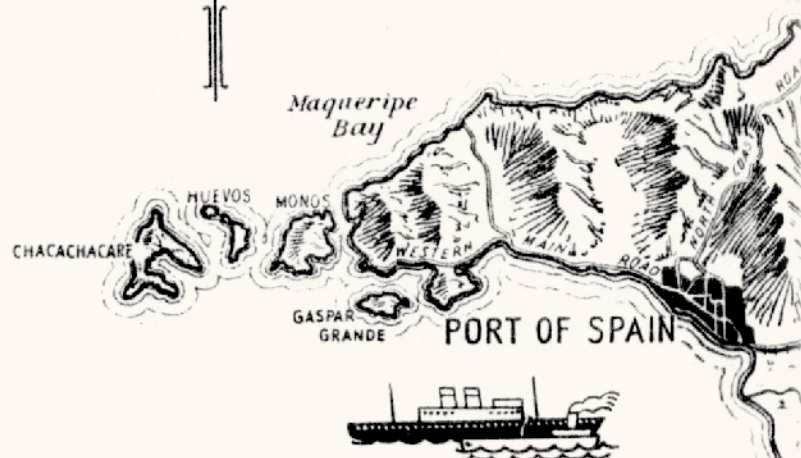


C A R I B B E A N



S E A



MAP OF
TRINIDAD
SHOWING PRINCIPAL
OILFIELDS, REFINERIES
& FACILITIES

G U L F

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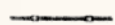
P A R I A

SCALE
MILE 1 0 1 2 3 4 5 10 MILES

LEGEND



Oilfield Areas



Major Pipe Lines

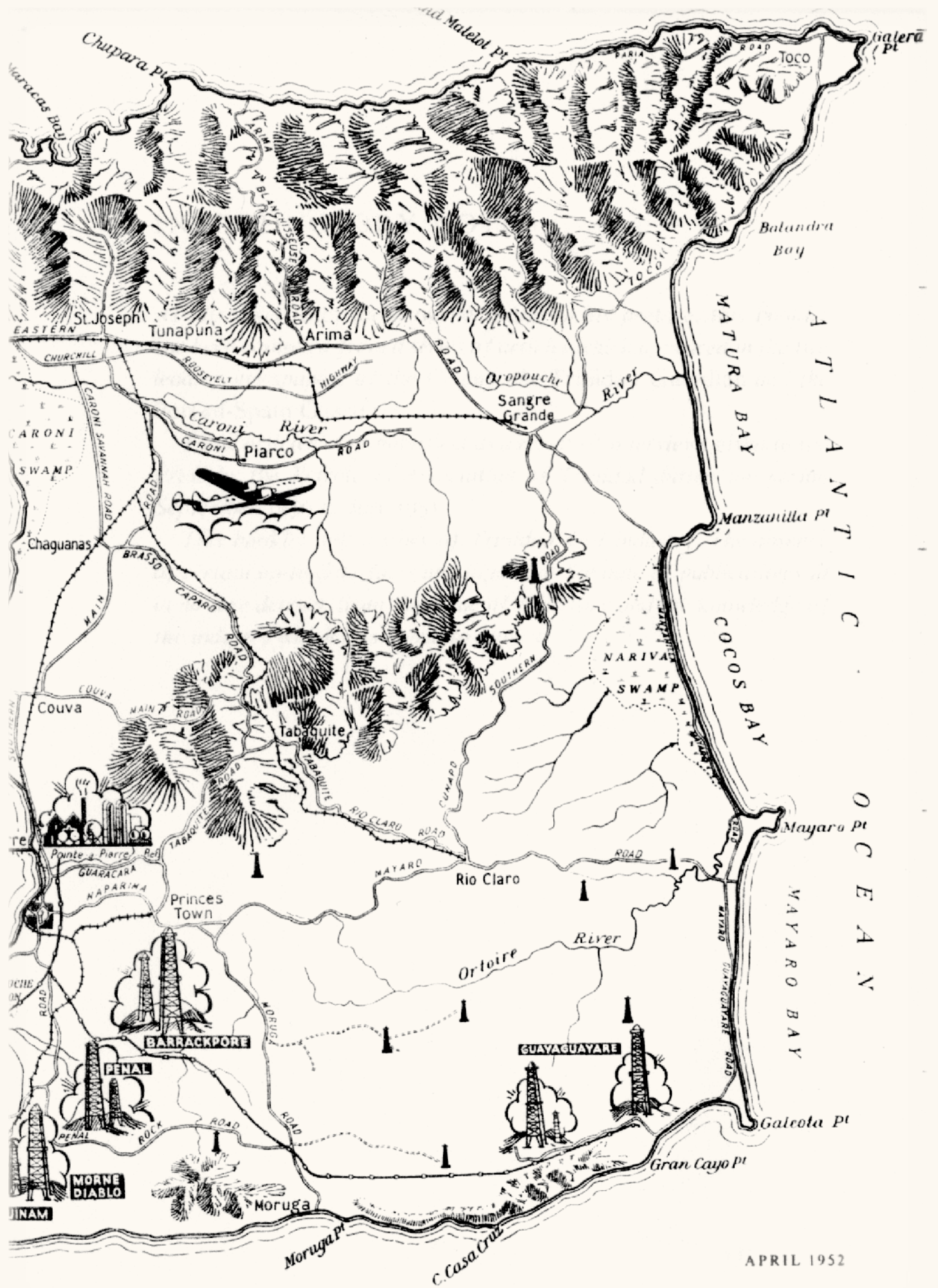


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APRIL 1952

Black Gold Part 3: The Road to Independence

By Gérard A. Besson

In the winning of the war, Great Britain was now the poor man of the world and had lost the will to dominate world affairs. That role would increasingly be assumed by the United States

It was now quite a different time altogether. The end of the Second World War had brought with it victory for the Allied cause. This had been accomplished by the gallantry of the few in the service of a great many. Their effort had been harnessed to the devastating combination of high technology, invention and unrivalled productive capacity. The war had catapulted the world into a new age. With the creation of radar and the dramatic advances in aviation and, as we have seen, in the production of high octane aircraft fuel technologies, the Battle of Britain and other battles, on land and on the high seas, had been won.

But other inventions of the times foreshadowed a more dramatic future. This may have been indicated when it was learned how the code used by the German High Command during the war might be broken. This achievement was, to a considerable degree, the success of the British Post Office Research Establishment in the building of

'Colossus', the first electronic computer which had produced the acceleration in the analysis process that served to crack the German and Japanese military and naval codes.

But even more dramatic, indeed deadly and world-altering, was the atomic bomb. The war had catapulted the human race into an astounding future, one that lay beyond the furthest imagining of all those who had started on this venture into 'The Modern' before the turn of the 19th century, which had been inaugurated by the industrial revolution. The beginning of the end of the colonial era had commenced in a manner that now, in hindsight, may be seen as tragic. In the winning of the war, Great Britain was now the poor man of the world and, as been suggested by some, had lost the will to dominate world affairs. That role would increasingly be assumed by the United States of America.

There was to be a changing of the guard. In the oil industry in Trinidad the signal for this was the change



A view of downtown Port of Spain looking north from the Harbour Master's office tower in the 1930s. Basically unchanged since the 19th century

of ownership of the Trinidad Leaseholds Company. This had been our 'Colossus,' for as in ancient times all roads led to Rome, all pipelines in Trinidad led to Trinidad Leaseholds' refineries at Pointe-a-Pierre. The owners, the shareholders and the Board of Directors that had led the company through the war years and had been a part of heroic world events, were now prepared to sell their greatly valued asset, no doubt at a very good price. As historian George Higgins was to say, Chairman Simon J. Vos retired with a golden handshake for a job well done.

The company was acquired by the Texas Company, who had made a modest entry into Trinidad oil as far back as 1912, and who had become associated with the McColl Frontinac interest at the Antilles fields in 1938. In 1946 they had made a processing agreement with Trinidad Leaseholds for the refining of their imported crudes that came from the Colombian and Venezuelan fields. In 1949 they purchased an institution in the oil industry

in Trinidad, Brighton Terminal Ltd and the 5,000 bpd refinery, from the Barbour Oil Company of New York and as such had the right to use the Brighton Jetty, owned by the Trinidad Lake Asphalt Company. They could now import crude, ship out product or supply bunkers.

This would be followed by: the building of the cat-cracker in 1952; the acquisition by Texaco, as the company would be known, in 1956, when the refinery throughput was about 80,000 barrels a day (b/d); the quadrupling of production since then with the addition of a Rexformer, hydrotreater, and a second platformer; the conversion of the old Dubbs units to additional topping units; and the addition of a massive 150,000 b/d topping plant, followed by additional plants for the production of such petrochemicals as benzene, toluene, cyclohexane and normal paraffins, and the commissioning of the first lubricating oil manufacturing plant.

These events were significant in the sense that ►

There was to be a changing of the guard. In the oil industry in Trinidad the signal for this was the change of ownership of the Trinidad Leaseholds Company



Left is the new telegraph tower, one of two that would dominate the city's skyline for the next 20 years

The Second World War saw the birth of the steel band. It was both an innovation in musical expression and a social explosion in Trinidad

► they would speak, over the next few years, of fundamental change in the management of the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery – at a time when the politics of nationalism was ushering in independence movements all across the British Empire. The Oilfield Workers Trade Union (OWTU), which was now led by John Rojas, registered its concerns. These had to do with the manner in which the workers would be treated by the new management. The union was concerning itself with the racial prejudice they were expecting to receive at the hands of yet another set of European bosses, and in a series of protest meetings sought to highlight the racial confrontations taking place in the Southern States of the United States, perhaps making the point that the South African brand of racism that had been identified by them in the oilfields, was to be replaced with a Deep South, Dixie variety, reflecting the notion that one brand of imperialism was to be replaced by another.

It was George Higgins' opinion that "It would appear that there had been undertakings given to Government by the Texas Company with regard to dealing with workers. No one was clear as to how these would work out or what exactly those undertakings were. What was clear was that the

company had spent a great deal of money in acquiring the refinery and all that came with it and as such felt convinced that it would be an extremely profitable venture." In the decade after the war, Trinidad and Tobago experienced general economic growth. The oil industry, linked to the international market in which Texaco was a player, powered the economy, which in turn benefited other sectors. Trinidad increasingly became a classic petroleum economy, always dangerously dependent on oil for export earnings and for government revenues.

The American bases had created thousands of jobs, absorbing almost 20 per cent of the entire labour force. There was a buoyancy in the economy, coming to some extent from consumer spending that was driven by the comparatively high salaries paid out by the Americans to local workers and staff and by the spending of the American servicemen themselves.

From sweet crude to sweet pan

In the beginning there had been the intrauterine beat, and the eye went in search of it and found it in the belly of a drum. A primal urge fulfilled.

Colonial life had banned the drum; it had become too disturbing in the night. But rhythm in the blood demanded expression. At first they were found, sometimes stolen, begged and bartered for. Steel drums. They came from the oilfields, from the American bases, from the sky, like cargo.

The politician Albert Gomes in his autobiography *Through a Maze of Colour* wrote: "The Second World War saw the birth of the steel band. It was both an innovation in musical expression and a social explosion in Trinidad. It also provided an unparalleled instance of puritan humbug. It would be impossible to trace the origins of the steel bands. These must always remain shrouded in mystery and a subject of endless speculation – all things considered, a not surprising genesis for this musical aberration and gimcrack orchestration, whose romantic odyssey spans an arc of picaresque adventure that began in the slum areas in Port of Spain, recently reached Cape Kennedy, and is still orbiting." ►

The 55-gallon oil drum would be made concave by dropping an 18th century cannon ball on it. The deeper the sink the larger the surface area on which to produce more notes. The thinner the metal from the stretching, the higher the notes. The notes are carefully marked out on it, each one brought to just the right key





Above: A postcard from the mid-1940s showing a very early steel band using paint cans and biscuit tins as musical instruments.

Middle: A postcard from the 1950s
Below: The Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra performing at the 1951 Festival of Britain



*Take a rusty,
discarded oil
drum, a heavy
cannon ball,
a blazing fire,
a hammer for
the fine tuning,
plenty noise, a
pair of strong
arms, a musical
ear, and you get
a sound that
is so soft and
tinkling that
it could be the
sound track
to Peter Pan's
flying fairy,
Tinker Bell*

► The steel band, the oil industry and wartime Trinidad all hang together in the collective memory of many who were not even there.

The quantity of 55 gallon oil barrels that appeared, their unique similarity to one another, so original in iron, in a world that was still wooden, mostly. They were modern and came from far away; flattened, they could become fence material or serve as roofing.

Mostly they were water barrels, as found objects they were recyclables, and as such could be transformed into any thing and made to tell a story. It was an aesthetic experience, a cross-cultural process – as well as an economic and political one – which was defined by the act of recovering and transforming the detritus of the industrial age, into hand made objects of renewed meaning, utility, devotion, and capable of producing sound of arresting beauty.

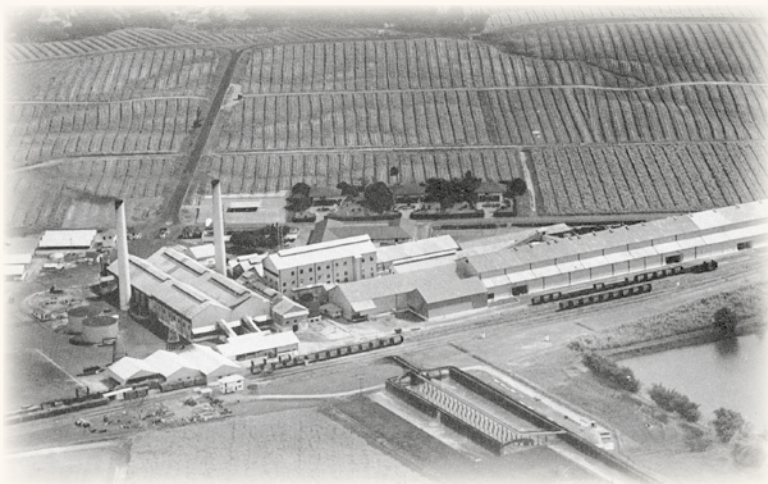
They say, one is never sure, that the steel band started in 1937 or '38 when the 'Alexander Ragtime Band' from New Town, formerly the 'Calvary Tamboo Bamboo Band', came out to play. Their leader was Lord 'Humbugger' Carlton Ford. He had with him as tuner Victor 'Tutie' Wilson. The pans were first made of paint tins, biscuit tins, linseed oil tins, carbide pans, zinc buckets and dust bin covers. These would all be called 'pans'. Tuned into two notes, they were beaten furiously and rhythmically together to the sound of bamboo poles striking on the ground. What a novelty! What a spectacle! No wonder they caught on in a place like Trinidad, where every thing is possible. A year later, the pan craze brought forth many more similar bands. The boys from Hell Yard, on Charlotte Street in Port of Spain, they

say discovered it, one 'Big Head Hamil' to be precise. As you see it is esoteric, and shrouded in mystery. Winston 'Spree' Simon indisputably played his famous 'God Save The King' on a 'ping pong' for the Governor in 1946, so his 'John John' band which was called 'Destination Tokyo', is traditionally given the cake. But it was the 55 gallon oil barrel that stole the show.

Take a rusty, discarded oil drum, a heavy cannon ball, a blazing fire, a hammer for the fine tuning, plenty noise, a pair of strong arms, a musical ear, and you get a sound that is so soft and tinkling that it could be the sound track to Peter Pan's flying fairy, Tinker Bell, or it could be a thundering pulse-racing sound, pounding in your ears, reverberating in your belly, playing Ravel's Bolero. It had emerged from the barrack yards of the slums, it was immediately recognised by the youth of all origins as unique to them, it readily crossed all barriers and belonged to everyone. It was, and rightly so, the only acoustic musical instrument discovered in the twentieth century; and it came from the oil, from Trinidad and Tobago, the Land of the Hummingbird.



An aerial view of Port of Spain in the 1950s. The city's sporting facilities feature with the Queen's Park Oval, at front, right, with its famous wicket at its centre. Left: King George V Park, and just beyond it, the Queen's Royal College sports ground, and at the top, the Queen's Park Savannah with its horse racing facilities, innumerable cricket grounds and football fields. Several sporting clubs made their homes in the Savannah



Brechin Castle sugar factory in south central Trinidad was for several years the largest of its kind in the Commonwealth. The sugar industry, with its agricultural way of life, was at the heart of Indian culture in T&T. As the Indo-Trinidadian segment of the population became increasingly politicised, it evolved towards a state of almost permanent opposition in Parliament. The sugar factory was nationalised in 1976 and eventually closed in 2006

The segmented society

In 1947 the colony's demographics tended to reflect both its past history and its future, in terms of economic and political development. A census taken at the time showed that there were 15,283 persons of European descent, 2.7 per cent (comprising British officials, businessmen and their families, as well as Trinidadians of European descent); 261,485 of African descent, 46.9 per cent; and East Indians at 195,747, representing 35.1 per cent. The Syrian-Lebanese population was 889 persons, 0.2 per cent; and the Chinese numbered 5,641, 1 per cent. Mixed-race or coloured totalled 78,775, 14.1 per cent, and who were a mixture of all the above, with 26 people representing the last of the tribal peoples, and 124 who couldn't say. The population then was 557,970 souls.

The colonial government, untroubled by this segmentation, in some instances encouraged an ethnicity-based pattern of economic development to take shape.

This loosely arranged itself along lines where many people of African descent, the descendants of the slaves and other Africans who had not been enslaved, almost 47 per cent of the population, were to be found in the lower echelons of all areas of the civil service and the police. Both of these services had grown incrementally as the colony's economy expanded. Very large numbers, in the tens of thousands, had come from the other islands of the Caribbean over the previous 100 years or so, particularly, as we have seen, in the 1920s and '30s when the oilfields were being opened up. A great many people of African descent

were self-employed as tradesmen and artisans, such as masons, barbers, carpenters, shoemakers, mechanics, drivers, and plumbers. They worked in the towns and for the trading companies in menial positions, a few as clerks. A great many were longshoremen who worked on the Port of Spain docks. Many were servants in the households of the Europeans as well as all others who could afford help. Some coloured people were in agriculture, owning cocoa estates, large and small. Some were vegetable farmers, but generally they were labourers. They were mostly Catholic in the first half of the 19th century, but with increasing immigration from the other islands, a larger and somewhat more socially upwardly mobile Protestant presence emerged. Some became teachers; it has been argued that the best of these were Methodists. Of these there were remarkable individuals who moulded the minds of their young charges with the highest ideals and a sense of social justice, and who gave to them an excellent grounding for entry into the ►

It had emerged from the barrack yards of the slums, it was immediately recognised by the youth of all origins as unique to them, it readily crossed all barriers and belonged to everyone

Education had produced the professionals, men who gained status and wealth in the practice of law, in medicine and increasingly in the sciences, including engineering

► university system of Great Britain. For it was only with an education that the barriers of race and class could be challenged. Concerned with and affected by colonial pressures, they formed 'movements' and entered politics in the context of the time.

Trinidad and Tobago had not experienced the complete 'colour bar' as was known in some other British territories.

This was because of the nature of its Spanish/French/African heritage where there were some individuals, even families who were socially white, at least in local eyes. This had to do with money, of course, but also with the extent to which these individuals had been educated and had assimilated European, English culture. With the right manners

and clothes, the right accent, and lots of hard work the deserving would be rewarded by the Crown with OBEs, MBEs, knighthoods and other imperial awards. This element would include some of the mixed, Afro-European or lightly coloured people, some 78,775, or 14.1 per cent of the overall population, who were by and large in the civil service or found jobs in offices as clerks, supervisors and accountants, and were shop attendants in the stores. Some were teaching, some in agriculture, a few in the professions. Having an education had produced the professionals, men who gained status and wealth in the practice of law, in medicine and increasingly in the sciences, including engineering. Some worked in the sugar industry, a few increasingly in the oil.

The majority of people of East Indian descent, who had arrived from 1845 to 1917, some 35 per cent, were to some considerable extent engaged in agriculture. The vast majority were Hindus, some were Muslims, many were converted to Presbyterianism. They were mostly labourers in the cane fields and were involved in farming, market gardens and animal husbandry. Although a few had become proprietors of plantations, cocoa as well as sugarcane, some were in the retail trades, owning rumshops and shops that sold food; a few were in transport, gas stations and construction. Two or three families owned cinemas. They increasingly entered the professions, becoming lawyers and doctors. The Indo-Trinidadians' rural, family-centred, religion-based lifestyle did not readily allow for the overall miscegenation that characterised the general population. Apart from being primarily rural-dwelling, they were strongly religious and their communities developed socially, religiously and occupationally separate from the Creole population (this term means everyone born in Trinidad, not Tobago, who is not of Indian descent). They entered politics slowly in the first decades of the 19th century. Their leaders – community, religious and labour – were preoccupied with their own concerns, because indentureship had kept them on the estates and their way of life ensured



A speech of welcome is read by the Governor of Trinidad and Tobago, Sir Edward Betham Beetham, KCMG, to HRH Princess Margaret (centre) on her arrival to inaugurate the West Indian Federation in 1958. On the right, Dr Eric Williams, Premier of Trinidad and Tobago, and members of his government



Left: After the collapse of the West Indian Federation in 1962, Trinidad and Tobago became independent. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, reads the Queen's speech at the opening of the first Parliament on Independence Day August 31, 1962. On her left, Lady Thelma Hochoy, on her right Sir Solomon Hochoy KCMG



Out of the colonial experience and mixed-race milieu would emerge a charismatic leader of remarkable ability and vision, Dr Eric Williams, T&T's first Prime Minister. He was admitted to the Privy Council in 1964, and unlike other West Indian Prime Ministers, disdaining a Knighthood, he accepted the more exclusive award of Companion of Honour in 1969. He relinquished these honours in 1976 when Trinidad and Tobago became a Republic within the Commonwealth

that they remained largely rural. This isolation was encouraged by the colonial government and the planters' lobby even after the indentureship system had ended in 1921.

The descendants of the resident European colonists were mostly involved in business and civil administration and agriculture. In the case of the British, the Scots had established themselves in the colony from the early 19th century, creating firms that were engaged in importing and exporting, retail, and distribution. Over time, joined by other British, they would become involved in the oil industry and light manufacturing, insurance, banking and real estate. The owners of these concerns would hold the nominated seats in the island's Legislative Council and to a degree influence local affairs. Some, over time, would form the English Creole society. They would be buttressed by the intransigent English, comprising officials, ranging from the Governor, the Colonial Secretary, down to various personnel in the Judiciary, colonial civil service, people who worked as artisans in the oil and in the sugar industry, the police on through to absentee landlords, vagabonds and 'remittance men'. A few stayed on to form

families; most left at independence. The English mingled less with the locals than the Scots. The Scots, however, being boilermakers on the sugar estates, took comfort with more than a wee 'drap' on windy, rainy nights...

The Trinidadians of Portuguese descent were largely in retail, owning and working in shops that sold food. Some were in the commission agency business, importing goods and exporting local produce. Others, coming from a background of blending and bottling spirits in Madeira, owned rumshops and bars. A few were gardeners, some were in clerking and worked for other Portuguese, and increasingly in the larger firms that were owned by the Scottish merchants. A handful entered the civil service, where one or two made it to the top. In a manner similar to the Indians their earliest arrivals, in 1849, had been indentured labourers. According to local prejudice they were not considered socially to be European, although they were. This had prevented social mobility, but had accommodated close, some would say intimate, ties with the general population. They were upwardly mobile, producing professionals ►

The Reform Movement came into existence largely as a reaction to British Crown Colony rule. It was out of its endeavour for self-determination, framed in nationalistic sentiment, that popular leaders were to emerge

► and individuals who became prominent as labour leaders and politicians.

To some extent apart from the English, but sharing in the prestige of pigment, were the French Creoles. This term included Irish, Spanish, Corsican and some German families that, being Catholic, had married into the French pioneer families of the late 18th century, most of whom were still socially and politically European. These clung to aristocratic notions of themselves that were largely imaginary but were expressed in stylish entertainments, gracious living and a more charming way of expressing their prejudices than the English. Being firstly agriculturist, the French Creoles had benefited from the cocoa boom and, reminded of better times, had spent their fortunes quickly. Having a fondness for amour they contributed considerably to the mixture of races in Trinidad. Two or three individuals entered the larger trading houses and were appointed to the boards that governed them. Three or four sat in the nominated seats of the Legislative Council, representing agricultural interests. A great many worked in the civil service, up until the 1950s, in

positions of responsibility that were controlled by the inevitable glass ceiling that affected all natives. Some worked in the sugar industry and increasingly in the oil, quite a few were in the professions and a great many functioned as clerks, accountants and managers in various offices. Quite a lot took Holy Orders in the Catholic Church and influenced education beneficially.

Despite their relatively small number, hardly more than thirty families, the French Creole culture left a lasting impression. It mostly expressed itself in religion, family life, keeping up with the Joneses and marrying one's cousins so as improve one's pedigree, and it proved surprisingly resilient to change. In attitudes to work and productivity, the French Creoles were far more relaxed than anyone else and in the pursuit of gaiety, particularly in the Carnival arts which permeated the society, they were extemporaneous.

The Chinese imported wives from China as well as other Asian specialities and exported the island's produce. They ran small retail outlets and groceries and increasingly larger ones, owned restaurants, steam laundries and bakeries. They produced some

*A day at the races:
HRH Princess Margaret is the centre of attention as all present try to catch the royal eye – all apart from Dr Eric Williams, Premier of Trinidad and Tobago, far left. The West Indian Federation will last only from 1958-62*



professionals and became Christians. Some were clerks, worked in banks, several were entrepreneurs and they more often than not employed other Chinese. They too enjoyed miscegenation, and with independence gave us our first local Governor General, Sir Solomon Hochoy.

Those from the Middle East, Syria and the Lebanon, were mostly Christian. They were all involved in the small retail trade. Many had started off as pedlars, several still were at the time of the census. Not perceived as socially or politically European, in the colonial milieu they were excluded from European and coloured middle class society, but instinctively entrepreneurial, and perhaps not being aware of, and certainly not allowing this isolation to interfere with reality, they proceeded to become enormously wealthy in the dry goods and other forms of enterprise particularly real estate. They had come mostly from small Christian enclaves in the Muslim Middle East and this was to contribute to some considerable degree to their non-involvement with the overall community, although like the Chinese and the Portuguese, they did interface elaborately and intimately with their customers. They too imported spouses.

This segmentation of the society in the years before independence was to some considerable degree encouraged by the British authorities. Nevertheless, it was accepted and participated in by the overall population and in many ways perpetuated after independence. The patterns of activity took some elements of the segments of the population, mainly Indians, Chinese, Portuguese, Syrians and the locally-descended Europeans increasingly into the professions and into entrepreneurial business activities and evident prosperity, and left some others seemingly to work forever for the government, in private concerns, as small owner-operators, or limited to the professions. This would come to affect the political landscape in the decades to come, a situation that would be further exacerbated by the monolithic petroleum-based economy that would dominate all others.

Party time

Dr Eric Eustace Williams founded the 'People's National Movement' in the early 1950s. History could argue that both he and the political party that has dominated Trinidad and Tobago for more than half a century had its roots ultimately in the Patois-speaking, Creole, free black and coloured intelligentsia of pre-emancipation days, and in the Afro-French reform movements of the later 19th century that had agitated against Crown Colony rule. This would be only partially right, however. Dr Williams, born in 1911, was a product of his environment, which was largely 19th century, but he was also a man of his times, which were the first decades of the 20th century.

The Reform Movement came into existence largely as a reaction to British Crown Colony rule. It was out of its endeavour for self-determination, framed in nationalistic sentiment, that popular leaders were to emerge.

One of these was Captain Arthur Andrew Cipriani, of European descent, who had styled himself as the defender of 'the barefoot man' and who went on to put backbone into the new-born trade union movement, the Trinidad Workingman's Association. The TWA was itself a product of the reformists and the forerunner of the trade union movement that in the 1930s had challenged the management of the oil companies and confronted the status quo. They had, through ardent militancy, brought about improved wages and working conditions in the oilfields and altered the social and political conditions in the colony. Challenged in his old age by the young, vigorous, outspoken and 'man of the people' Portuguese politician, intellectual and trade unionist Albert Gomes, the Captain faded eventually from the stage of local politics.

The Gomes years, important to the development of nationalism, stretched from the middle 1930s to the early 1960s, and came to an end with the failed Federation of the West Indies. This was the period when individuals, independents, middle-class trade unionists and a host of idealists, some ►

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The West Indian archipelago state and some of the statesmen who worked to create it in 1958. Albert Gomes of Trinidad and Tobago, third from the right seated, and Sir Norman Manley of Jamaica, third from the left seated. Jamaica left the Federation in 1962, followed by Trinidad and Tobago in the same year. Port of Spain served as the federal capital during its short existence. The proposed site had been the US Naval base at Chaguaramas, which at the time was occupied by US Forces. Its role had changed from a base to launch offensive attacks against German U-boats to an early warning system guarding the US from intercontinental ballistic attacks launched by the Soviet Union

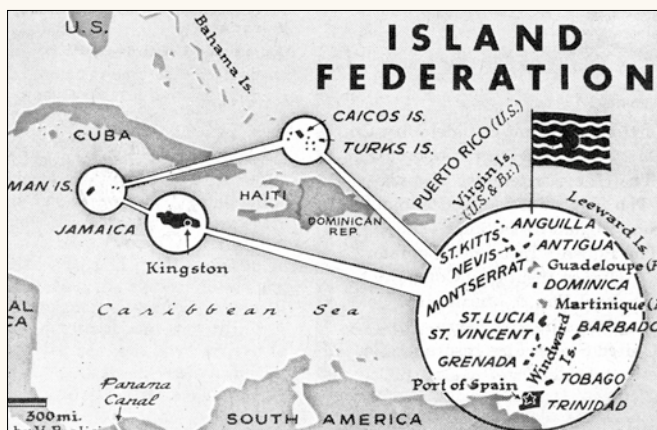
► really political opportunists, were allowed to play at politics by the Colonial Office. This is where Eric Williams appeared on the scene. He had proved himself eminent in scholarship, in debate and his command of language. He possessed the common touch. He was the locus of the entire French/African colonial experience, and it was felt by many of his constituents that he was arrogant enough to deal with both the British and French creole

establishment. His stature was messianic. What he said, what he did in those formative years are cast, to this day, in iron, immutable, or so it would appear.

Dr Williams took advantage of the post-war disenchantment of the 'Gomes government' and its loss of working class support. But he was not alone in terms of locally-grown 'genius'. The first generation of significant Indo-Trinidadian leaders on a national level were also defining their role on the political scene. The Capildeo brothers, Lionel Seukeran, Mitra Sinanan, Badase Maraj and others emerged from local estate life and rural politics on through to the Legislative Council. They, over time, would become an opposition in waiting.

Dr Williams had been educated at Oxford University in the period just before the last war. Although not actively participating in the left-wing politics that had become fashionable in England in the period, he possessed broadly socialist views. He was a historian, and would become an ardent nationalist. Williams

The Caribbean territories that were organised into a short-lived Federation in 1958. This came to an end in 1962



entered politics in Trinidad and Tobago with an energy and a sense of intention that had never been seen before. He was amongst a relatively small elite in the 1950s, the period of decolonisation, who appeared in the colonies and who had acquired the ideology, the techniques and above all, the vernacular of Western politics in the post-war period. His impassioned discourses, which were professorial in character and historical in content, were garnished with resounding phraseology that captivated his audiences.

One of the most significant economic milestones of the 1950s, and occurring in the same year that Eric Williams won the elections to become the first Premier of Trinidad and Tobago, was, as we have seen, the acquisition of Trinidad Leaseholds by the American Texas Company.

Since 1946, Trinidad Leaseholds and the Texas Company had a processing agreement, whereby TLL processed Texaco's Venezuelan and Colombian crude. Also, Trinidad Leaseholds and the Texas Oil Company (the arm of the Texas Company operating in Great Britain) marketed their products jointly in the UK since 1947. What followed in 1948 was the start-up of the Regent Oil Company, with shares owned 50:50 by TLL and a company called Caltex. The latter owned all the shares of the Texas Oil Company in the UK, and was jointly owned by the Texas Company and Standard Oil of California. Regent was a marketing company, and it rapidly acquired 15 per cent of the market. As such, Trinidad Leaseholds was able to maintain an output of between



The Red House in Port of Spain was where the more important government officers were housed. It also contained the Legislative Council and the Law Courts. With independence in 1962 the Legislative Council became Trinidad and Tobago's Parliament. This impressive seat of government was painted red on the occasion of the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897

7.3 and 7.9 million barrels per year between 1946 and 1954 (production had peaked at 8.7 million barrels during the war).

However, even though a successful well drilled at Soldado in 1955 was promising, TLL was ►

Dr Williams was not alone in terms of locally-grown 'genius'. The first generation of significant Indo-Trinidadian leaders on a national level were also defining their role on the political scene



Independence celebrations in 1962 included the unveiling of the bronze statue of Captain Arthur Cipriani in the middle of the newly-named Independence Square

One of the most significant economic milestones of the 1950s was the acquisition of Trinidad Leaseholds by the American Texas Company

► continuously plagued with the fact that its crude resources in Trinidad were just too small. In order to continuously supply crude at a price that would allow the company to maximise on its profit margins, TLL would have to amalgamate with another major oil concern. Eventually, the Board of Directors accepted an offer by the American Texas Company (which, through Caltex, already owned half of TLL's marketing company, Regent) and Trinidad Leaseholds was acquired by Texaco for £63 million.

What a furore in the streets of Port of Spain and San Fernando! A British company, located in a British colony, bought by the 'Yankees' – who actually had been a marketing partner and been supplying crude through Caltex all the time, but who really knew about that? Higgins cites a calypso that commented on popular feelings about this transaction:

"Well the days of slavery back again
Ah hope it ain't reach in Port of Spain
Since the Yankees come back over here
They buy out the whole of Pointe-a-Pierre
Money start to pass, people start to bawl
Pointe-a-Pierre sell the workmen and all."

But of course, the deal made sense: oil supply in South America and the Middle East was expanding rapidly, the Texas Company wanted to tap into that supply and market products in the UK and elsewhere, and Leaseholds had extra refining capacity. In 1957, TLL (which by that time had changed its name to The Trinidad Oil Company) became Texaco Trinidad Inc (Textrin) and after a while, the Regent name on top of gas pumps in the United Kingdom changed to Texaco. Textrin had two Trinidadian personalities on its Board of Directors in 1957: Marc de Verteuil (representing the former Brighton and Antilles companies) and H.O.B. Wooding QC. With the necessary cash injections from the Texas Company, Texaco Trinidad's holdings and interests almost quadrupled in the next 12 years. Such is the power of amalgamations!

In the first years after the acquisition, the



The new Texaco Administration Building at Pointe-a-Pierre completed in 1960



Texaco's entry onto the local commercial scene was dramatised by the sponsoring of motor sports. These events took place in the now disused American air fields where the thunder of the fighter bombers had given way to the roar of the greasepaint

refinery was expanded substantially, geared to yield aviation gasoline primarily for commercial aircraft servicing the Caribbean region (in later years, also increasingly jet engine fuel), and fuel oils for export to the US east coast markets. In those years, the refinery's crude still came to a substantial part from its own and other Trinidad sources. Throughput at Pointe-a-Pierre in 1956 was 80,000 b/d, of which 40,000 came from Trinidad crude (split into 22,000 from Leaseholds' own fields and 18,000 from Apex and other local fields). The other sources were Venezuela (25 per cent), Saudi Arabia and Safaniya (10 per cent), and Texaco-owned sources in Arabia and Indonesia, Venezuela, Colombia and Brazil. In terms of local crude production, from the acquisition of TLL in 1956 to 1959, Textrin increased annual production from the former TLL wells by 6 million barrels to 14 million barrels, and that from Antilles and Trinidad Northern Areas by 2.8 million barrels to 7.9 million barrels (the latter mostly offshore production).

Fuel oil for export to the United States rose to 55.4 per cent of the production of Textrin. "Satisfying the fuel oil demand was, perhaps, one of the compelling reasons for the takeover of TTOC," writes George Higgins in his *History of Trinidad Oil*. "In one stroke the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery put Texaco Incorporated in a fully competitive strategic position vis-à-vis Esso at Aruba and Shell in Curaçao."

Project 1236 followed (this was now the period of the Cold War, with codenames still in use), which included the installation of major tanks in Pointe-a-Pierre, together with new berthing facilities for tankers that increased ever in size. The Suez Canal was closed in 1956, and larger vessels had to come around the Cape of Good Hope to supply crude to Trinidad from the Middle East and Asia – up to 85,000 tonnes at the time. Additional areas of mangrove swamp were reclaimed,

new sub-sea pipelines to fill tankers further out at sea laid, and a 6,500 kW gas-turbine for electricity generation installed, the first of its kind in Trinidad. In 1960, Textrin offered a full range of petroleum and petrochemicals. Its marketing arm, Texaco (Trinidad) Ltd, operated out of the Colonial Life Building in Port of Spain, the first modern multi-storey office building in the city.

In 1960, Texaco opened a modern office block in Pointe-a-Pierre. The era of working in mosquito-netted, wooden buildings on stilts, wearing shorts, tall socks and short-sleeved shirt, came to an end, and central air-conditioning as well as new dress codes required the office staff to appear in long trousers, shirt, tie and socks. There were minor revolts by the staff, but these were quickly settled and compromised on (no ties for Trinidadians necessary), but in the larger picture, the 1960 OWTU strike called against Textrin was a more serious affair, since it was the first serious industrial action taken since 1937, and brought back the fears on both sides of that time. The issues were eventually settled after much shouting on both sides, but, as Higgins describes, "the peace and tranquillity that had prevailed on the industrial scene never really returned to what it had been previously." In fact, the years preceding and immediately after independence in 1962 were plagued by strikes, with millions of ►

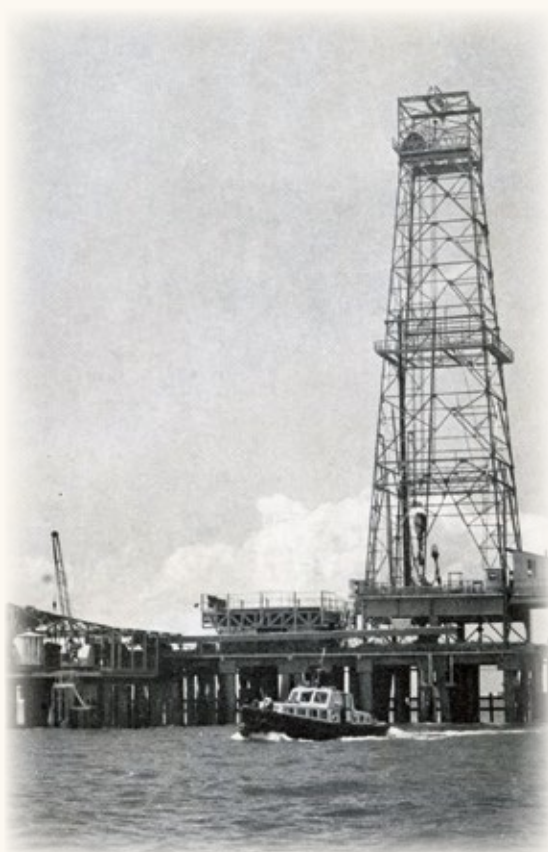
With the necessary cash injections from the Texas Company, Texaco Trinidad's holdings and interests almost quadrupled in the next twelve years



The Texaco Merry Makers steel band had evolved from the notorious Red Army steel band. Now pacified, they were sponsored by Texaco. Steel band sponsorship by commerce and industry was perceived as an important element in nation building in the early years of independence

From the acquisition of TLL in 1956 to 1959, Textrin increased annual production from the former TLL wells by 6 million barrels to 14 million barrels, and that from Antilles and Trinidad Northern Areas by 2.8 million barrels to 7.9 million barrels

► man hours lost in Trinidad and Tobago. One could argue that the competitiveness of the fledgling nation was seriously impacted by these strikes, and a general air of labour hostility cemented itself in the emerging body politic to this day. The early 1960s were the beginning of a developing 'strike consciousness' on the part of businesses, which Minister of Finance A.N.R. Robinson in the budget speech of 1963 said was inhibiting the impetus to grow. "Unsatisfactory industrial relations during the past two years have struck at the root of confidence of investors, rapid wage increases are reducing the competitiveness of local labour," he commented. "These factors combined are tending to nullify the various incentives offered by the government to attract investment."



The world's largest marine drilling platform in 1962 was in operation in the Trinidad's Gulf of Paria. It had drilled up to 36 wells in one location

Texaco's new office building was fitting for a refinery that was in 1960, with a total refinery capacity of 350,000 b/d, the largest in the British Commonwealth, and the second-largest in Texaco. It hailed a phase of Project 1236 which comprised the building of a lubricating oil manufacturing plant, canning plant, lube oil storage, blending facilities, a jetty capable of loading lube oils and petrochemicals in bulk or in drums. This phase was built under the provisions of the Pioneer Industries legislation and was exceedingly profitable for Texaco, as the legislation gave it a tax break of several years. The Aid to Pioneer Industries Programme was an attempt of encouragement from the government to help some people to venture into industry. From its inception in 1950, it had resulted in 71 products being declared pioneer products and 72 manufacturers declared pioneer manufacturers by 1957. Williams informed parliament in his budget speech of that year of the needs to develop agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, tourism and transport, improved harbours and a better airport in Tobago. "Oil production increased five-fold from 5.38 million barrels in 1927 to 28.93 in 1956," he said, adding that food imports for the ever-increasing population were on the rise. While he held out some hope for an even better cocoa crop, he cautioned that the government was becoming more and more dependent on oil, which accounted for 80 per cent of exports at the time.

Prime Minister Eric Williams opened Textrin's new manufacturing unit personally in 1964 – a prestigious project because it enabled the refinery for the first time to manufacture a full range of locally-manufactured petroleum products in addition to petrochemicals. The project also had the side effect that dry materials no longer needed to be transported from Port of Spain harbour to Pointe-a-Pierre by government railway, but could be offloaded at the newly-built jetty directly. This was a big drop-off in revenue for the railway, and a contributing factor to its closure not long afterwards, with plans to implement a new train



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Trinidad Oil Industry plays such an important part in the economy of the Colony that every responsible citizen should not only be aware of the activities of this industry, but also should appreciate something of the complexities and difficulties that confront the industry today.

How many people for instance realize that the industry contributes over one third of Trinidad's total revenue and that during the year 1961 petroleum and its products accounted for nearly 77 per cent of the Colony's exports? In addition to direct contributions to revenue amounting to some 56 million dollars in 1961 the industry expended over 43 million dollars in Trinidad during the same years. These figures are immense, as are the other benefits which, apart from direct contributions to the island's economy, Trinidad derives from its Oil Industry.

The effect of these large contributions to public funds is that the Government is in a sounder financial position than other Governments in the British Caribbean and is well placed to finance development and social schemes for the benefit of its citizens.

As regards the difficulties confronting the industry, it is probably true to say that very few of the inhabitants of the Colony, apart from the 17,000 employees of the industry, realize the varied and complex activities carried on daily, nor is the highly competitive world market in which Trinidad oil strives to hold its place appreciated. No new large reserves of oil have been discovered for some time and the rising costs of exploration drilling, coupled with the difficult and in some cases almost unique geological structures of Trinidad, have resulted in considerable capital outlay for this vital search for oil. Oil plays such an important part in world affairs today that every loyal citizen of oil producing countries should be aware, not only of the benefits which oil production can bring, but also of the dangers which can arise if wise control of the industry is not maintained.

H. E. Rance

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO,
MAJOR GENERAL SIR HUBERT ELVIN RANCE, G.C.M.G., G.B.E., C.B.
DECEMBER 1962

A message from the Governor of the Colony on the publication of a book produced by the Petroleum Association



As all roads led to Rome in ancient times, all pipelines led to the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery in modern Trinidad and Tobago

system not underway until the time of writing, more than 40 years later. The other contributing factor to the demise of the railway was of course the increase in cars and the improvement of the road system. Already, in 1962, Williams announced his plan to phase out railroads and substitute them with road transport and regulation of the taxi system. The car began to take over Trinidad. The number of vehicles imported in 1955 was 4,798, which had almost doubled by 1960 to 8,439. There was one licensed vehicle for every 19 people of the population – even though unemployment hovered around 14 per cent and sometimes rose to 18 per cent! Williams actually saw this as a sign of development. “The increased consumption reflects the higher purchasing power of the people. The community spent \$7.8 million in 1956 on its imports of 3,353 motor vehicles of all sorts. In 1960 it spent \$16.7 million on 6,680 motor vehicles,” he remarked in his 1961 budget speech. By 1961, the Beetham Highway and Lady Young Road had been completed and the Maracas-Las Cuevas Road was about to formally open. Williams lamented that while the number of licensed private

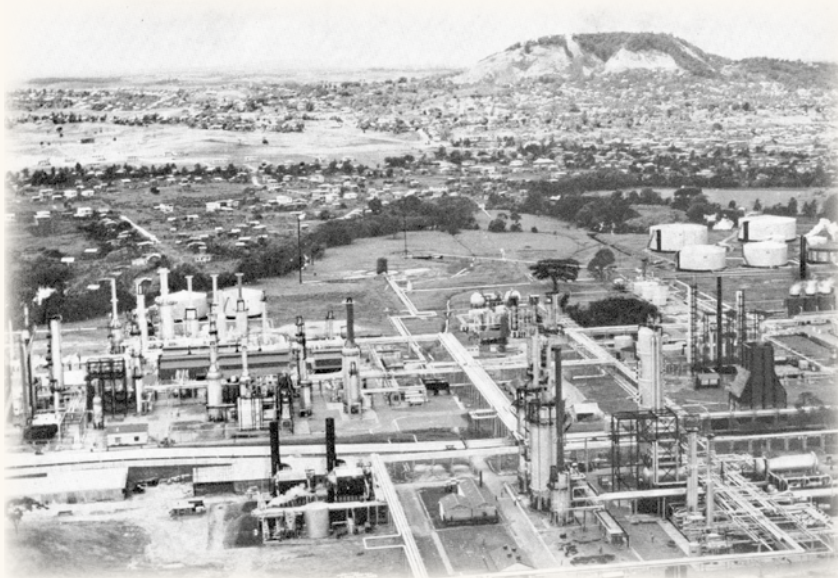
cars had increased by 5,848 over the three-year period from 1956 to 1959, persons paying taxes increased by only 420! For every additional 14 persons who acquired a car, only one paid income tax. There were 28,771 private cars licensed and 32,757 registered, while only 15,400 people paid taxes. So much for life being sweet in an oil-producing country, where the biggest refinery in the Commonwealth churns out cheap gasoline and cars are the measure of prosperity as the government struggles to collect revenue through taxes...

Another problem presented itself with Project 1236, in that the stevedores required for the new jetty, who were in charge of unloading cargo, were controlled by the highly-politicised Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union (SWWTU), which was an addition to the OWTU already in place in Texaco. Naturally, ‘demarcation problems’ occurred initially with the stevedores, with the union demanding that more of its Port of Spain men be deployed at Pointe-a-Pierre (not a very practical solution), which took a while to sort out.

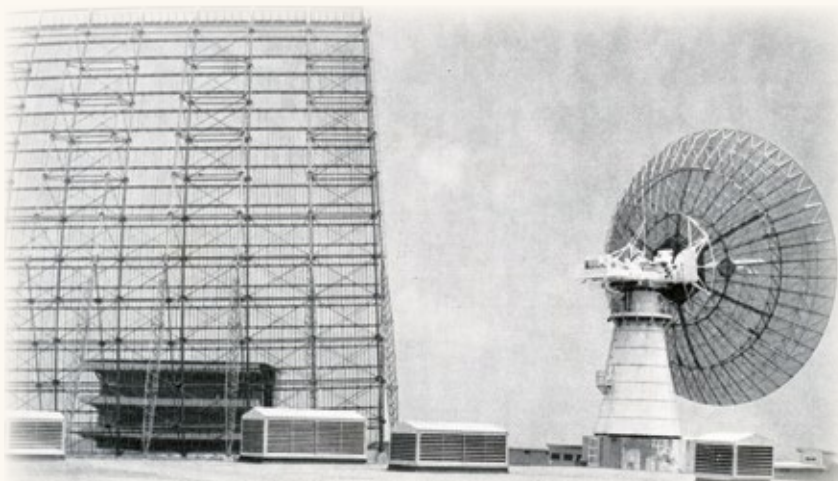
In closing this segment of the history of ‘Black ►

Prime Minister Eric Williams opened Textrin's new manufacturing unit personally in 1964 – a prestigious project because it enabled the refinery for the first time to manufacture a full range of locally-manufactured petroleum products in addition to petrochemicals

Between 1950 and 1956, the total population of Trinidad and Tobago had increased from 635,834 to 742,500, and this trend continued – with the petroleum sector as one of the main reasons for immigration



Texaco's Pointe-a-Pierre refinery in 1960 was the largest in the Commonwealth. Trinidad and Tobago's oil industry was to become the engine for the country's future industrialisation and economic growth. This would increasingly leave behind its agricultural base with its attendant economy, and with it, a way of life that had existed for 150 years would fall into neglect



The radar installations at the US Naval base at Chaguaramas were an important link in the tracking network for satellites and rockets launched from Cape Canaveral in Florida. It was also, at the time of the Cold War, a part of the early warning system that served to guard the United States in the event of a surprise intercontinental ballistic strike launched from the Soviet Union. It became one of the major issues that was politicised during the move to independence, when the base's immediate closure was demanded

► Gold' in Trinidad, one must mention Augustus Long, who was to retire as Texaco Chairman and CEO in 1965, and who had a keen personal interest in the developments in Trinidad. Long had a personal relationship with both Prime Minister Williams and Governor-General Sir Solomon Hochoy. In terms of the problems and opportunities facing a small nation emerging out of colonialism, which was also host to the largest non-US investment of Texaco in the world, the men saw eye-to-eye. Sir Solomon also had a personal interest in the providing of adequate housing to low-income households in the country, a concern Augustus Long shared because the housing of oil workers had been a perennial problem of the industry. Between 1950 and 1956, the total population of Trinidad and Tobago had increased from 635,834 to 742,500, and this trend continued – with the petroleum sector as

one of the main reasons for immigration.

It was a time when commercial banks were not offering loans to those in lower income brackets to build homes, and Textrin, with the assistance of government, came to an arrangement with the banks to keep sufficient cash balances with those institutions to offset home mortgage facilities extended to its employees. A separate housing department was set up at Textrin. As a consequence, large areas in Guayaguayare, Pointe-a-Pierre and Brighton were developed for housing at the company's expense, and government and the credit union also made land available for building at San Fernando and Claxton Bay, for employees to build their own homes on freehold or long-term leased lands. All this contributed to the reason why the hospital at Pointe-a-Pierre was named for Augustus Long, remembering this great private sector person

who 'put his money where his mouth was' and invested so substantially in a better life for countless Trinidadians and West Indians at large.

Texaco's Pointe-a-Pierre refinery was undoubtedly in the front rank of the world's largest and most highly integrated refineries. This huge industrial and residential complex stood on what once were six coconut estates with pretty French names: Bon Accord, La Carriere, Concord, Bonne Aventure, Plein Palais and Plaisance. As such, in its first 50 years, the refinery grew from a small batch distillation plant, perched on a hillside near a vulnerable pipeline viaduct, to a huge petroleum and petrochemical complex with its attendant tank farm, reservoirs, and shipping port – once one of the largest in the world, one that helped to win two world wars, and one of the most beautifully-sited refineries in the world up to this day. ■

In its first 50 years, the refinery grew from a small batch distillation plant to a huge petroleum and petrochemical complex that helped to win two world wars, and one of the most beautifully-sited refineries in the world up to this day



Texaco Board of Directors, from left to right: not identified, Patrick Emmet Taaffe O'Connor, H. McNaughton-Jones (GM), John Moore (Exploration Manager), not identified, Sir Lyndsay Grant, E.G. Stibbs, J. Howard Bass (Chief Geologist), Cyril Duprey and Arthur Downs