 8 April 1927.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Radcliffe-Clarke suggested that the abolition of child labour should be delayed until the government provided compulsory education. *Hansard* 8 April 1927.
49. *Hansard* 8 April 1927.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. *Hansard* 17 December 1929.
54. Passed in the Legislative Council on 19 April 1918. Assented to by Governor Chancellor on 27 April 1918. During 1909–1912, 412 Indians were prosecuted for habitual idleness. Williams 107.
55. Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 32. The Colonial Office did not permit the implementation of amendments.
56. Ibid. 35, 56.
57. See Singh, *Race and Class* 144.
58. Habitual Idlers Ordinance, 1918. Clause 2.
59. Ibid. Clause 3.
60. Ibid. Clause 7.
61. Ibid. Clause 11.
62. Ibid. Clause 8, Clause 9 (1).
63. *Hansard* (Commons Debates) 10 March 1920.
64. Ibid.
65. Howard-Bishop 7.
66. See Despatch from Acting Governor T.A.V. Best to Churchill, 15 September 1921. CO 295/537.
67. Cipriani asked, "Has the Government any intention, now or in the near future, of repealing the Habitual Idlers Ordinance? Will the Government lay on the table the annual reports forwarded to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies concerning the working of the said Ordinance, from the date of the passing thereof to the present day?" *Hansard* 22 May 1925.
68. *Hansard* 22 May 1925.

69. In 1919, the Acting Colonial Secretary sought the approval of the Legislative Council for the acceptance of a recommendation of the Finance Committee that £1,000 be released for the River Estate Settlement. *Hansard* 4 April 1919.
70. *Hansard* 21 May 1926.
71. Assented to by Governor H.A. Byatt on 6 November 1926. Mid-year estimated population for 1919 was 384,247. Annual Report of the Medical Inspector of Health. *Council Paper* no.11 of 1921, 7 (laid in the Legislative Council on 18 February 1921). In 1925, the total population was 383,422. The East Indians comprised 125,238. Report of Registrar General for 1925 in *Minutes of Council Paper* vol. 2 1926.
72. *Hansard* 29 October 1926.
73. Ramdin 55.
74. By December 1920 there were 130,028 Indians in the colony of whom 502 were indentured, 2,649 were "free" on the estates and 126,877 were free of the estates. Administration Report of the Protector of Immigrants for the year 1920 (laid in the Legislative Council on 6 May 1921). *Council Paper* no. 55 of 1921, 3. The EINC estimated that 75% to 80% of the labourers on the cocoa and sugar estates were East Indians. Memorial of the EINC of Trinidad to Wood, 3 February 1922. Enclosure in Trinidad Despatch no. 486, 3 October 1922. CO 295/544.
75. Report of the Protector of Immigrants in *Council Paper* no. 55 of 1921, 4.
76. Howard-Bishop 7. Bishop met Wood in July 1921.
77. Memorandum from the Executive Committee of the TWA to Governor Wilson, 6 October 1922. CO 295/544.
78. Letter from Best to Howard-Bishop (General Secretary of the TWA), 12 October 1922. CO 295/544.
79. Resolution passed at TWA meeting, 12 October 1922. CO 295/544.
80. Letter from Howard-Bishop to Churchill, 17 October 1922. Enclosure in Trinidad Despatch no. 523, 7 November 1922. CO 295/544.
81. Despatch from Wilson to the Duke of Devonshire, 7 November 1922. CO 295/544.
82. Ibid.
83. *Labour Leader* 11 August 1923.
84. Ibid. 8 September 1923.
85. *Hansard* 13 March 1925. In May 1925, Cipriani moved a motion for a Select Committee to be appointed to enquire into the conditions of labour in the colony. Lennox O'Reilly seconded the motion.
86. *Hansard* 13 March 1925.
87. Despatch from Byatt to Amery, 14 August 1925. CO 295/555.
88. *Hansard* 19 February 1926.
89. Ibid. 9 April 1926.
90. Ibid. 23 April 1926.
91. Ibid.
92. Singh, *Race and Class* 98.
93. *Hansard* 23 April 1926.
94. The exceptions under which an employer was not liable included wilful disobedience of an order given to a workman, or if injury was caused while a worker was under the influence of drugs or alcohol; or if he disregarded safety services while working.

95. *Hansard* 23 April 1926.
96. Ibid.
97. He was the elected member for St. Patrick.
98. *Hansard* 23 April 1926.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. *Hansard* 29 October 1926. There were public notices in the press by Snaggs stating that the Workmen's Compensation, 1926 would come into effect on 1st January 1927. For more on the ordinance see Roy Thomas, *The Development of Labour Law in Trinidad and Tobago* (Massachusetts: Calaloux Publications, 1989) 15.
102. V.R.H. Buren was appointed as Commissioner by the Governor.
103. *Hansard* 10 December 1926.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid.
108. *Labour Leader* 26 February 1927.
109. Ibid.
110. *Hansard* 30 March 1928.
111. See Singh, *Race and Class* 99.
112. Memorandum of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association, 27 May 1930, presented at the British Commonwealth Labour Conference, 21 July 1930. London. TUC Library, University of North London.
113. See *The Vanguard* 20 May, 22 July 1944.
114. Minute by Wood, 31 August 1921. CO 295/541.
115. Howard-Bishop 7.
116. See *Labour Leader* 4 April, 14 April 1923.
117. Ibid. 12 May 1923.
118. *Hansard* 29 October1926.
119. Ibid. 2 March 1928.
120. Those opposing Pierre's recommendations were Sir Francis Watts, Gaston Johnston, L.A.P. O'Reilly, Dr. A.H. McShine, Sir H.A. Alcazar, A.P. Catherall, F.C. Marriott, C. Sadler, W.G. Freeman, Lieutenant-Colonel A.H.W. de Boissiere, Dr. K.S. Wise, M.A. Murphy, Colonel G.H. May, H.B. Walcott (Treasurer), A.D.A. MacGregor (Attorney-General) and W.E.F. Jackson (Colonial Secretary).
121. Memorandum of the TWA. British Commonwealth Labour Conference. July 1930. TUC Library, University of North London.
122. *Hansard* 15 April 1932.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid. In response to Kelshall's query about whether Cipriani contemplated the assumed exclusion of Indians, Cipriani responded: "Oh, no! I beg your pardon! I don't exclude them at all!"

131. *Hansard* 15 April 1932.
132. Ibid. 3 April 1936.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid.
135. Ibid.
136. *Hansard* 16 October 1936.
137. Ashby interview.
138. Blades interview.
139. Ibid.
140. Ashby interview
141. Cowrie interview
142. *The Vanguard* 11 April 1942.
143. *Hansard* 24 April 1942.
144. *The Vanguard* 28 March 1942.
145. Ibid. 21 March 1942.
146. Williams 221.
147. Craig 86.
148. Brereton 168.
149. Lewis, *Growth of the Modern West Indies* 204.
150. Ibid.
151. Ayearst 181–182.

5 Rise of the Trinidad Labour Party

1. Clause 107 (1) *Companies Ordinance of 1913*. The first Companies Ordinance was passed in 1869.
2. *Friendly Societies Ordinance* 11 January 1918. The first Friendly Societies Ordinance was passed in 1888.
3. Clause 5 (d) *Friendly Societies Ordinance* 11 January 1918.
4. Ibid.
5. In the early nineteenth century, Parliament imposed restrictions on the working-class organizations in Britain through the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800. Although there were trade unions existing (craft societies and craft unions), they were illegal. These Acts prohibited the association or "combination" of trades, skills, or workers. The statutes indicated government's fear that combinations of workers could be a cloak for rebellious conspiracies, inspired by the Jacobins and therefore subversive. The Combination Acts were repealed in 1824, and a new statute limited union rights to the determination of wages and hours of labour.
6. Notes of a meeting comprising W. Howard-Bishop, Spoor (M.P) and Wood at the Colonial Office on 18 August 1921. CO 295/541.
7. Ibid.
8. *Hansard* 26 November 1926.
9. Ibid. 3 December 1926.
10. Ibid. 25 April 1930.
11. Memorandum of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association (27 May 1930) to the British Commonwealth Labour Conference, 21 July 1930. TUC Library, U of North London.

12. Confidential Circular from Passfield to the Officer Administering the Government, 17 September 1930. CO 295/599.
13. Circular from Malcolm MacDonald, 9 November 1930. CO 854/97. Malcolm MacDonald was appointed Secretary of State in 1935. He was the son of former Prime Minister of Britain, John Ramsay MacDonald.
14. Petition from the TWA, 26 January 1931 in Enclosure no. 1 in Trinidad Despatch no. 80, 24 February 1931. CO 295/573.
15. See Thomas, *Development of Labour Law* 20–21.
16. Section 33 Trade Union Ordinance, 1932.
17. Section 33 (b) Trade Union Ordinance, 1932.
18. Ibid.
19. *Hansard* 18 June 1932.
20. Ibid.
21. Telegram from Citrine to Cipriani, 20 June 1932. TUC Library, University of North London. See also Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
22. Lewis, *Development of the Union-Party System* 17. Kiely 71.
23. *Hansard* 27 May 1932.
24. Letter from Cipriani to the Secretary of the TUC, 30 May 1932. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
25. *Hansard* 18 June 1932. The Bill was originally founded on the law of the British Parliament and drew upon the Trade Union Acts of 1871 and 1876. The Trade Union Act of 1871 gave legal status to trade unions; it enabled unions to protect their funds by registering under the Friendly Society Act. There were restrictions since another ordinance, the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1871) prohibited any form of picketing. Subsequently, the Act of 1876 provided legal protection in the case of picketing and worker demonstrations. H.A. Clegg, A. Fox and A.F. Thompson, eds., *A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889* vol.1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) 46.
26. *Hansard* 18 June 1932.
27. Ibid. The English laws to be consulted were the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875, the Trade Disputes Act of 1906 and the Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act of 1927.
28. Hansard 18 June 1932. The Ordinance was amended in February 1939 to include protection for peaceful picketing and immunity against actions of tort.
29. *Hansard* 18 June 1932.
30. Ibid.
31. Letter from Cipriani to Secretary of the TUC, 21 June 1932. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
32. Letter from Henry to Gillies, 24 January 1933. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick. See also Marjorie Nicholson Files, TUC Library, University of North London.
33. Letter from Citrine to Henry, 9 February 1933. Marjorie Nicholson Files, TUC Library, University of North London. For more on the correspondence between Citrine and Henry see Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 118–119.
34. Letter from Citrine to Henry, 9 February 1933. Marjorie Nicholson Files, TUC Library, University of North London. The General Secretary of the

TUC also advised Henry that on the issue of regulations under the English Acts he should consult Arthur Henderson's *Trade Unions and the Law*.

35. Letter from Henry to Citrine, 2 March 1933. Marjorie Nicholson Files, TUC Library, University of North London.
36. *Hansard* 18 June 1932. See also Williams 231. The Clerks Union, founded by the TLP in 1933, and with a membership of 500 persons, never registered. Ramdin 142.
37. Richard Hart, "Working Class in the English-speaking Caribbean," *Labour in the Caribbean* eds. Cross and Heuman 57.
38. Letter from Henry to Citrine, 16 February 1934. Marjorie Nicholson Files, TUC Library, University of North London.
39. Letter from Citrine to Henry, 29 March 1934. Marjorie Nicholson Files, TUC Library, University of North London.
40. Emmanuel 97.
41. Letter from Owen Mathurin to General Secretary of the TUC, 30 November 1934. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
42. Letter from Secretary of the Research and Economic Department to Mathurin, 19 December 1934. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
43. Letter from Secretary of the Organisation Department to Mathurin, 20 December 1934. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
44. See Lewis, *Labour in the West Indies* 20.
45. Letter from Henry to Bailey, 30 July 1934. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.
46. *People* 5 January 1935.
47. Ibid. 26 May 1934.
48. Ibid. 23 June 1934.
49. Ibid. 24 February 1934.
50. The Amalgamated Building and Woodworkers' Union was a registered union (date of registration was 30 March 1936). Ramdin 143. This union held its first meeting at no. 66 George Street, Port-of-Spain. The Municipal General Workers' Section was unregistered.
51. *People* 18 January 1936.
52. Ibid. 17 October 1936.
53. The Water and Sewerage section was officially affiliated as a new section on 9 May 1936. *People* 16 May 1936.
54. John M. Hackshaw, *One Hundred Years of Trade Unionism* (Diego Martin: Citadel Publishing, 1997) 20.
55. "A person under the age of twenty-one, but above the age of 16, may be a member of a trade union, unless provision is made in the rules thereof to the contrary, and may, subject to those rules, enjoy all the rights of a member except as herein provided." Clause 22. Trade Union Ordinance 1932.
56. Reddock, *Women, Labour and Politics* 127. The Juvenile section of the TWA was not as vibrant during the 1920s as it was during the TLP.
57. *People* 9 March 1935.
58. Ibid. 6 April 1935.
59. Ibid. 12 June 1937.
60. Ibid. 21 November 1936.

61. Kiely 73.
62. Other members of the Committee included Emelda Clarke, Nathan Williams, Justin James, John Ramsay, Beatrice Jonas, George Bruce, Veronica Jonas and Wilfred Bruce. *People* 17 March 1934.
63. *People* 2 May, 23 May 1936. Thousands of Tobagonians were expected at the May Day observance.
64. Bernard S. Tappin, "Pope versus the King – The Divorce Controversy in Trinidad in 1931," *Antilia* 3 (1987): 31.
65. Singh, *Race and Class* 150.
66. The failure of the rice crop in 1934 led to an unforeseen number of labourers seeking employment on the estate. Memorandum from Colonel A.S. Mavrogordato, Inspector General of Constabulary, in Despatch from Grier to Cunliffe-Lister, 28 July 1934. CO 295/585. The drought affected the rice fields of Indian labourers and the "stormcentres" of protest were the Chaguanas and Caroni estates. Note by J. Rootham, 28 July 1934. See also Despatch from Grier to Cunliffe-Lister, 21 August 1934. CO 295/585. For more on the origins of the protest see Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 122–123. Also Bolland, *On the March* 85.
67. Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 127.
68. Surujpat Mathura, personal interview, 18 November 2003. He is the son of C.B. Mathura.
69. Samaroo, "Vanguard of Indian Nationalism" 6.
70. C.B. Mathura, letter, *People* 27 June 1936.
71. *People* 27 June 1936.
72. Samaroo et al., eds., *The Indian Contribution to Trinidad and Tobago* 149.
73. *People* 20 January 1934.
74. Ibid. 4 May 1935.
75. C.B. Mathura, "Indians and Their Political Status," *People* 15 August 1936. Mathura did not identify the persons who attempted to form Indian working-class organizations. Possibly they included Indians who were disillusioned with the ineffectiveness and failure of the TLP to adequately identify with their problems.
76. Mathura interview.
77. C.B. Mathura, "Why should Indians and Negroes Unite," *The Socialist* October 1935.
78. *People* 15 August 1936.
79. Ibid. 13 February 1937.
80. Ibid. 19 September 1936. The influx of thousands of Indians into the TLP during 1936 was reiterated in Mathura's "New Year's Message" for 1937. *People* 2 January 1937.
81. *People* 25 May 1935.
82. Ibid.
83. The sub-committee comprised Cipriani as Chairman, Aubrey James as Secretary, other members included L.A. Pujadas, Geo. Chambers, Hugo Mentor, Alfred Richards, Audrey Jeffers and M. Rigsby. *People* 19 October 1935.
84. *People* 21 March 1936.
85. Ibid. 2 May 1936.
86. Ibid. 18 July 1936.
87. Confidential Despatch from Ormsby-Gore to Fletcher. Enclosure no. 2 in Trinidad Despatch no. 247, 15 May 1937. CO 295/597.

88. Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 153.
89. Ibid. 162.
90. See Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 251. An article by "vigilantes" stated that those persons within the TLP who attempted to be independent in their thinking were identified by Cipriani as "Communists" *New Dawn* February 1941, 6.
91. W.R.Jacobs, "The Politics of Protest in Trinidad: The Strikes and Disturbances of 1937," *Caribbean Studies* 17 (1977):19. "Increasing dissatisfaction with his authoritarian leadership and the lack of results in the crisis of the depression led to serious challenges and divisions in the TLP over the next few years, when a series of demonstrations and strikes led up to the rebellion of 1937." cited in Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 147. See also Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 158.
92. *People* 19 February 1938.
93. Blades interview.
94. Ramdin 93–94.
95. C.L.R. James assessed Cipriani's work primarily as that of a reformer. James 103. Also Ramdin 95. See also Williams 220–224.
96. Basdeo, "Indian Participation in Labour Politics" 16. Also Bolland, *On the March* 88. A few months prior to the TCL's formation, Rienzi formed the Citizens Welfare League. Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 152.
97. Secret Despatch from Fletcher to Ormsby-Gore, 7 July 1937. CO 295/599.
98. Cited in Hackshaw 21.
99. Ramdin 94
100. Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 153.
101. Secret Despatch from Fletcher to Ormsby-Gore, 24 October 1937. Confidential Despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State1937. National Archives, Trinidad. Also Kelvin Singh, "The June 1937 Disturbances in Trinidad," *The Trinidad Labour Riots of 1937-Perspectives 50 Years Later*, ed. Roy Thomas (St Augustine: Extra Mural Studies, 1987) 70. Singh, *Race and Class* 170. Singh, "Rienzi and the Labour Movement" 14.
102. Cited in Hackshaw 21.
103. Lewis, *Growth of the Modern West Indies* 203. Williams 224.
104. *TG* 16 September 1937.
105. *Report of the Commission on Trinidad Disturbances 1937* (London, 1938), (hereafter cited as the *Forster Report*) 9.
106. Letter from Cipriani to Middleton, 5 July 1937. TUC Library, U of North London.
107. Letter from John Maffey to Geo. Huggins, 24 June 1937. CO 295/599.
108. Enclosure no. 1 A & WI submission to Secretary of the Admiralty, 2 August 1937. CO 295/599.
109. *Barbados Observer* 30 October 1937 cited in Charles Kunsman, "The Origins and Development of Political Parties in the British West Indies," diss., University of California, Berkley, 1966, 289.
110. Letter from Cipriani to Gillies, 19 November 1937. TUC Library, University of North London.
111. Ibid.
112. Ramdin 142–143. Mention is made of two unions registered before 1937. H. Johnson, "The Political Uses of Commissions of Enquiry: The Forster

and Moyne Commission," *Trinidad Labour Riots* ed. Thomas 269. Also Rennie 113.

113. Letter from C. James Harris to Citrine, 25 May 1938. TUC Library, University of North London.
114. Letter from Emile Jones to Citrine, 20 October 1937. Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick. In 1937, a similar group (though independent of the TLP) was formed which also sought trade union status – the Trinidad and Tobago Union of Shop Assistants and Clerks. Ramdin 142.
115. Letter from Harris to Citrine, 25 May 1937. TUC Library, University of North London.
116. Circular from the OWTU to the TLP, 23 August 1937. *People* 19 February 1938.
117. Letter from the TLP to the OWTU, 25 August 1937. *People* 19 February 1938.
118. Letter from Cipriani to Mary Sutherland, 13 October 1937. TUC Library, University of North London.
119. Letter from Cipriani to Citrine, 19 November 1937. TUC Library, University of North London.
120. The West India Committee was located at 14 Trinity Square, London. The body was established before 1750 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1904. It functioned as an association of British individuals and firms who agreed to promote the interests of trade, manufacturing and agricultural industries of the British West Indies.
121. Huggins referred to Cipriani's organization as the "Workingmen's Association" even though it had been converted, by 1937, to the Trinidad Labour Party. Confidential notes of a meeting between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and a deputation of the West India Committee held at the Colonial Office on 3 July 1937. CO 295/599. See also Confidential Despatches from the Secretary of State to the Governor 1937. National Archives, Trinidad.
122. Confidential notes of a meeting between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and a deputation of the West India Committee held at the Colonial Office on 3 July 1937. CO 295/599.
123. Semi-official letter from Fletcher to Ormsby Gore, 10 August 1937. CO 295/600.
124. *People* 18 September 1937. A few weeks later, Isaiah Joseph replied to Cumberbatch's criticisms. Joseph stated that the Burial Scheme had 63 member contributors and three payments were made. He also claimed that since Cumberbatch was both a member of the TWA and also the managing committee of the Arima branch, he should have been aware of the management policy of these welfare funds. *People* 9 October 1937. In the controversy, Cumberbatch replied and accused Joseph of not speaking the truth when he reported that the contributions were disbursed through the Burial Scheme. *People* 16 October 1937.
125. *People* 25 September 1937.
126. Letter from Citrine to Roland Sawyer, 3 November 1937. TUC Library, University of North London.
127. Letter from Citrine to Sawyer, 3 November 1937. TUC Library, University of North London.

128. *Hansard* (Commons Debates) 7 July 1937.
129. Ibid.
130. *Hansard* 1 April 1938. See also *the Socialist* April 1938.
131. Ibid.
132. The resolution was signed by J.M.T. Roberts (President-General) and Sylvester Patrick (Secretary). Despatch from Fletcher to Ormsby-Gore, 23 October 1937. CO 295/600. This meeting of the FWTU was held at the Philmore Hall (corner of Duke and George Streets), Port-of-Spain. *People* 2 October 1937.
133. Ibid. 21 August 1937.
134. *People* 4 September 1937. Both Cipriani and Roodal were on the Wages Advisory Board Committee and they signed a recommendation that the difference in weekly wages of the workers in Port-of-Spain who earned $3.00 and the workers in the rural areas who earned $2.78 was a fair situation. *People* 16 October 1937. A letter to the editor signed by an oil worker from Palo Seco highlighting Cipriani's alleged hypocrisy in advocating a fair day's wage for a fair day's work yet the TLP leader did not condemn the difference in wages. *People* 6 November 1937.
135. *People* 4 September 1937.
136. Ibid. 10 July 1937.
137. Ibid. 30 October 1937.
138. Ibid. 5 November 1938.
139. Williams 223–224.
140. *Socialist* April 1938.
141. Rawle Farley, *The Caribbean Trade Unionist* (British Guiana: Daily Chronicle, 1957) 14.
142. *New Dawn* February 1941, 8.
143. The WINP was based in South Trinidad and formed by David Pitt and Roy Joseph. Gerald Wight formed the Progressive Democratic Party in 1945. The United Front was formed by Jack Kelshall in early 1946. In 1941, the Socialist Party of Trinidad and Tobago was founded by Rienzi.
144. *Report of the United States Commission to Study Social and Economic Conditions in the British West Indies* appointed by the President of the United States on 13 November 1940 (hereafter cited as the *Taussig Report*) 74.
145. *New Dawn* February 1941, 6.
146. *TG* 19 January 1943. Two of the speakers were Julien Brathwaite and C.B. Mathura.
147. *TG* 2 February 1945.
148. On 26 April 1945, at a meeting of the TLP, Liberty Hall, Roodal was elected as President-General of the Party. *TG* 28 April 1945. See also Michael Anthony, *Port-of-Spain in a World at War 1939–1945* (Port-of-Spain: Columbus Publishers, 1983) 257. Williams 224.
149. Patrick Solomon, *Solomon: An Autobiography* (Port-of-Spain: Inprint Caribbean Limited, 1981) 134–135. Hamel-Smith contested the Tobago seat in the 1946 elections and lost to A.P.T. James. Hamel-Smith later served as Mayor of Port-of-Spain in the early 1950s.
150. *POSG* 17 March 1948.
151. *TG* 6 October 1950.

6 Demands for Self-Government and Federation

1. Ayearst 31. The Leeward Islands comprised Antigua, St Kitts-Nevis, Anguilla, Montserrat, British Virgin Islands and Dominica. The Windwards comprised St Vincent, Grenada, St Lucia and Tobago.
2. Ayearst 29, 32.
3. Responsible government was granted to White settler colonies such as Australia in 1855, New Zealand in 1856, Cape Colony in 1872 and Natal in 1893.
4. In 1900 the Commonwealth of Australia was formed and Dominion status granted to New Zealand in 1907. By 1910, the Union (not federation) of South Africa was in existence.
5. Hayes 635.
6. Ibid. 637–638.
7. James A. Williamson, *The British Empire and Commonwealth* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1954) 296.
8. Ibid. 371.
9. Alfred Richards, *Trinidad Discovery Day Celebrations 1498–1927* (Port-of-Spain: Trinidad Government Printers, 1927) 97. Richards estimated that 13,000 persons attended the meeting. This may be an exaggeration since the TWA had only been recently revived.
10. Minutes and notes of a meeting among Howard-Bishop, Spoor and Wood at the Colonial Office on 18 August 1921. CO 295/541.
11. Hayes 760. Germany returned Alsace-Loraine to France; and also northern Schleswig to Denmark. The Polish districts of Prussia were surrendered to the new Polish Republic; Danzig was made a separate city state, a free city in which Poland was given special rights to use the seaport since it had no seaport.
12. *Labour Leader* 15 June 1929.
13. Ibid. 22 June 1929.
14. Ibid.
15. "A Progressive Step,"editorial, *Labour Leader* 21 September 1929.
16. *People* 15 July 1933.
17. *Labour Leader* 14 June 1930, 5 July 1930. Also Sahadeo Basdeo, *Labour Organisation and Reform* 152. Webber was member of the Court of Policy and well-known in British Guiana's labour movement.
18. Malmsten 181.
19. Memorandum of the TWA, 27 May 1930. TUC Library, University of North London. The 'Dominion' was a replica of the British government with a Governor-General instead of the King, a senate in place of the House of Lords, and an elected legislature in place of the House of Commons to which a cabinet of ministers was responsible.
20. *POSG* 18 November 1932. Cipriani's speech was originally published in the *Dominica Tribune*.
21. *People* 24 August 1940.
22. Charlie Whitham, "Sore Thumbs and Beachcombers: Britain, the War Debt, and the Cession of the British West Indies, July 1938-May 1940," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25 (September 1997): 467.
23. Whitham 468.

24. Britain's overall public debt to America and other creditors in 1920 was about 40 billion dollars. Hayes 779.
25. Europe appealed to the United States to assist in the economic crisis of the Great Depression which began in October 1929. The US President, Hubert C. Hoover therefore granted a moratorium which suspended for one year the Allies' war debt to the United States.
26. *TG* 18 February 1932. In May 1934, the US Congress passed the Johnson Act which stated that countries which defaulted on loans from the United States would be denied further loans.
27. *People* 2 December 1939.
28. *United Empire* May 1912, 356.
29. Ibid. 830.
30. Ibid. May 1914, 380.
31. Memorandum of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association with regard to the Federation of the British West Indies, 10 January 1919. Chancellor to Milner in Enclosure no. 1 in Trinidad Despatch no. 102, 10 March 1919. CO 295/520.
32. Letter and Memorandum from Sir Edward Davson, Chairman of the Associated West Indian Chambers of Commerce, to the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated 4 August 1921 cited in Ann Spackman, *Constitutional Development in the West Indies 1922–1968: A Selection From the Major Documents* (Barbados: Caribbean University Press, 1975) 269.
33. *Wood Report* 32.
34. *The Beacon* December 1931, 1.
35. *Labour Leader* 13 July 1929.
36. Ayearst 228. Also Allister Hinds, "Federation and Political Representation in the Eastern Caribbean 1920–1934." Paper read at the Henry Sylvestre Williams Pan-African Conference, January 2001, University of the West Indies, St Augustine, 10.
37. Address by the Governor of the Windward Islands to the Grenada Legislative Council, 3 November 1922 cited in Spackman 278–279.
38. Reply by members of the General Legislative Council to the address by the Governor of the Leeward Islands, 28 April 1931 cited in Spackman 284.
39. Report of the West Indian Conference, 1926 cited in Spackman 273.
40. *Labour Leader* 26 January 1929.
41. *West Indies Report of the Closer Union Commission* April 1933 (London: HMSO, 1933) iv.
42. *POSG* 1 November 1932.
43. *POSG* 17 November 1932.
44. *POSG* 1 November 1932.
45. Cited in Emmanuel 114.
46. Malmsten 188–189.
47. Emmanuel 114. The conference's participants wanted "effective control over public expenditure by representatives of the people." Hinds 15.
48. *POSG* 18 November 1932. Cipriani's speech was reprinted from the *Dominica Tribune*.
49. *TG* 10 January 1933.
50. *TG* 2 February 1933.

51. Ayearst 36.
52. The Commissioners were Sir Charles Fergusson, Macfeill Campbell and Sir Charles Orr. At an earlier West Indian Conference held in Barbados in 1929, delegates considered the formation of a West Indian university, the development of agriculture in the region and the need for improved aviation and shipping. Support was given to the promotion of closer contact among the islands to foster "intercolonial unity and cooperation." See S.Ramphal, "Federalism in the West Indies," *Caribbean Quarterly* 6 (1960): 221.
53. *Report of Closer Union Commission* 3.
54. Speech delivered on 10 January 1933 at the Council Chamber, Court House, St Vincent. The text was published in the *POSG* 26 January 1933.
55. *Report of Closer Union Commission* 7. Hinds argues: "The commissioners were not convinced of the sincerity of the black and coloured intelligentsia's demand for a federation." Hinds 16.
56. *Report of Closer Union Commission* 32. Also Lewis, *Growth of the West Indies* 344.
57. *Hansard* 10 April 1931.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. *Report of Closer Union Commission* 6.
61. *People* 12 August 1933.
62. Ibid. 2 September 1933.
63. Ibid. 9 September 1933.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid. 23 September 1933.
66. Emmanuel 116.
67. Malmsten 189.
68. Statement by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on Closer Union proposals for the West Indies, 31 October 1934 cited in Spackman 290.
69. *People* 30 March 1940.
70. Ibid. 24 February 1940.
71. *Hansard* 20 December 1940.
72. *The Vanguard* 19 June 1965.
73. *Labour Leader* 28 March 1931.
74. *The Beacon* December 1931, 1.
75. Extract of Minutes in despatch from Hollis to Passfield, 8 October 1930. CO 295/570. Drummond Shiels was the Labour Party representative and spokesman for the Party on colonial affairs. The demand for self-government by the TWA was not well-received by Gilbert Grindle, chief clerk of the Colonial Office, who expressed a racist and biased opinion: "The vivid imagination of the Negro tends to hypnotize him with words that he uses without understanding their meaning. I suggest, therefore, that the despatch should explain what 'self-government' means and tell them plainly they are not going to have it." Singh, *Race and Class* 155.
76. Malmsten 188.
77. Ibid. Olivier served as Colonial Secretary and Governor of Jamaica and also served as Chairman of the sugar commission during 1929–1930.

78. Lee 196.
79. Ibid.
80. *Memo From CIO* 4.
81. Ibid.
82. Cited in *People* 27 January 1940.
83. Williamson 403.
84. Lee 2.
85. *Hansard* 13 July 1945.
86. Dos Santos based his resolution on the despatch received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies. For summary of despatch see *Hansard* 13 July 1945.
87. *Hansard* 13 July 1945.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.
93. Cited in Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 479.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid. 490.
96. Hart represented the People's National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Trade Union Council (JTUC). The JTUC was formed in 1939 on Walter Citrine's advice to co-ordinate trade unionism in Jamaica.
97. *POSG* 20 September 1945.
98. Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 482.
99. Ibid.
100. Speech of Alexander Bustamante from Proceedings of the Conference of the Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies, Montego Bay, Jamaica, 11–19 September 1947 cited in Spackman 309–310.
101. Cited in Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 482.
102. Lewis, *Growth of the West Indies* 345.
103. West Indian integration also found expression in professional organizations and 'prefederal' institutions: (a) one of the earliest of the professional organizations was the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the West Indies (1917) which promoted trade among the colonies and sought to develop inter-island transport. (b) The West Indies and British Guiana Teachers' Union was formed in 1935. Its first President was T.E. Beckles of the Trinidad Teachers' Union (c) The first West Indian Press Conference was held in January 1929 in Barbados. In attendance was T.A. Marryshow of Grenada's *West Indian*, A.R.F. Webber of the *New Daily Chronicle* in British Guiana and one delegate from the *Voice of St. Lucia*. See *People* 31 August 1935, 7 September 1935. (d) Similar associations included the Civil Service Federation formed in 1944, which fought against the colour bar in the colonial service and encouraged the unification of the civil service in the region. Other 'pre-federal' institutions included the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture and in 1948, the formation of the University of the West Indies. Also promoting regional co-operation was the Caribbean Bar Association and the West Indian Meteorological Service.

104. David C. Browne, "The Workingmen's Association (W.M.A) in Barbados 1927–1939." Paper read at the annual conference of the Association of Caribbean Historians, April 2003, Puerto Rico, 8.
105. *People* 23 September 1933.
106. Ibid.
107. Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 246. Marryshow visited St Vincent on 3 August 1936.
108. The BGLU was founded on 11 January 1919. By December 1919, the BGLU had a membership of 7,000 persons. Bolland, *On the March* 21. Apparently, by 1925 the membership of the BGLU had declined to 1,100 persons, mainly due to unemployment. *Report of the First British Commonwealth Labour Conference* July–August 1925, 82.
109. *Negro World* 23 August 1924.
110. Basdeo, "British Caribbean Working Class Cooperation" 49.
111. Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 2.
112. Malmsten 174.
113. Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 52–53. F.O. Roberts was a Labour parliamentarian for West Bromich and a trade unionist who also served in the First Labour Government as Minister of Pensions.
114. Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 475. Also Basdeo, "British Caribbean Working Class Cooperation" 51.
115. Basdeo, "British Caribbean Working Class Cooperation" 50–51. Also Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 67. Emmanuel 105.
116. *Daily Argosy* 13 January 1926. Also Malmsten 175.
117. Basdeo, "British Caribbean Working Class Cooperation" 53.
118. Hayes 811–812.
119. See *TG* 2 June 1938. *POSG* 9 June 1938.
120. The Guianese and West Indian Federation of Trade Unions and Labour Parties (GWIFTULP) was formed at the 1926 labour conference in British Guiana. However, the organization existed only on paper and failed to develop links among the region's trade unions.
121. Cited in Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 475. Also Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 218.
122. The Executive comprised: Cipriani (President) from Trinidad, two Vice-Presidents-A.A. Thorne of British Guiana and J.H. Helstone of Suriname. The General Secretary was Rienzi (Trinidad) with Critchlow (British Guiana) serving as Assistant Secretary. The Committee members included Ralph Mentor (Trinidad) and J Van Eer (Suriname).
123. Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 476. Also Basdeo, *Labour Organization and Reform* 218–219. A similar attempt at unity occurred in East Africa where White European settlers preferred the unification of Uganda, Tanganiyaka and Kenya into a single, self-governing unit in which they would be able to control its policy. However, colonial officials and members of the British Labour Party opposed this idea of a closer union because it did not appear to reinforce Britain's power. Michael D. Callahan, "The Failure of Closer Union in British East Africa," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 2 (1997): 267. Also N.J. Westcott, "Closer Union and the future of East Africa, 1939–1948," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 1 (1981): 67–68.

124. *POSG* 26 February 1944.
125. The Conference was held during 17–27 September 1945, comprising twenty-three delegates representing nine colonies. The conference was opened by J.D. Rankine, Acting Governor of Barbados who appealed for improved labour relations and increased efficiency. *WICC* October 1945, 191.
126. Delegates were from Antigua – Vere Bird, Harold T.Wilson and J. Oliver Davis; Bermuda – Dr E.F. Gordon; Jamaica-Richard Hart representing the PNP and the Jamaica TUC (Bustamante was invited, but he did not reply); St Lucia and St Vincent – St Clair Bonadie and George McIntosh; Barbados-Adams, Springer and Frank Walcott (Wynter Crawford's union was not represented); Grenada – G.A Glean and T.A Marryshow; British Guiana – Critchlow, Lee and Thorne (absent was representation from the Man-Power and Citizens' Association (MPCA), the main union for Guianese sugar workers); Trinidad and Tobago – Gomes, Henry, Dudley Mahon, C.B. Mathura, Mentor, McDonald Moses and T.E. Simpson (Butler's party and union were not represented) Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 478.
127. Jon Kofas, "U.S. Foreign Policy and the World Federation of Trade Unions, 1944–1948," *Diplomatic History* 26 (2002): 33.
128. Kofas 22.
129. The Soviet All Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU) represented 30 million workers. Kofas 23.
130. Kofas 58.
131. Bolland, *Politics of Labour* 488.

Conclusion

1. Cited in *OWTU brochure* 15.
2. R.M. MacIver, *The Web of Government* (New York: The Free P, 1965) 252–253.
3. Prime Minister of England 1916–1922 (Member of Parliament 1906–915).
4. See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963) 38–40.

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Index