

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago:
From Crown Colony to National Security State

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A Thesis
in
The Individualized Program
between the disciplines:
History, Economics, and Geography.

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (INDI) at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

April 2018

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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

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Master of Arts (Individualized Program)

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Abstract

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago: From Crown Colony to National Security State

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This thesis examines the manifestation of a national security state in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) that emerged in the context of decolonization, during the period between 1946 and 1978, when the country achieved internal self-government, independence, and, finally, became a republic. The T&T national security state developed from its roots in British Crown Colony rule, however the concept of the “national security state” was originally derived from an analysis of United States (US) in the immediate post-WWII period.

US “national security” rested on an ideological dogma of anti-communism and the forceful, interventionist, US-led promotion of Western capitalism as the universal measure of freedom. This thesis extends the concept of the “national security state” to the case of T&T, in the Southern Caribbean. From this circumstance an appropriate redefinition is derived, where the “national security state” is rooted in the aftermath of plantation slavery and British Crown Colony rule, coupled with the rise of the US as the unquestioned imperial power of the Western Hemisphere and the world in the 20th Century.

The core aspects of T&T’s Crown Colony constitution remained fundamentally intact despite the proclamation of independence in 1962 and republic status in 1976. Eric Williams, author of *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), became T&T’s first Prime Minister and oversaw the consolidation of the national security state that targeted the efforts of the New World Group in their work to foster decolonization and sovereignty of the in the Caribbean.

Acknowledgements:

I give thanks for my parents and family, the people in Trinidad and Tobago who shaped my worldview, my unanswered questions, and my passions; including those things I had to rebel against, for those principled choices make us who we are.

I give thanks for Kari Polanyi Levitt, a living archive and an inspirational embodiment of a lifelong commitment to the struggle for the betterment of all, so much work put in, unfortunately not fully recognized and appreciated in this fast-paced sound byte world.

I give thanks for the supervisory committee that brought this to completion, Elena Razgolova, Kari Polanyi Levitt, and Ted Rutland.

Maximilian Forte was an essential early catalyst for this project; this deserves recognition and I give thanks for that. Similarly, thanks to Gada Mahrouse for her time, insight, and encouragement that set me down this path during my undergraduate degree, and for Kevin Gould and the entire Concordia Geography department, faculty and peers, that catalyzed a lot of important early learning's about the awareness of place, space, and movement in terms of politics and action, materially brought forth in the 2011/2012 Quebec student strikes; a humbling learning experience for it was clearly demonstrated that women are often the most effective links in political organizing.

Thank you N, for you support and feedback.

Salute to Pasero and Schmoo, ordinary revolutionaries with unmatched integrity and humility; and to Fidel.

Che, forever

This effort is dedicated to all the unnamed persons who lived, served, and died in the struggle against downpression, inequality, and classism in all of its forms.

To the strong women without whom I would surely have been lost in this world of male dominance.

Balance

alpha and omega

I

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Chapter I, Introduction and Literature Review

Introduction

Within the purview of national security in contemporary Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) is given prime attention as the institution most responsible for the poor state of affairs. Efforts to address the issues abound, and thus a prominent local criminologist, Ramesh Deosaran, headed the recent Police Manpower Audit Committee into the TTPS in 2017. In the executive summary of the report it is stated that, “*the country’s Number One Problem*” (emphasis original) is the concern for crime, violence and police performance where there is an apparent “inability of the authorities to deal more aggressively and positively with the general problem.”¹ A major point of initial concern was the evident abuses of power in the TTPS,² worsened by government mismanagement, where the fact that the TTPS has had an Acting Commissioner since 2012 “provides a window for political interference.”³ The report noted the public discontent with the police,⁴ and prominently highlighted the central importance of the TTPS to national security in T&T through its call for the situation “to be treated as an emergency” that required a “non-partisan will” to address the problem.⁵ It also admitted that the lack of serious attention on these matters had the effect of “keeping crime as a politically volatile issue”, and further, “the social, psychological and economic costs are becoming quite high with parallel damage to the country’s international reputation.”⁶

The government’s directive for the “Manpower Audit” indicates its narrow focus, and despite the limited scope the report does give evidence of a larger and more historically rooted set of problems. The Cabinet mandated the audit “to examine the extent to which the manpower strength of the Service is meeting major objectives and whether its human resource capacity is sufficient.”⁷ At the public release of the report to the government in October 2017 the Prime Minister stated that he was already set to take action on the report by scheduling it before the Cabinet and the Joint Select Committee on National Security.⁸ The authors took a bold posture with the subtitle, “Now is the Time, No Sacred Cows”, and this statement on the cover page:

When one considers the history of previous inquiries, their seemingly ignored recommendations, and the range of challenges facing the TTPS, it will be a delusion to think that all be well quickly once a permanent Commissioner of Police and Deputies are appointed.⁹

From the outset it is established that there is a precedent where reports were produced and action was not taken by the government executive and the national security institutions to address the identified problems. The Committee highlighted the previous major reports that were done for the government, and it is important to note that these reports cover the span of T&T's independence: 1959, 1964, 1972, 1984, 1990, 1991, 2006, 2011, 2013.¹⁰ These factors suggest that little has been done to update/reform or even decolonize policing in T&T. This is not insignificant as the police force is the oldest institution in the country,¹¹ rooted in the containment of indigenous peoples under the early Spanish rule, and later slaves and indentured labourers particularly under the British.

The police force is only one of many T&T security institutions that go back to the pre-independence era and the national security doctrine developed in the United States during World War II and in the postwar period. The Strategic Services Agency in T&T, a centralized intelligence coordination agency created in the mid 1990s, was founded under the name of the Office of Strategic Services,¹² and a Minister highlighted in Parliament that the agency was created due to international imperative.¹³ The original Office of Strategic Services (the predecessor of the CIA) was a US wartime intelligence agency that specialized in espionage, propaganda, subversion, and the use of academics in intelligence networks. These precedents are not merely symbolic, for as this historical analysis will detail, these forces were active in T&T and have been integrated into the State from the time Independence was attained. This opening effectively links the contemporary problems of national security in T&T to larger historically rooted problems involving imperial influence alongside detrimental dynamics of the executive of government and the lack of accountability for those who hold State power.

This thesis examines how T&T's national security state emerged in the context of decolonization, in the period between 1946 and 1978, when the country achieved internal self-government, independence, and, finally, became a republic. Focusing on the career of historian and statesman Eric Williams and the work of the New World Group of radical economists, this thesis shows how the Trinidad and Tobago national security state developed from its roots in Crown Colony rule. In the process, it coopted anti-colonial intellectuals who became part of the governing elite, such as Williams. It also suppressed the anti-imperialist, non-aligned, and anti-capitalist intellectual institutions, such as the New

World Group. The national security state thus remained fundamentally intact despite the declaration of independence and the achievement of republic status.

This introduction synthesizes a working definition of the national security state from existing theory and historiography. It argues for an imperial role of the United States as the birthplace of the national security state. It then makes a case for a distinct conception of a national security state in the Caribbean, and T&T specifically, by incorporating the ideas of a generation—the radical economists of the New World Group—who in the 1960s and 1970s articulated a decolonized social and economic theory rooted in history of the Caribbean. These intellectuals are also actors in this study as the targets of the national security state, and this thesis uses an analysis of the Crown Colony governance system derived from this group as the basis for theorizing the national security state in the independent T&T.

Why study national security today, within a historical framework?

There is ample evidence that national security looms large in the body politic of contemporary T&T, notably through the prime economic attention it receives from the government. National security in T&T is controlled by an executive that has access to far-reaching surveillance mechanisms,¹⁴ that utilizes foreign military backing in its border security emphasis alongside an active paramilitary approach to policing,¹⁵ and is directly supported by legislation that empowers the State and cuts back on many social liberties.¹⁶ The lack of appropriate historical perspective on the problems of national security in T&T is what this thesis seeks to address. More specifically the focus is on the issue of an elected and unelected elite that maintains control of the state via its national security institutions, utilizing this power for continuation of the status quo where the country is dominated by unbroken patterns of private and corporate interests that function at the expense of the general population. Most of the work done by national security is to secure these private and corporate interests where this principle brings the State into confrontation with the population that must face daily struggles of economic downturn, receding social services, increasing inequality, persistent social fragmentation and exclusion, and the consequent escalating inward cycles of violence.

There have been many studies on policing and problems of national security in T&T over the past decades, and in the last ten years this attention has been particularly

heightened. These studies are headlined by the need to secure borders and protect against illegal networks of drugs, gangs, guns, and murders as a set of problems that exist aside the other concerns regarding the lack of police accountability, the need for “democratic” and “community” policing, governance and security issues, “restorative justice” prison reform, the death penalty, and improved police detection rates.¹⁷ Most of this attention is undertaken through criminological frameworks, heavily influenced by US and European approaches, with very little attention given to historical circumstances that suggest a problem of a different kind. These studies are concerned with a technical contribution to the system of national security. While such contributions may indeed alleviate some bureaucratic inefficiency or the other, the system in place will continue its miserable performance and the conditions on the ground will only continue to worsen unless a more fundamental type of shift is undertaken. The conditions for such an undertaking will be greatly heightened when there is widespread social acknowledgement and resultant confrontation of the historical precedents that lie before the multifaceted issues of national security in contemporary T&T.

This thesis makes the case for studying national security in a historical perspective by situating central problems with the conclusions of two recent prominent reports on matters of national security in T&T. One report ignores historical context entirely while the other utilizes certain historical assessments to serve its interest in bolstering the T&T government’s national security agenda. The position taken here confronts the problematic position of both. The first report is the Commission of Enquiry into the 1990 “attempted coup” that was initiated in 2010, almost 20 years after the events but not long after the T&T recorded its highest murder toll to date. The report was published in 2014 and one of its primary outcomes was to “recommend that the entire national security architecture should be revisited.”¹⁸ Many of the recommendations were censored in the public version of the report, and despite noting the central impacts of political manipulation in the management of the Special Branch of the police on the breakdown of protocol,¹⁹ “the Commission concludes, on balance, that *burgeoning crime and the changing nature of contemporary crime in Trinidad and Tobago have their origins in the events of 1990 and the aftermath thereof.*”²⁰ (emphasis added) This analysis has already begun to situate the historical precedent for issues of executive management and political interference in the security services, and it is important to situate the simplistic and problematic ahistorical position of the Commission’s report as it ignores these factors in its conclusions and recommendations.

To this day the leader of the Jamaat-al-Muslimeen (JaM), Yassin Abu Bakr, maintains that 1990 was *not* an attempted coup d'état but was the culmination of a standoff with the government, triggered by the events after a policewoman came to his organization with evidence that the Minister of National Security and other high-level security officials were involved in drug trafficking at the airport.²¹ It is known that this policewoman died during a training exercise at the Army base in Chaguaramas in that period, by “accident”,²² and that the Ministry of National Security was escalating its antagonisms against the JaM in the lead up to the events of 27 July 1990.²³ The second study considered here states that the title of a “coup” is problematic due to details of the actual insurrection,²⁴ and a high level national security official in T&T acknowledged that prior to 1990 the JaM was “very anti-drugs”.²⁵ Elsewhere, Abu Bakr claims he was unknowingly working with the US Drug Enforcement Agency before the events of July 1990.²⁶

There is a serious distortion of the problems of the present, and the history of 1990 as worked by the State and elite interests to rationalize the worsening conditions, absolve the government for its failures, and invoke a past threat so as to continually justify executive national security actions that empower the State and cut back on peoples’ social freedoms without addressing the underlying problems. The persistent condemnation of the JaM is a recurring discourse used by those who support the workings of national security in contemporary T&T. Although the Commission of Enquiry arrived at its conclusion via an ahistorical analysis the second study considered explicitly links this concern back to earlier contexts, but unfortunately with a similar result.

This second study was conducted by academics Andy Knight²⁷ and John McCoy, directly through collaboration with the T&T national security agencies. The use of historical context in this work is done in a very problematic and dangerous way that serves to expand the State’s capacity to criminalize the population’s discontents and encourage the consolidation of state power. The authors claim to have produced a pioneer study on “Homegrown Violent Extremism” in T&T. The primary thrust of the paper is to link the fact that T&T records “one of the highest per capita rates of extremist travelers in the world” contributing to Daesh,²⁸ to the identified context of “highly developed human and narcotic smuggling networks”.²⁹ The authors then link this contemporary circumstance to a long history of “political activism and radicalism”³⁰ that goes back to anticolonial labor struggles in the 1930s, and Black Power mass mobilizations leading up to the Army revolt

and State of Emergency in 1970.³¹ In this circumstance Knight and McCoy note that the fundamental challenge to the newly independent government came from its own political demographic. To this the Eric Williams' government responded with a move to further the centralization power in the office of the prime minister, accompanied by a program of welfare expenditure that sought to pacify the disenfranchised black population.³² This historical context is the detail considered in the body of this thesis.

Knight and McCoy are consistent in the routine condemnation of the JaM as they link the organization to this historical context and assume a preexisting “radical milieu” in Trinidad by citing the 1970 events and the Black Power movement.³³ The JaM is specifically highlighted as a key recent manifestation of this so-called “radical milieu”, but the report admits the JaM is not active in extremist recruits and organizing radicalism today. In this regard the report acknowledges that a Judge appointed to the issue of extremist travelers spoke of two families of the Indo-Islamic community that were key points of recruitment, and known to be very wealthy and thus “untouchable in terms of prosecution.”³⁴ Nevertheless Knight and McCoy conclude, “the point here is this: T&T’s extremist travelers, as members of a preexisting radical community, are being socialized into an ideology associated with a transnational radical network — one that promotes a specific world outlook that rests on violent opposition to the West and its co-religionist enemies.”³⁵ The authors’ center the problem on a social movement where distorted radical ideology can be inserted into preexisting historical grassroots formations of resistance to unbroken legacies of colonial domination. The consequence of this formulation serves as a mechanism that can criminalize dissent against the status-quo Westminster political system dominated by an unquestioned economic elite with commonplace abuse of State power.

A critique of knowledge production that legitimizes the national security state is important because it is this function that serves to ensure that the logic that demands an ideologically bound security State with consolidated executive power is commonplace across any partisan divide. The state of decolonization in T&T is questionable in the case where a publication produced to commemorate 50 years of independence notes that the constitution of the country is still firmly rooted in its Crown Colony foundation.³⁶ Within the unchanged constitution lie serious institutional problems of executive abuses of power and lack of accountability. The national security state is not so much dependent on individuals, but is a much more lasting formation with its various components that maintain the momentum of

an agenda based on a fundamental ideological commitment to the West and its project of global capitalism under the US imperial banner. This thesis works to situate this national security state in its identified foundations in Crown Colony rule in T&T and presents an analysis of this national security state as it underwent change but remained fundamentally intact despite the declaration of independence and the achievement of republic status.

Established historiography: Eric Williams and the New World Group

Eric Williams and the New World Group are important actors in this thesis, and as there is existing literature on these subjects a brief comment is due regarding how this thesis is situated within these established fields, and what it contributes. There is an established body of historiography on Caribbean decolonization, Trinidad and Tobago, and Eric Williams.³⁷ Some studies celebrate Williams as a pioneer historian based on the legacy of his monumental work *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944),³⁸ and highlight his contribution to postcolonial studies,³⁹ but there are also works that are duly critical of him with respect to his political career. An article by Tony Martin makes an important contribution in highlighting Williams' early political career and specifically situates his work with the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission (AACC) and the Office of Strategic Services as a consultant.⁴⁰ Detailed documentation of Williams' successful efforts in moving through influential US and British circles is provided in the article, and the author appropriately included this description in its subtitle: *Trinidad's Future Nationalist Leader as Aspiring Imperial Bureaucrat, 1942-1944*. This thesis expands upon the insight given in Martin's paper by providing further details on the strategic importance of Trinidad to the British and the US, by situating the consequences of the US military presence in T&T during WWII, and brings this context directly into the postwar sequence of political decolonization in T&T. Eric Williams spent twelve years working for the AACC,⁴¹ after which he entered politics in T&T and became the Prime Minister, in a twenty-five year unbroken stint as head of the government.⁴²

There are also those studies that focus on Williams' time as head of the government in T&T and in this regard there is a difference in treatment of Williams when he led a march to challenge the US military base in Trinidad in 1960,⁴³ and when he was a Prime Minister that consolidated power and actively suppressed the Black Power uprisings of the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴⁴ Most studies focus on these issues either within the domestic circumstances,⁴⁵

or tend to give a broader regional/international overview.⁴⁶ This thesis re-examines these currents of interest and this historical context by utilizing the lens of national security to bring together the concern for domestic circumstances with an analysis of wider imperial relations. Further insight into important details of these circumstances is given by utilizing sources that either were not considered in these works, or were still classified at the time of writing for some of the older works noted.

The historical analysis of this thesis is an added contribution to the existing historiography by specifically bringing together the work of the New World Group (NWG), and the historical context of the NWG's existence as its members became targets of national security by newly independent Caribbean States. The NWG was created in 1963, the year after T&T became independent, but did not survive the decade of the 1960s. Despite a short-lived existence the group's impact across the Caribbean was significant during that period, and its members continued their work through different mediums after its dissolution.⁴⁷ *The Thought of The New World* is a volume published in 2010 as the outcome of a retrospective conference held by the group's remaining members,⁴⁸ and is one of the only main publications on centered this group. Despite this collection that holds a rich amount of material, there has been limited effort to engage the ideas of the NWG and put them to use. Using national security as a frame, this thesis links the NWG as actors who are targets of concern to the establishment, but at the same time this groups' ideas provide particularly important insights that are used to theorize the basis of the national security state in T&T.

Defining the national security state

The precedent of the national security state as it is known is set by the US. Most notable in this regard is the postwar anti-communist posture of the National Security Act of 1947 and the infamous National Security Council memo 68. These moves institutionalized a centralized executive with the integrated intelligence and coercive agencies of force centered on "containment" of a threat that was explicitly ideological. The dogma of free market capitalism was institutionalized into the military industrial complex, and effectively channeled the momentum of WWII into a globalist arrangement where "communism" stood as the central threat to US national security (wherever it could be 'found' in the world). It is in this way that the US national security state arrived into those parts of the world under US

dominance, such as T&T. The Caribbean has long been called the US's "third border",⁴⁹ its "soft underbelly",⁵⁰ and even "the American Lake".⁵¹

A symposium of the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1982⁵² provides the historical markers of the formation of the national security state and some key mechanisms of its imperialist function. The National Security Act of 1947 is the determined institutional point of origin for the doctrine of national security and the basis of this legislation was to "integrate the domestic, foreign and military policies relating to national security" to enable more effective cross coordination of agencies.⁵³ National Security Council report 68 is seen to be US President Harry Truman's most deliberate attempt at defining national security, and centered on the threat of the Soviet Union and concerns of domestic subversion.⁵⁴ The institutional outcome was the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Central Intelligence Agency, which embodied the characteristic mechanism of the entire system in "non-accountable, subterranean policymaking and security options."⁵⁵ The mechanism of shielding "security" from legislative control was the institutionalized technique of pre-authorized operations with "actions unspecified".⁵⁶ The domestic outcome was the "ugly phenomenon of McCarthyism",⁵⁷ and in the international sphere a "burgeoning reliance on atomic weapons" "eliminated the need for precision in strategic planning."⁵⁸

This military symposium publication credited Daniel Yergin with the term the national security state, and identified this formation as a state "in which external and national security concerns become dominant, while domestic objectives (as evidenced by the fate of Harry Truman's Fair Deal) are subordinate to them".⁵⁹ The principal of "containment" was deployed as an expansive global interpretation with the underlying postulates that US interests were global, and that national security meant security of the "free world" dependent on US intervention to prevent states being "lost" to communism.⁶⁰ The threat of communism was operationalized as the means to divide and suppress internal dissent within the US. As noted elsewhere by Von Eschen (1997), of particular importance in this regard was the pacifying of anti-colonial political activism in the US that linked the domestic struggle of black people in the US to those globally at the core of its organizing. This anti-imperial principle was superseded by the liberal concern for political and civic "freedom" in the overall thrust and institutional outcome of the civil rights movement.⁶¹

Further insight into the postwar geopolitical context indicates that the US national security state was driven more so by the demand to contain the Soviet Union after the Nazi alliance was defeated. Daniel Yergin's 1977 publication, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* remains a seminal text on national security and the national security state in this context. In the introduction Yergin refers to the national security state as comprised of the "unified patterns of attitudes, policies, and institutions" geared towards the task of organizing the country for "perpetual confrontation" and "war".⁶² He identifies the nation-state as the basic unit of the international postwar system,⁶³ and in the context where Stalin stood as the only wartime leader left in power the "Grand Alliance" against the Nazi threat gave way to the Cold War standoff.⁶⁴ The commanding ideas of US foreign policy in this period centered on anticommunism and the new doctrine of national security policies based on "containment, confrontation, and intervention" managed by "government bureaucracies and private organizations that serve in a permanent war preparedness."⁶⁵ The function of the national security state was to carry the wartime interventionist posture into the decades after WWII, and thus it was a prime catalyst for the onset of the Cold War.

Yergin does highlight some earlier precedents of the national security state but confines his attention to the immediate postwar period and the workings of formal state agencies. A key precedent for Yergin was the Eberstadt report of September 1945, which was an earlier internal document that greatly influenced the outcome of the 1947 National Security Act. The Eberstadt report is highlighted as a major step towards overcoming the interagency tensions that arose during WWII by emphasizing *coordination* of agencies as opposed to *integration* that presupposed a loss of autonomy.⁶⁶ The coordination emphasis bore through with the creation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the NSC, and a greater emphasis on intelligence systems across the board.⁶⁷ This period, between mid 1947 and 1948 accords to the rise of the national security state according to Yergin, and is hallmarked by major expansion of the military establishment, integration of significant industrial and intellectual sectors into this establishment, and the promotion of an anticommunist alliance.⁶⁸ These first contributions from the Cold War era rightly highlight the canonical function of the 1947 National Security Act and the workings of the new executive-empowered state agencies which are the core of the national security state, set to uphold its basis in the ideological anti-communist dogma.

Later studies have expanded the analysis of the national security state by providing important further insight into the function of influential private individuals in this process and the civil support that bridged the partisan divide. Michael Hogan (1998) provides a base reference that the National Security Act of 1947 is the “Magna Charter”⁶⁹ and modern mechanism of the national security state.⁷⁰ Hogan notes the Ivy League contributions towards the doctrine of national security, but emphasizes the greater prominence of figures from “corporate board rooms, financial institutions, and Wall Street Law firms” such that “nonelected experts presided over the largest and fastest growing sector of the federal government.”⁷¹ The expanded powers given to the NSC, CIA and Joint Chiefs of Staff amidst a consensus of discourse regarding external and internal Soviet threats resulted in acceptance of a “permanent blurring” of war and peace, civil and military.⁷²

The contradictory role of academics with respect to the national security state is highlighted in the case of prominent scientists such as Oppenheimer who were incorporated into central spheres of the national security complex, yet were subject to McCarthyist interrogations. His security clearance was revoked even though it was exposed that there was internal manipulation of evidence to form charges against him.⁷³ One of Hogan’s key concluding observations is worth quoting: “Liberal intellectuals were willing to put the containment of communism ahead of the welfare state while conservative intellectuals were prepared to give antistatism a back seat to anticommunism. This development set the stage not only for a policy of containment but also for a national security state that could apply that policy.”⁷⁴ The above contributions provide a very useful starting point for locating and defining the parameters of a national security state, however they all situate its creation as a postwar phenomenon.

More recent publications have done the work to uncover earlier precedents of the national security state and provide further detail on the widespread support it received from various spheres of civil society. Douglas Stuart produced one of the most recent major works on the national security state and primarily engages with details of internal domestic debates in the process of *Creating the National Security State* (2008). With respect to the historical context of this process there is further detail given to the central importance of the Acadia Conference between Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, and their respective military advisors that took place between 22 December 1941 and 14 January 1942. In this meeting the US envoy was struck by their lack of cohesion in the face of the strong

negotiating position put forth by the British due to their articulation of a common position across their various agencies.⁷⁵ The British model fulfilled the evident lack of a mechanism for unified command in the US, and thus the Joint Chiefs of Staff was created by executive order on 9 February 1942.⁷⁶

Preceding and overlapping with this process was the creation of a system for the coordination of intelligence, first taking form with the executive order of 11 July 1941 to create the office of Coordinator of Information.⁷⁷ William Donovan headed this agency, and followed through with the reformulation of this agency under the banner of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in 1942.⁷⁸ The OSS profile was left vague, and when formulated the mandate was to undertake “the planning, development, coordination, and execution of the military program for psychological warfare.”⁷⁹ By the end of WWII the OSS had 13,000 persons enlisted, mostly academics operating outside of the US, and Donovan had risen to Major General with control of an OSS budget of \$57 million USD.⁸⁰ This context situates the beginnings of some of the key institutions of the national security state in their wartime precedents. This is important to note for many of the ‘civil liberties’ (such as privacy) that are now routinely forgone in the name of national security were first demanded as a war measure, and thus the postwar formalization of the national security state is the creation of institutions to carry over those war measures into ‘peacetime’ daily life. Another underlying point provided by Stuart was the role of the British in this exchange, and a large part of this thesis focuses on the lasting importance of the Anglo-American bond.

The major works on the national security state itself locate the formation as a wartime and postwar creation, but in this historical study it is important to consider earlier linkages through the concept of national security itself. A *Genealogy of National Security* (2014) by Andrew Preston links national security back to the “often forgotten” National Security League established by a Wall Street lawyer in 1914. With the support of Rockefeller, Carnegie, and other such foundations the League lobbied with an emphasis on “military preparedness” that sought to “discipline America’s wayward youth” in light of an absence of foreign invasion.⁸¹ Preston identifies the League as a central influence in the move to replace traditional references to national security as a term referring to socioeconomic security for individuals,⁸² with a formulation that was both “territorial and ideological - forming an integrated, indivisible whole that applied the world over”.⁸³ US national security rested on a self-proclaimed monopoly over “economic opportunity, republicanism, and liberal

democracy” and thus the project was globally oriented to ensure preservation of a national “identity” rooted in a particular “Judeo-Christian tradition”.⁸⁴ The power of the US to uphold this formulation “was enmeshed in its economic prowess and social democracy as well as its military power.”⁸⁵ This is a distinct articulation of the core tenants of the national security state, not yet with its empowered NSC and CIA, but materially so in the particular ideological and veiled racial commitments as a fundamental base that is supported by powerful institutions of knowledge production. The role of organizations with similar functions as Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundation in bolstering the national security state is a particular concern and is given specific attention in the body of the thesis.

Following precedents set in WWI, the lead up to WWII saw increased and expanded involvement of academics in domains of national security, and in this context a network of Ivy League academics produced the first formal definitions of national security. Edward Mead Earle, of Princeton’s Institute for Advanced Study, featured prominently in this period as a figure with scholarly and political aspirations.⁸⁶ Earle defines national security as “a state of affairs in which the nation’s territorial domain, political independence, rights, and vital interests are free from any substantial threat of aggression from abroad, or from internal forces operating under foreign control or influence.”⁸⁷ He coordinated seminars and used academic influence and prestige to garner general support for the interventionist position, as well as for specific issues such as President Roosevelt’s Lend-Lease policy that saw the US acquire territory in various British possessions in the Western Hemisphere for military bases.⁸⁸ The national security doctrine was characterized by a continual “invocation” of “core values” and “[a]fter a couple of false starts, a fusion of geographical and ideological security took place during the world crisis of the late 1930s and the world war that followed. The results have defined US foreign policy ever since,”⁸⁹ especially as national security remains one of the very few government formulations that receives continuous bipartisan support.⁹⁰ Trinidad was one of the key base sites in Roosevelt’s agreement with the British, which took place before the entry of the US into the war. It is not insignificant that figures such as Edward Mead Earle were important in garnering support, and already the precedent of the national security state connects directly to the focus of this case study on its formation in T&T.

The analysis of the national security state thus far has given a broad base to begin formulating a critical and useful definition of the concept. The historical and geopolitical

context given has indicated its explicitly anti-communist foundation and posture of intervention to contain its spread, however none of these analyses contain an explicit critique of US imperialism. This is an important point to note as this section on the US precedent comes to a close, along with the fact that despite a lot of important historical detail the above works do not provide any specific definitions of the national security state. A last consideration of further detail on its institutional function appropriately brings the analysis towards the elusive question of definitions in the realm of national security. Laura Donohue's *Limits of National Security* (2011) in the *American Criminal Law Review* provides a thorough, and useful overview and critique of US national security, although the paper does not fundamentally challenge the imperial position of the US. Donohue argues that national security is "not a creature of the twentieth century," and despite appearing in the National Security Act of 1947 over one hundred times the term is never defined.⁹¹ Similarly this is with true national security strategies, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, and the 2001 Patriot Act, with an overall effect that is amorphous and circular: "material is classified because it is interpreted by officials as being related to national security, even as national security data is defined as material that has been classified."⁹² This is characteristic of the operation of power when it comes to knowledge production, and one must be suspect of rigid and uneven demands for definitional convention in the academy when those in power face no such restrictions but can instead enforce a status of integrity.

In such a context the focus of concern is primarily the function of relations. Donohue sets out to "examine the evolution of U.S. national security as understood by the interests that national security is intended to serve".⁹³ In an effort to move away from discipline-bound definitional restrictions, the examination of national security is conducted by focusing on "the object that is to be secured and the reason for its preservation - the purpose for which such object exists."⁹⁴ The examination is focused on the "executive branch as a whole", situating institutional relationships, "congressional grants of authority, appropriations, and oversight devices,"⁹⁵ thus allowing for an evaluation of tangible and representative indicators over time. The incorporation of the power relations embedded in military hierarchy and intelligence operations into other civilian channels of government has effectively made the largest branch of government (the Department of Defense) even larger in its scope of influence. The outcome of these institutional arrangements in the era where national security threats take their most amorphous form is an inversion of ends and means

such that it is “the federal government's sovereignty, which, through secret mechanisms and a greatly enlarged administrative capacity, is being secured as against the people.”⁹⁶ In framing the matter on what interests are served, the analysis begins to reformulate the function and definition of the national security state.

In taking that it is the executive of government being secured an emphasis must be maintained on the mechanisms through which the national security state sidelines any democratic checks on power and attempts at accountability. Thus the national security state has mechanisms to sideline Congress, and increasingly, the Judiciary. In the contemporary context the definition of security and the mechanisms of identifying security threats have become increasingly blurred as varied threats may stem from a single phenomenon, evident in the notion of “narco-terrorist” that embodies a threat across the realms of drugs, crime, and terrorism.⁹⁷ One specific issue that demonstrates the increasing problem faced by the courts (apart from the obvious effects of political appointments in bodies such as the Supreme Court) is the case where the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 that established a distinction between criminal law and national security concerns has been removed after 9/11.⁹⁸ Similarly, national security matters are exempt from the Freedom of Information Act. The judiciary has a fraction of the bureaucratic power and faces a general disparity of information with respect to the executive on national security matters, exaggerated by the broadening of security and recurring claims of “judicial institutional incompetence” or bias, made by the executive branch.⁹⁹ The function of this arrangement is that power is consolidated and accountability is deflected and dispersed. The context and detail considered thus far is substantial enough for the formulation of a historically derived definition of the national security state.

The institutional characteristics of the national security state are: a militarized government bureaucracy where an executive’s ability to define threats to national security is ideologically based and expansive in its limits, and the executive’s ability to respond to these threats through means outside the sphere of oversight is unhindered in its ability to circumscribe access to knowledge – intelligence – due to declared exceptional circumstances; all legitimated in the name of freedom. The operative theme of the national security state is justice unbounded by law where the centralization of power is coupled with the dispersion of responsibility, and externally oriented strategic concerns are prioritized over domestic socioeconomic needs of the population. This national security state is an integrated system

of bureaucratic-corporate-military power that is largely removed from public oversight, where the security of the government overshadows any other prerogative, and this entire complex is justified under the cause of individual freedom.

Proponents of the national security state as cited above, and critics such as those in the volume *The Bases of Empire: The Struggle Against US Military Posts* (2009) edited by Catherine Lutz, primarily situate the material origins of the national security state as a US product of the post WWII era.¹⁰⁰ Lutz's volume does consider the Caribbean as a particular region of concern, however there is no critical analysis of US imperialism, or reference to continuity in the patterns of accumulation of wealth and power established by British colonialism and the history of plantation slavery.¹⁰¹ In my reading of this literature it seems that to varying degrees all of these authors believe in and contribute to the US project, despite some moments of sharp criticism. A particularly notable chorus of criticisms arose from those who now fear the wrath of a State they legitimated when that attention was elsewhere. There is a particularly loud silence with regards to US imperialism, as well as any detailed histories and foundations of the State and society in the context of slavery. Further, there is a lack of critical overviews that frame the national security state as the evolution of the Western project of global domination with origins in colonial and imperial expansion from the modes of accumulation pioneered in the interchange between the slave plantations of the Americas and the industrial revolutions that catalyzed global capitalism.

This thesis starts off from these authors' operative definition of the national security state as an integrated bureaucratic-corporate-military system, exempt from law and removed from public oversight, yet justified as a protector of individual freedom. In such a State, power is centralized but responsibility is dispersed. For such a State, security of the government overshadows any other prerogative, and externally-oriented strategic concerns trump domestic socioeconomic needs of the population. Despite moments of sharp criticism, none of these scholars frame the national security state as rooted in the accumulation of global wealth and power in plantation slavery, British colonialism, and US imperialism. My thesis instead seeks to extend the concept of the national security state as an evolution of the Western project of colonial and imperial expansion, using the Caribbean, and Trinidad and Tobago specifically, as the primary example.

A Caribbean worldview from which to begin reconsideration

The concept of the national security state cannot simply be ‘imported’ onto a discussion of T&T. While T&T is a node in the sphere of the US national security complex it does retain its own particular manifestation due to its layered colonial history and subsequent context of independence. This engagement will utilize theory from the Caribbean that addresses some of the fundamental concepts at the base of national security in the context of the geography and history of the region. This work is situated a tradition of Caribbean political thought broadly identified by the New World group.¹⁰²

The group emerged in 1963 with the collective position of “economic decolonization as the real basis of political independence”¹⁰³ and sought to cultivate “sovereignty of the imagination”¹⁰⁴ in challenging the failures to change the status quo.¹⁰⁵ The phrase *sovereignty of the imagination* is from George Lamming, a literary figure, who edited the 1966 Guyana and Barbados Independence Special issues of the *New World Quarterly*. A lengthy quote by Lamming, from an interview in 2000, speaks to continuity in the imperative of decolonization beyond a political declaration:

This is a problem which I find myself reconsidering. Language is a source of control. But language is also a source of invention. And the controlling power of language of course depends very much on who has the power to define... this region that we call the Caribbean, the very early, in a way, if you like, premature global character of its formation, almost [is] in a way one of the earliest chapters in this experiment that is now called globalization, is that we were in a sense presented with the distinct possibility of making the abstract global, a global community of what [Martin] Carter would call, “valid persons.” Instead of a globalization of things and structures or space, the proximity that we have to each other, and the communality of historical cargo of burden, and survival from burden, that we carry, allowed us the possibility if we willed it, of giving to the concept of global a meaning that is not on the agenda of globalization. I am finding it very difficult to see how we are going to deal with that when definitions of our predicament by the chosen Definers - and I mean by the people who are economists, the people who are sociologists, the people who are in a variety of disciplines, and so on - the definers are mired in the language of their tutelage from which they have not been able to escape.¹⁰⁶

Norman Girvan complements Lamming’s centralizing of the problem of definition in a piece titled *Power Imbalances and Development Knowledge* (2007). The general North – South imbalance of power and a precedent of unilateral action has produced an established “*framework of customary action* for the conduct of international relations” (emphasis original) where the limits

of ‘appropriate’ state action “can be arbitrarily redefined by dominant powers”.¹⁰⁷ The overarching “imbalances are manifested in the overwhelming preponderance of the military power of the North, headed by a super-power with a global military capability.”¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, security alliances dominated by the global North “render many Southern states dependent on the North for their security, with spin-offs in other areas of their external relations.”¹⁰⁹

Girvan’s thrust is to confront the “knowledge hierarchies”¹¹⁰ established by the power imbalances that reflect the “Northern dominance in knowledge construction, reproduction and dissemination”.¹¹¹ Knowledge is understood as “the constructs, assumptions, and beliefs by which people understand and interpret the world around them” and the challenge in a system of domination is to confront the codification “as ideology, as economic or social theory” whereby this “knowledge serves the function of justifying hierarchal relations.”¹¹² Girvan links the continuity in this function where earlier “civilising mission” “doctrines were used to justify conquest and enslavement”, later on “colonialism”, and in the contemporary period “neo-liberal theory is used to justify market-led and corporate-dominated globalization”.¹¹³

In considering the overlapping military, economic, and knowledge imbalances at play, Girvan concludes that the function of “knowledge may be the most powerful in its ability to condition routine behaviour without resort to physical force or material sanction” as it “operates at the level of internalized assumptions” with respect to people and states.¹¹⁴ The claim of “universal applicability” of the neoliberal paradigm is established by the “knowledge hierarchy” that is maintained by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund as “global knowledge centres”.¹¹⁵ The discursive output of these institutions is coupled with their “policy based lending and advisory operations” which gives “tremendous prestige and influence amongst policy-makers of the South”,¹¹⁶ despite the ideological bias that is reinforced by the “global *centralization* of development research”.¹¹⁷

This paradigm for global development is charted by “a highly idealized version of the Western experience that is largely contradicted by the historical record”,¹¹⁸ such that the analysis is that to a “significant degree international knowledge functions as ideology”.¹¹⁹ The bias upheld in the difference between appearance and reality is admitted by an official historian of the World Bank, where the answer is “not much” in response to the question of what has the Bank “done in the last half-century to build institutions in developing countries

that could help them think for themselves?”¹²⁰ Girvan’s conclusion is appropriate in maintaining that as “long as the South is dependent for its development knowledge on the global centres of power, its own autonomy will be compromised.”¹²¹

The New World Group confronted this dependency in principle by highlighting the continuities in colonial patterns of organization in the economy and the society. The structure of the Caribbean economy in the period after independence remained largely oriented toward production of raw materials for export to the metropolis where the bulk of refinement and value added is accrued.¹²² This same pattern was found in the structure of the discipline of economics in 1960 at the University of the West Indies; dominated by a minority of British economists holding senior positions and enforcing a British economic curriculum with the insistence that there was no need for a Caribbean specific economic theory.¹²³ In this formation, which mirrors the organization of the economy itself, the Caribbean is the site of gathering raw data and Britain is the producer of knowledge to be applied and exported as universal. The New World movement refused to resign itself to these conditions and sought to actively contribute in the formulation of an alternative vision for the Caribbean.

Continuity in the organizational pattern of state and society with respect to foundations in the plantation mode of production is evidenced by the initial publications in the 1960s and 1970s of Lloyd Best and Kari Levitt¹²⁴ with their plantation theses,¹²⁵ and George Beckford in *Persistent Poverty* (1972). Taken together, these works set out the parameters of the plantation economy and society working from social, economic, and political observations that the plantation remained the characteristic firm around which lay the basis of organization of Caribbean economies through to the independent era.¹²⁶ In his original 1968 Plantation Economy article Best distinguishes modes of European colonization under hinterlands of conquest, settlement, and exploitation, where a plantation economy is a particular hinterland of exploitation characterized by a “merchant-pirate ethos” of short term planning utilizing total exploitation of labor in an open resource situation.¹²⁷

The metropolis provided military, administrative, and economic infrastructure to support the plantation that “admits virtually no distinction between organization and society, and chattel slavery” oriented towards exclusive export production.¹²⁸ The plantation economy and society is an *internalized* system of exploitation and control through exceptional violence that exists in a political economy *externalized* in its service and dependence on the

metropolitan center of political and economic power. In this conception the plantation foregrounds the existence of a national security state, exhibiting justified control of a subordinate other in defense of a particular notion of freedom that rests on the need to maintain systems of accumulation and domination transnationally.

The insistence of the New World Group was that the complex and unique history of the Caribbean called for a deeper approach to decolonization through a complete societal re-evaluation of economic, political, and cultural circumstances and a concerted effort to cultivate independent thought and expression in the political sphere. This group was formed around a core of economists, however their vision and program was intimately integrated with artists, poets, literary figures, community organizers, and researchers and theorists not bound by discipline or any other such confinement of thought. This movement collectively recognized that decolonization was an imperative that carried beyond the attainment of political independence.

The reach of the New World Group was broad, with chapters in Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad, and Montreal. The *New World* publications flowed hand-to-hand through these networks such that Norman Girvan described resistance to Eurocentric thinking as the basis of the group, and in its program it “waged a kind of intellectual guerrilla warfare”.¹²⁹ A headline of the group’s affiliates includes: Lloyd Best, George Beckford, James Millette, David deCaries, Miles Fitzpatrick, Roy Augier, Alister McIntyre, Kari Levitt, George Lamming, Gloria Lannaman, Norman Girvan, Owen Jefferson, Michael Witter, Sylvia Wynter, C.L.R. James, Edwin Carrington, Gordon Lewis, Martin Carter, and many more. The group’s organizing and publications spanned eleven years starting from the year after T&T and Jamaica attained independence, and had profound impacts across the Caribbean.

Consistent throughout the period from the time of the New World Group to the present is the overarching power of US influence in the region. The function of national security plays into the dependency of the core-periphery pattern where the Caribbean is a site of specific strategic concern to US national security and thus an area from which raw materials (intelligence and assets) are accrued. In turn the US specializes its national security discourse and practice, and deploys its conventions into the international sphere. In the Caribbean both discourse and practice of national security are directly informed by US norms.¹³⁰ The cycle of influence reworks itself continually in accordance with shifting threats and changing circumstances particular to the domestic states of the Caribbean, as well as in

response to, or anticipation of larger geopolitical shifts. The works above situate the imperial function of the national security state, detailing the active resistance to institutions of knowledge production that service the domination of the national security state. It was essential to situate the work of the NWG and its contribution to the decolonization project in the Caribbean. This review reinforces the call for Caribbean-specific approaches and provides some important historical and analytical content that supports the following analysis of the Crown Colony national security state that is used to derive to an appropriate definition for the case of T&T.

Crown Colony rule as a foundation of the national security state

James Millette, key member of the New World Group in Trinidad, was foundational in detailing the history of Crown Colony governance in Trinidad in the decades after the British took control of the island in 1797. *The Genesis of Crown Colony Government* (1970) situates and details the course of the “experiment” in Trinidad from the 1783 *Cédula de población* issued by the Spanish Crown as a means to incentivize French planters to populate the island in an attempt to increase security, focusing closely upon the period of British rule after the 1797 capture and the first declaration of a constitution in Trinidad in 1810.¹³¹ The *Cédula* was issued as an open proclamation to Catholic persons (a direct stipulation against the British) to settle in Trinidad through grants, tax incentives, and access to land on behalf of the Spanish government. In many respects these functions of the *Cédula* mirror the same parameters of the “industrialization by invitation” program of development via the attraction of foreign capital that came under challenge by the NWG in the immediate post-independence era.¹³² In the fifteen years between the *Cédula* and the British capture, Trinidad initiated a course towards a well prospected plantation economy, characterized by fresh soils for planters (both white and mulatto), a haven for revolutionaries, privateers, and runaway slaves, and home to the largest free colored population in the Caribbean with an overall French to Spanish speakers ratio of 20:1.¹³³

It was this combination of factors that brought Admiral Dundas to impart his specific concern regarding Trinidad to Major General Abercromby, leader of the British expedition sent to the West Indies after the defeat of General Maitland’s Royal Army expedition in Saint Domingue. Abercromby’s military expedition that set sail in February 1796 was the largest

force ever dispatched from British shores, numbering 20,000 troops.¹³⁴ Also reflecting the unprecedented severity of the security, political, and economic crisis of the West Indian colonies was the fact that Abercromby was informed that his burden was that of the future of the British Empire in the West Indies.¹³⁵ In a secret military dispatch of instruction to Ambercromby, Dundas stated definitively: “Trinidad, because of the ‘Principles and Persons which have lately been introduced there’ had become ‘a cause of just alarm and real Danger to several of our most valuable islands.’”¹³⁶ The main factors behind the conquest of Trinidad were the prospect for previously unexploited plantation prosperity heightened by the fact of an increasingly overt manifestation of unrestrained republican sentiments such that Millette makes the reference to the island before British capture as a “major threat to the security of the hemisphere”.¹³⁷

In noting the unique context of Trinidad, Millette poses the research question that lies at the center of the Crown Colony endeavor: “What sort of government is best suited to a West Indian colony the majority of whose citizens were foreign and colored, and the majority of whose inhabitants were, taken in the aggregate, slaves?”¹³⁸ In response he presents three Colonial Office dispatches that characterize the shifting concerns regarding the development of a constitution in Trinidad, each noting a specific identified population problem as it served to justify the prolonged denial of a representative system of government. The first letter was sent on 16 October 1802, from the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Lord Hobart, to the Commissioners established in control of Trinidad, and lays out as the primary concern the low ratio of British persons to foreigners (mostly French and Spanish) within the white population.¹³⁹ The threat of republicanism was made evident and heightened by the language difference and almost no immediate possibility of loyalty to the British Crown. The second letter is dated 27 November 1810, and was sent from Lord Liverpool to Governor Thomas Hislop, arguing that the principal factor in refusing a representative system was the large number of free coloreds that made it “inadvisable to enfranchise”.¹⁴⁰ The third letter was sent by Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Viscount Goderich, to governor Lewis Grant on 30 January 1832. In the immediate lead up to slave emancipation this letter further refused representation on the basis of the cost (monetary and security) in “entirely abandoning the interests of the slaves.”¹⁴¹

These three letters broadly outline the parameters of the State's vision of the population, which is that demographic concerns determined the basis of organization of government with regards to securing the plantation economy upon which the colony depended. Starting from the split in the white population these factors were paramount in the denial of constitutional advance by the British government, with the removal of the representative option as the principal factor allowing the official experimentation with amelioration schemes that were to follow.¹⁴² The overall pattern, with a particular relevance for the concern of the foundations of national security, is expressed by Millette: if "war is the continuation of diplomacy by other means then the government in the island of Trinidad in the post-Commission period was the pursuit of faction in another guise."¹⁴³ Millette was the first to detail the historical significance of the Crown Colony mode of governance as it was formed in Trinidad in the lead up to emancipation and situates how the Crown Colony system was set to serve metropolitan interests at the expense of local populations. The primary goal of the British was to secure the plantation economy in spite of the event of emancipation, and that demanded the institutionalization of a centralized system of State management that was heavily dominated by military influence in its early formation.¹⁴⁴

Millette noted that the British undertook immediate measures to reorganize the police, establish curfews and routine patrols within the island, as well as the institutionalization of a program for the strict regulation of movement of people in and out of the island.¹⁴⁵ The local militia was reinforced and expanded in function and power to include significant judicial and administrative linkages with the government.¹⁴⁶ Two other works on this particular context provide further insight into the internal security functions of Crown Colony governance that will allow for the formulation of the Crown Colony system as the basis of a national security state. Claudius Fergus formulates *Revolutionary Emancipation* (2013) as a challenge to colonial pretenses of humanitarian abolition by engaging a detailed analysis of the historical political-economy and military determinants surrounding the island of Trinidad after its capture by the British in 1797, in direct response to the British military defeat in Saint Domingue by the black forces of the Haitian revolution.¹⁴⁷

The British imperative was to satisfy the need for a more effective mode of colonial rule and social control that could carry the plantation economy through the institutional ordeal of emancipation. This imperative came as a response to the underlying fear of insurrection wrought by instances of militant slave resistance increasing in number and in

scale across the West Indies.¹⁴⁸ The most important factor in this system of governance was to avoid what has been called *The 'Trap' of Representation*,¹⁴⁹ which was the transfer of chartered rights to the plantocracy in the colony.¹⁵⁰ The “Trap” that had been the disastrous lesson learned for colonial ambitions was the case of Saint Domingue where it had been observed that it was the success of the planters in obtaining representation that brought the immediate consequences of catalyzing the outbreak of the French Revolution in the colony and thus opening the space for slave insurrection.¹⁵¹

Lord Liverpool, the Secretary for War and the Colonies during this period of interest, wrote to Sir Thomas Hislop, Governor of Trinidad, on 4 January 1811 to outline the Crown’s position on the governance of Trinidad.¹⁵² The letter notes Trinidad and Demerara (contemporary Guyana) as factors that could derail abolition if elected councils were established there. Of prime importance to Liverpool was the unique demography of Trinidad, with concern for the very large free-colored population (comprising 60% of the male population),¹⁵³ as well as the cosmopolitan white population many of whom were considered aliens not suitable to parliamentary process.¹⁵⁴ The retention of absolute power was justified as necessary in the “obligation” to abolition, and further, Crown Colony rule was the principal means to maintain control over any avenues for subversion by vested interests in parliament or the colonial legislative.¹⁵⁵

For Fergus, the Emancipation Act is a system of social control, evident in the detail considered and the simple economics that indicate a disproportion in spending allocated to the militia, police, magistracy, and prisons as compared to education and social restitution.¹⁵⁶ The immediate circumstance which produced the disenfranchisement of the newly emancipated population were the targeted controls over access to land with stipulations of large sized plots for plantation production. In 1832, what might be called an omnibus ordinance was passed that redefined “a wide range of offenses” in targeted clauses of economic, political, and administrative jurisdictions such that the scope of arbitration was greatly increased, the “correctional punishments” administered more severe, and a newly expanded class of “magistrates” with the power of the Protector of Slaves was established.¹⁵⁷ It is noted that these “magistrates” were slaveholders, and the British explicitly undercut any potential for the existence of an independent labor force with the mass importation of indentured laborers from India and China in the following decades.¹⁵⁸ This was the basis of a divided society contained by a State with consolidated power that is actively turned inward

on the island's population.

A more domestically focused analysis of the Crown Colony's security workings in Trinidad during the immediate post-emancipation era starts with the characteristics of a plantation economy: institutionalized monopolization of land and capital, a mass coerced labor force confined to cash crop production, and a political economic arrangement that existed for the sole export of primary plantation product.¹⁵⁹ This system of plantation control has been described as “criminogenic”, where the harsh material conditions the population was subjected to ensured widespread desperation amidst a circumstance where the elite manipulated the State to broaden the scope of criminalization. This broadening of criminality was done in such a manner that followed the pre-existing divisions in the society, still based on race (socially and ideologically re-enforced as the overt barrier of slavery had now been abolished) and class.¹⁶⁰ The plantation economy was in full swing after emancipation and by 1870 the consolidation of power in Trinidad was increasingly evident as the explicit project of Anglicization achieved dominance. The fracture in white solidarities was significantly reduced as a majority of the French Creole interests were successfully aligned with the power of the English planters, and government – military officials, now in full control of the State and the economy in its path of development.¹⁶¹

The context and consequences of the disparity in criminalization in the post emancipation period are demonstrated in the wide range of interventions against the local population carried out through the Crown Colony system of government.¹⁶² The most significant crimes in this period are those against property, primarily small-scale praedial larceny for personal consumption carried out as an attempt to seek relief from harsh inequalities.¹⁶³ Ordinance 5 of 1855 explicitly moved to further the individualization of punishment with the expansion of the definition of “malicious injury” as no longer limited to a “riotous assembly”,¹⁶⁴ and other ordinances were enforced that gave the planters numerous avenues through which they refused pay and extended the contracts of laborers.¹⁶⁵ This shift saw a doubling of convictions in a ten-year span, especially noted in the periods of crises where workers attempted to organize protest against wage cuts. The range of measures passed targeted specific aspects and characteristics in the population as a means of coercion and control, and was not limited to the plantations.

The specifically targeted ordinances reveal what the interests the Crown Colony system served, and who was a threat. The bias is obvious when considering Ordinances 6 of 1868,

and 5 of 1888, which specifically targeted games of chance such as *wbe-wbe*: a Chinese originated small-stakes game widespread among the lower classes of the population that was quite often used as a social fund for assisting distressed community members and for burials.¹⁶⁶ These practices were targeted as “gambling”, and made a criminal offence, along with drumming and many features of the black and colored population’s carnival celebrations.¹⁶⁷ Similarly the 1880s saw an array of ordinances in attempt to control the population, and thus there was an increasingly hostile environment with escalating antagonisms between the police and the masses. This is evident in the Carnival riots of 1881 (known as the Canboulay riots), 1883, and 1884, as well as the Hosein riot turned massacre of 1884, and the Arouca drumming riot of 1891.¹⁶⁸

These actions did nothing to hinder those practices of gambling undertaken by the elite class, such as horseracing, for these were organized by the police and did not fall under the specific codes of criminalization declared.¹⁶⁹ This disparity is coupled with the fact that white-collar crimes such as fraud, embezzlement, and forgery (as crimes restricted to the literate/elite of society) are grossly understated in the statistics.¹⁷⁰ The cases that are noted involve persons in positions such as the Attorney General, lawyers, magistrates, and other senior civil servants, yet convictions were uncommon. Those very few who were convicted were junior civil servants and other persons without a network of connections to the powerful in society.¹⁷¹ Those who did have the means deployed their privilege of race and class, and especially took advantage of the “growing spirit of Creole nationalistic consciousness and anti-metropolitan sentiment and antagonisms” as a means to justify their position in the national population.¹⁷² A definition of the national security state is the goal of this section, and the first formulation will be derived from this analysis of the conditions of Crown Colony system in Trinidad leading up to and after the declaration of emancipation.

The basis of this thesis rests upon the argument that Crown Colony governance as founded in Trinidad during the 1800s in the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution and impending emancipation constituted the essence of a national security state.¹⁷³ Working from the above analysis, the general parameters of the national security state embedded in the Crown Colony system are: a centralized state characterized by (i) an exceptionally high degree of executive control over essential institutions that bypass most civil checks, (ii) an overall military and internal security emphasis resulting in a divided population and suppression of social organizations, (iii) policies that are asymmetrically oriented to and

representative of the interests of private/corporate property and capital, (iv) executive control over the movement of people, goods, and communications, and (v) governance of the State and economy in accordance with the larger strategic interests of the British Empire.

An appropriate definition of the national security state has to explicitly link its foundations in the institutions of slavery and governance of a plantation economy and society, as it must also be situated in an international context of Western dominance stemming from colonial and imperial arrangements. The institutions of the state that bear this legacy are characterized by an exceptionally high degree of executive control of government, where there are institutional mechanisms through which the executive bypass major checks of democratic accountability, and instead there are direct channels for the “special interests” of the various groups of elite representation. The displacement of elected institutions such as a House/Congress is coupled with displacement/paralysis of the Courts as a functional mechanism to keep the executive in check.

At the same time this definition of the national security state must consider the distorted conceptions of individualized freedom deployed as a means to socialize fear in the service of bolstering private executive control of the State. In the national security state, there is an elite cadre with access to wide reaching forms of surveillance and intelligence networks, integrated control of the armed forces with a posture of intervention, the institutional ability to displace and bypass democratic processes of government and accountability, and direct mass influence through media institutions as well as widespread integration to academic networks. The national security elite is made up of the top politicians, government bureaucrats, lawyers, military and security officials, and private/corporate interests who control the dominant affairs in the country and its regional network. This formation can be seen as a complex, driven by a violently defended underlying ideological dogma of free-market fundamentalism and materialist liberalism that has the ability to control and distort definitions, histories, laws, social movements, and most certainly individualized fears.

The definition of the national security state used in the analysis of this thesis is: a nation-state with origins in colonial institutions built to contain and endure institutions of slavery and its aftermath, aligned with imperial international arrangements that are rationalized by liberals and (neo)conservatives alike, and managed by a protected upper hierarchy of government executives in tandem with an unelected elite that together control

the institutional means to bolster private/corporate capital interests through the function of an ideological definition of national security and a state security complex that includes: the use of widespread surveillance, intelligence networks, and knowledge production systems to serve its ideological fundamentalism; the use of state (and increasingly private) military or paramilitary forces to contain and dismantle any organized responses that challenge the unbroken conditions of discontent; the displacement of elected representation and the courts as mechanisms of executive accountability,

Outline

The first chapter of this thesis includes an introduction, sections that make up a literature review, above, and this outline. Four main chapters of historical analysis, with a brief conclusion are below. Chapter II is based mostly on established literature and is used to provide the geographical and historical context that sets the stage for the main engagement of the thesis. Chapters III through V make up the principal research contribution of this thesis, mostly based on archival evidence from the National Archives of the United Kingdom Public Records Office, and an extended interview with Kari Polanyi Levitt. The archival sources used in each section will be listed in the respective parts of this outline.

The focus of the thesis is on the period from 1947 to 1978, beginning in the immediate postwar context with the granting of universal adult suffrage and the first general election that signifies the opening-up of T&T's constitution and the move towards independence. In 1947 the Crown Colony system was still overtly in place, yet on the eve of major changes, and thus it provides a useful point from which to begin close observation of the sequence of changes that were made to the constitution as independence approached. The significant concerns are the lasting patterns in the function of national security and the impacts of the US base in Trinidad into the postwar period. T&T attained independence in 1962 with the acclaimed historian Dr. Eric Williams as Prime Minister. The continuity in the organization and function of the national security state will be traced through the first decade of independence to situate the conditions in T&T when the country became a republic in 1976. The closing date of the analysis is 1978, an appropriate marker as it gives a snapshot shortly after republic status was attained. It is the peak year of the 1970s oil boom

in T&T, during which the country was already showing signs of an underlying crisis building-up pressure.

Chapter II is a highlight from the unification of T&T in 1899 until the end of WWII, and the 1946 elections as the first with universal adult suffrage. This early period situates the origins of the commercial oil industry 1910 and its increasing strategic security importance to British Empire. In 1925 the first elected component was introduced into government in T&T, a small minority in the legislature, and only 6% of the population enfranchised. The 1937 labour riots in Trinidad centered on the oil industry, where the foreign corporations posted record profits and workers pay was suppressed. This circumstance demonstrates the function of the Crown Colony national security state in the 20th Century. The de-escalation of the labour riots was achieved by outright suppression through physical force and intervention of the Royal Navy and Marines. The onset of WWII came shortly thereafter along with the increasing importance of Trinidad to the US. The presence of the US is most noted through the impacts of its military bases on the local population in Trinidad during the war, with its racist imperialist occupation on display.

The US bases were established in T&T during 1940/1941, and would remain through the war and for two decades after. 1942 and 1943 were highpoints of submarine attacks in Caribbean as they targeted the Trinidad area due to concentrated supply lines, and the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission (AACC) was formally established to help alleviate shortages of food due to record high ship losses. In actuality the key figures of the AACC worked to streamline the process of establishing US bases in the Caribbean, and later the organization functioned as an institution through which the US formally sought to determine the postwar policy direction of the Caribbean and promote independence as a direct means to push back British influence in the region. Eric Williams' political career has its beginnings in this period, noted through his direct links to US security agencies and the AACC. The wartime period comes to close in Trinidad with the granting of universal adult suffrage in 1945, and specific attention is given to the Crown Colony constitution that upheld the fundamental characteristics of the national security state.

Archival sources used in this chapter were: The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Public Records Office files from the Colonial Office, Foreign Commonwealth Office, War Office, Ministry of Defence, Foreign Office; Government of Trinidad and Tobago websites, Ministry of Energy and Industries, Election and Boundaries Commission;

University of Florida Digital Collection; FBI Freedom of Information Request documents made public online via Muckrock.

Chapter III covers the period 1947-1962 in Trinidad, during which the Crown Colony constitution underwent a change towards democratic principles, and the surprising reversal back towards centralized authority under the first local government. The focus is the evolution of the constitution, the organization of the economy, industrial relations and worker suppression, the formation of the P.N.M. and its electoral performance, and the extent to which Williams' claims of 'decolonizing' the Crown Colony constitution can be substantiated. In this regard the alignment of the oil and sugar interests vision of the constitution with Eric Williams' stated principles are detailed, and set in opposition to formulations that came from local councils and workers unions. In the opening segment the imperative of internal security is highlighted through the British intelligence and security system in place in Trinidad, along with the US bases which remained operational throughout. The outline of the constitution in 1955 will be situated, as it was before Eric Williams attained power in 1956 with the P.N.M.

The formation of the P.N.M. and the first five years of Eric Williams' term indicate the extent to which he was unwilling to break with the established interests of power, and thus his reliance on the Colonial Office in this early period is firm in the records. Most important are the executive actions Williams took to establish a strong hold on government in a case where he did not command mass electoral support and thus had relatively weak parliamentary representation. Williams relied on the British nominated component for a majority and attained further constitutional modifications to broaden his chances of electoral support, but mostly utilized a system where power was consolidated in a nominated Cabinet controlled by the Prime Minister. In this system of government and in the continued function of the economy oriented toward external interests Williams ensured the status quo remained. An insight into the security threat evaluation presented by Williams as he built up to his 1960 "march on Chaguaramas" is given through the perception of the Colonial Office and the US security agencies. This record reveals the limited extent of Williams' anti-colonial challenges, and provides revealing insight into the conditions of T&T upon achieving independence in 1962, with a national security state intact.

Archival sources used in this chapter were: The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Public Records Office files from the Colonial Office, Ministry of Defence,

Defence Office, Ministry of Power; Edited reference collection of documents on constitutional history of the British Empire; University of Florida Digital Collection; Edited collection of Eric Williams' speeches; Government of Trinidad and Tobago websites, Election and Boundaries Commission, Parliament; FBI Freedom of Information Request Documents made public online via Muckrock.

Chapter IV covers the first decade of independence in T&T, 1962-1972. The early years of independence record an anti-communist national security state headed by Dr. Eric Williams. Guyana in the early 1960s is an appropriate case to contrast with T&T; this is as it pertains to colonial/imperial interventions in support of T&T and against Guyana. In Trinidad the analysis situates Special Branch Intelligence reports, the 1963 Mbanefo Commission of Enquiry into Subversive activity, the 1965 Industrial Stabilization Act, noting the consistent executive action against 'threats' to an ideological insistency, and thus the various means of targeting those who thought and attempted to organize otherwise. Lloyd Best of the New World Group was based in Trinidad in the mid 1960s, primarily at the University, but was and active on the ground and did become a target of the national security state, along with routine targeting of labour leaders. The National Joint Action Committee rose out of radical student leadership and alliance with labour leaders and became the forefront of the Black Power challenge to the Williams government, catalyzed by the events of the 1968 and 1969.

Political interference in the security services is a key feature in the 1960s, contributing to the volatility. This is noted primarily in the Regiment where a corrupted hierarchy fed grievances throughout the force, but also the police where abuses of executive power were not uncommon. The British High Commissioner's analysis of the situation is used alongside 'intelligence' from a US foreign correspondent to provide an analysis of the security threats throughout the events leading up to 1970. This episode features labour strike action, student protests, Black Power militancy, the 'February Revolution' and a Regiment uprising in an attempted coup d'état in April 1970. Williams responded to this situation with a call for US military support, and relied on executive actions that in effect compromised State legitimacy. The aftermath of 1970 brings the section to an end, noting the outcome of the court martial, and the convictions that were later overturned. The context of emergence of the National Union of Freedom Fighters indicates the continuity in organized dissent against the PNM government characterized by executive dominance and an empowered and corrupted police

force. These patterns set the trend and material basis for the problems faced in the purview of national security in contemporary T&T.

Archival sources used in this chapter were: The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Public Records Office files from the Colonial Office, Defence Office, Ministry of Power, Foreign Commonwealth Office, Prime Minister's Office, Foreign Office; Declassified US Government records on Guyana hosted online; Online Archives of the Institute of Current World Affairs, Frank J. McDonald newsletters; McGill University Archives, Kari Polanyi Levitt collection; Edited collection of Eric Williams' speeches; Government of Trinidad and Tobago websites, Election and Boundaries Commission, Parliament; Caribbean elections online database.

Chapter V spans the year of independence from 1962 to 1978, two years after republic status was attained and at the height of an oil boom. This section primarily examines the impact of the national security state on independent thought in the Caribbean, with T&T in focus. C.L.R. James and key members of the New World Group (NWG) are situated as they are caught and targeted by the national security state on various occasions. The impacts of these actions actively hindered the careers of the groups' members, their ability to produce their work, and the efforts to build institutions of independent thought. This analysis links Guyana, T&T, Jamaica, and Canada by locating the transnational network of the NWG's work and organizing, as it also reveals a security network across the same geography that was always ready to intervene. Further insight into the workings of the national security state reveals its function as a system not reliant on a strongman individual leader, but operational through the organization of institutions and the active targeting of dissident voices through bureaucratic mechanisms. The widespread and active network of a "Western Intelligence Community" is situated in contrast to members of the New World Group, such as Lloyd Best, George Beckford, and Kari Levitt, a professor and one-time economist for the T&T government that was repeatedly targeted by the national security state.

As Kari Levitt was pushed out of Trinidad as Williams' fortunes in government changed with the onset of an oil and natural gas boom, which alleviated immediate pressure and allowed public expenditure to pacify some of the population's material concerns. Eric Williams further consolidated power in this period, taking actions that seriously compromised the functioning of the civil service in a move to empower appointed Ministerial portfolios even further. Despite claims of 'nationalization' and 'diversification' the

substance reveals that foreign interests continue to maintain strategic control of the economy that primarily relies on the export-oriented petroleum sector. The outcome of the 1970s oil boom was an import-oriented materialist consumer society in T&T with obvious inequality and underlying social cleavages intact. Thus this chapter concludes with the endurance of the national security state on the eve of the neoliberal counter-revolution.

Archival sources used in this chapter were: The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Public Records Office files from the Colonial Office, Defence Office, Ministry of Power, Foreign Commonwealth Office, Prime Minister's Office, Foreign Office; Declassified US Government records on Guyana hosted online; Online Archives of the Institute of Current World Affairs, Frank J. McDonald newsletters; McGill University Archives, Kari Polanyi Levitt collection; Edited collection of Eric Williams' speeches; British Library of the United Kingdom online collection; New World Quarterly online archive; Government of Trinidad and Tobago websites, Election and Boundaries Commission, Parliament, Ministry of Legal Affairs; US Department of Defense online archive; Author interview with Kari Polanyi Levitt; University of Florida Digital Collection.

The conclusion gives attention to some of the key contemporary problems of national security in T&T, where the historical analysis provided in this thesis is used to counter the distorted understandings in contemporary discourses. This is done by highlighting a single study that compliments the work of this thesis in confronting the systems that uphold and work for the national security state, and in effect serve to bolster its power by producing knowledge that serves to justify the government's displays of power and criminalization of traditions of resistance to colonialism and anti-Black racism that go back to the 1960s. It is argued that an important antidote to such distorted self-serving discourses is a strong analysis based from the historical context which brought T&T to these contemporary circumstances; i.e. an analysis that details the suspension of the decolonization process and the endurance of the national security state in T&T, noting the unbroken continuities in the patterns of who hold impunity in office, what interests retain most profits from the economy, who is protected by the states forces, and who remains disposable.

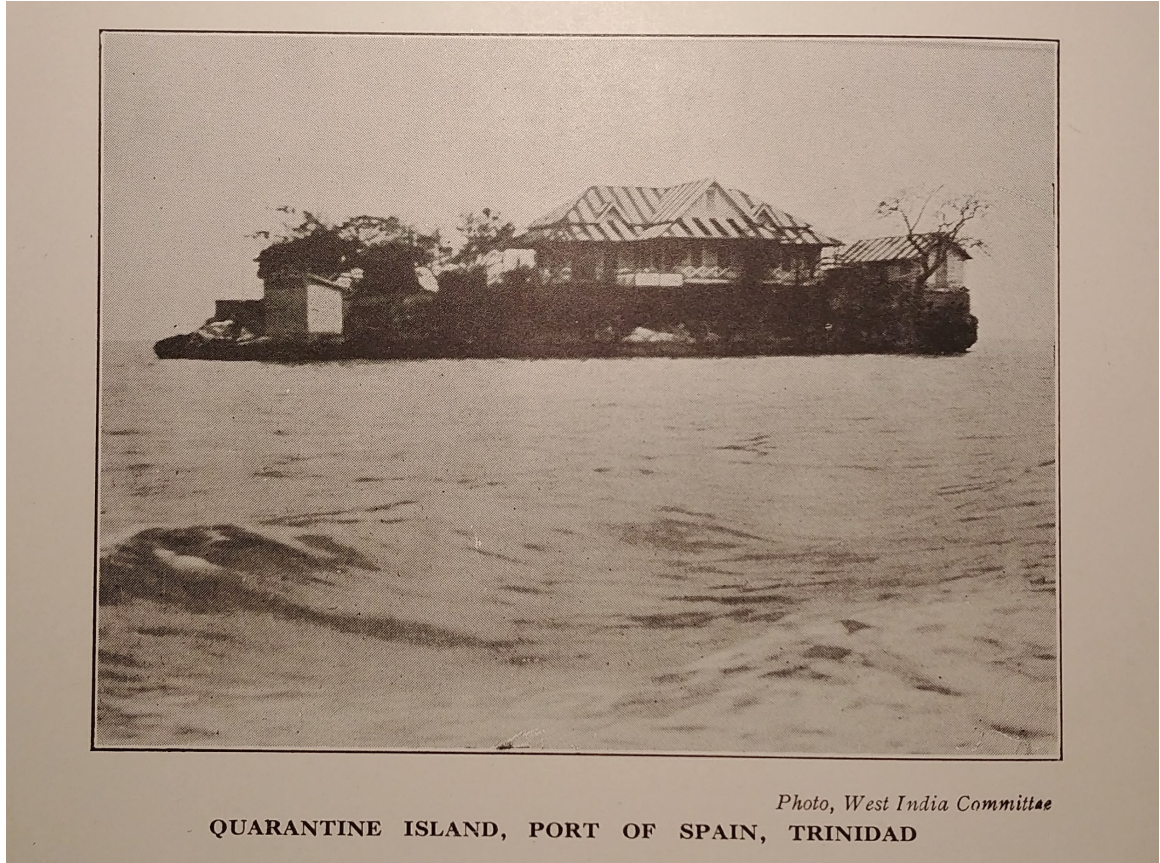
In conclusion the case of Walter Rodney brings this analysis to a close, noting the context of his grounded, sharp and unwavering commitment to decolonization, never to back down from the security state, but most devastatingly impacted. Walter Rodney is a classic case of how the national security state endures, and the function of its violent

interventions against independent thought. Nevertheless, even as the national security state remains prominent in everyday life, there is always space for an undertone of resurgence and it only needs resonance and consequent amplification to become an orchestra.

Chapter II, 1899-1946

Situating the geopolitical importance of the national security state of Crown Colony T&T

Image 1. A prison of open water



Pictured above is Nelson Island, titled “Quarantine Island” as it historically had been by the British when it was used to process incoming slaves, and indentured laborers up to the early 1900s. Union leader Uriah Buzz Butler was detained on this island after being arrested in the 1937 labour disturbances, as were the Black Power leaders in 1970. The island is very symbolic, a clear “natural” unit of containment, and serves to highlight the geographic basis of this study on the national security state, in these southern Caribbean islands. Prince Emmanuel, a rastafari Bobo Shanti leader, described a Caribbean island as “an open prison, surrounded by water”,¹⁷⁴ poetically exposing the institutions which govern life in these “ghetto paradise” islands.¹⁷⁵ Not far from this prison island are some other small islands where the elite’s holiday houses are located.

The function of the national security state in these small Southern Caribbean islands needs to be situated as part of a wider system of global colonial and imperial interests. From the beginning of the twentieth century and increasing in decades thereafter, the interchange

between the British Empire and the US as the top superpower is demonstrated in the Caribbean. Trinidad provides a small ‘stage’ from which to observe this interchange at an awkward but important period in the histories of these empires; challenges to the Western global order by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, and the growing movements for decolonization. Nevertheless the consequence is that prime attention was given to T&T’s oil industry, and hence a heavy emphasis on internal security most notably manifested in the suppression of worker organization. In T&T the Crown Colony system of government ensured that the private/corporate interests were principally served. This was manifested in strong institutions to protect and uphold the profitable export industries that grew alongside a noted absence of institutions that protect workers, foster social uplift and integration, or, on a most basic level, secure local livelihoods with food production.

The Governor was the centralized authority of the local government and actively used the armed forces, local police and intervention by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, to subdue worker mobilization in the oil industry. At this point less than 6% of the population could vote, and there was the first introduction of a small minority of elected members in the Legislative Council. The population was also forced to confront the impacts of US Naval and US Army/Air Force bases established on the island as a means to secure essential supply lines of oil and bauxite. Perhaps unsurprisingly both the US military bases and the executive dominated Crown Colony system remained in place long after the war ended.

The Anglo-American Caribbean Commission (AACC) played an important role in mediating and securing the transition to the postwar order in the British Caribbean. The AACC was established by US initiative as an institutional means to counter British political influence in the region by obtaining a direct channel into research and policy formation influence in British colonies. Eric Williams worked for the AACC for twelve years, and despite being hailed as an anti-colonial and anti-racist scholar he spent time among US intelligence circles in Washington. The context and function of the AACC is most significant in framing the later analysis of this thesis where the concern is the continuity of the Crown Colony constitution and the national security state beyond the declaration of independence. Eric Williams was T&T’s first, and longest-ever serving, Prime Minister. This chapter sets the stage for that engagement by locating the work of the AACC and Eric Williams within the networks of the US national security state that was firstly concerned with establishing unquestioned US influence in the Western Hemisphere.

The Trinidad oil industry at the basis of the imperial strategy

The beginnings of Trinidad and Tobago as a unified political entity correspond with the emergence of the US as the world's leading military and economic superpower. US primacy was most evident in the Caribbean where the US increasingly dictated security arrangements. The 1899 unification of Trinidad and Tobago coincides with the founding of the Organization of American States during The First International Conference of American States,¹⁷⁶ and a report by the director of Naval Intelligence for the Royal Navy that the US had completely outclassed the British in the West Indies.¹⁷⁷ The 1901 agreement to give the US complete military control of the Panama Canal, the 1902 establishment of the Caribbean Division of the US North Atlantic Squadron, and the formal recognition of the Monroe Doctrine by the British are indications of a key shift in a determined Anglo-American alliance of imperial continuity.¹⁷⁸ The decision to disband the West Indies Squadron of the Royal Navy in 1904, and the strategic withdrawal of the Royal Navy itself in 1905 represents the formal ascension of the US as the unquestioned imperial power in the Western Hemisphere.¹⁷⁹

The interventionist position of the US's early national security strategy took material form in the Caribbean. In the decade between 1903 and 1913 the US Navy was sent to the Caribbean more than 20 times to control political turmoil, notably through multiple interventions into Haiti, Cuba, Panama, Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Nicaragua.¹⁸⁰ The recurring concerns in the posture of the US towards the Caribbean are two-fold: the protection of the imperial sphere of influence from *external* threats by major powers and the policing involved in maintaining *internal* security of the various units to ensure the stability of empire.¹⁸¹ War Plan Black of 1913 put the Caribbean at the center of focus in a projection of German aggression.¹⁸² The first US Navy vessel to cross the Panama Canal was in 1914. This marked an important beginning in the shift in US national security strategy towards a more global posture,¹⁸³ with the Caribbean as the single most important area in the US Navy's planning throughout the period 1913–1917.¹⁸⁴ Although the US underscored the regional security influence, Britain still had a firm hold on its colonies and Trinidad was of particular interest.

Petroleum became a key defining strategic feature of globally oriented national security agendas in the early twentieth century, and it has been noted that the first oil well sunk in

Trinidad was in 1857 at a depth of 55 meters, though its significance has not been fully considered. According to a British Official, “the credit for one of the first successful oil wells in the world might fairly be claimed by Trinidad.”¹⁸⁵ It was a US company that drilled this first well, and there has been persistent attention on Trinidad ever since. By 1910 commercial oil production was established in the country with the first crude oil export to England, and some 60 foreign companies established between 1909 and 1912.¹⁸⁶ Winston Churchill appointed a Royal Commission under the Navy in 1912 to conduct an investigation across the British Empire to evaluate politically stable sources of oil necessary for the functioning of the navy.¹⁸⁷ The strategic importance of oil took a heightened note with the finding that Trinidad was the only site of proven oil reserves in the British Empire at the time.¹⁸⁸

The security importance of oil supplies not only resulted in the heightened strategic importance on Trinidad, but also affected the development of the petroleum industry itself. Coinciding with the emergence of the commercial oil industry in Trinidad was the fact that the Royal Navy recognized the superiority of oil as a fuel and made the decision to begin replacing its coal powered fleet.¹⁸⁹ Less than 1% of Britain’s energy requirements were met by petroleum products in 1900,¹⁹⁰ however by 1912 the Royal Navy had fully committed to the new fuel and commissioned the *Elizabeth Class* as its first fleet of vessels that operated solely on petroleum combustion.¹⁹¹ The Royal Navy was essential for the existence of the British Empire, and because it was the primary agent pushing government commitment to petroleum the approach taken towards the overall development of oil policy reflected the specific concerns of naval supply line planning within a framework of national security.¹⁹²

The security agenda that determined this process was most concerned with power-parity and thus developments in petroleum technology became a type of arms race. At the beginning of the century the Royal Navy held a strategic advantage because it was unequalled in size,¹⁹³ however its planners understood the need to at least match the technological advances being made by the Italian, French, Russian, and US navies as they pioneered the use of petroleum.¹⁹⁴ After taking into consideration the US Navy’s 1916 and 1919 ship building programs the Royal Navy confirmed that it was going to be eclipsed by the US in terms of naval power.¹⁹⁵ In light of such a circumstance and with reliance on the US as the single largest oil supply of the British Empire, the Petroleum Imperial Policy Committee and the British War Mission both recognized the strategic weakness of this position in 1918 and placed utmost importance on the need to bolster sources within the empire.¹⁹⁶ In both

application and control of sources of oil the progression of the twentieth century evidenced US superiority of power.

The vulnerability of the British with respect to the US is evident in the 1917 breakdown of sources of oil for the Royal Navy: US 71.5%, Persia 10%, Mexico 8%, Domestic 7.5%, Trinidad 2%, and Borneo 1%.¹⁹⁷ New discoveries in Trinidad and Venezuela in 1918 provided some relief to strategic planning efforts,¹⁹⁸ and Trinidad's rise to prominence as a source of oil for the British Empire increased from then onwards, rising to 50.3% of the Royal Navy's supplies by 1932.¹⁹⁹ In 1937 the Oil Board of the Imperial Defence Committee reported that Trinidad accounted for 62.8% of total oil production in the British Empire,²⁰⁰ and was expected to supply the Royal Air Force with 25% of its wartime needs.²⁰¹

The world's most advanced aviation fuel plant at the time began operations in south Trinidad in 1938.²⁰² This source of fuel supply was directly attributed to the success of the Royal Air Force in the "Battle of Britain", without which the Oil Control Board admitted that Britain would have probably lost, and the Petroleum Times specifically highlighted Trinidad Leasehold Ltd. as a proportionately unmatched contributor to the war effort.²⁰³ The British endured its relative decline in part by strategic control of places and resources such as that represented by Trinidad. This heightened security emphasis had contradictory consequences for the local population, where there was a marked emphasis on investment in infrastructure for industry as opposed to institutions for social development and democratic governance. Many elements of the local population would become outright targets of internal security, unabated despite the progression toward internal self-government.

Crown Colony Trinidad in the 1930s, profits for the few and discontent for the many

The cruelties of property and privilege are always more ferocious than the revenges of poverty and oppression. For the one aims at perpetuating resented injustice, the other is merely a momentary passion soon appeased.

(C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 1938)

The engrained domestic disparities in Trinidad can hardly be hidden in the circumstances from which the widespread discontent of the 1930s flared up across the Caribbean in the lead up to WWII. In 1937 Trinidad Leasehold Ltd. and Apex (later BP) posted large profits

and declared 30% and 45% dividend returns to shareholders respectively.²⁰⁴ In the same year the Petroleum Association in Trinidad internally reported that local living expenses had increased by 17% in the previous two years, yet wages were below their pre-depression levels. The infrastructural costs of developing the industry were placed on the local government while private companies were given preferential tax rates and exclusive access to extensive tracts of crown lands in south Trinidad from which local peasants were excluded.²⁰⁵ At this point the petroleum industry employed about 14,000 people, with the sugar and cocoa industries employing about 40,000 and 17,000 people respectively.²⁰⁶ After decades of expansion and high profitability catalyzed by state subsidies and loans to employers the sugar industry was in relative decline despite the “extravagant use of low-paid labour” as reported by the West Indian Sugar Commission in 1930.²⁰⁷

The agriculture industry employed the largest amount of people, and the conditions of those who labored for its profits are a good indicator of the harsh realities faced by most on the island of Trinidad. Cocoa surpassed sugar as Trinidad’s leading agricultural crop at the turn of the century, however the cocoa economy experienced a significant downturn as early as 1921 with the consequence of a 50% reduction in disbursements to laborers between 1929 and 1936.²⁰⁸ This statistic was highlighted in a 1936 report of the Wages and Advisory Board as they expressed concern for the already high and increasing unemployment and underemployment levels in a context where few laborers owned food gardens.²⁰⁹ The exploitation of workers was even further compounded by practices of payment through tokens or credit notes that maintained a system of laborer indebtedness to local shopkeepers without the planters ever having to disburse cash.²¹⁰ Such practices of merciless usury were so engrained that in 1918 a local planter admitted to the Legislative Council (LegCo) that it was “unfortunately, only too true” that this system was “the basis on which the agricultural industry in the Colony has been built up.”²¹¹

The official neglect of the population at the expense of servicing the interests of foreign capital is evident thus far, and in this context it is noted by the lack of any minimum wage legislation before 1935 despite being formally tabled since 1920.²¹² Similarly an initial trade union law was passed in 1932, however it granted no right to peaceful picketing or any protections from action in tort.²¹³ This was not for any lack of social agitation on behalf of the population, for mobilization towards elected representation in government persisted up to the 1925 modification of the constitution to permit the first elected members to the

LegCo,²¹⁴ and only increased in energy thereafter. The return of thousands of veterans from WWI and workers from construction on the Panama Canal occurred amidst a general rise in race and working class organizing catalyzed by an increased circulation of Garveyite and socialist literature across the Caribbean.²¹⁵ These networks were important catalysts of an increasingly international struggle against the European colonial regimes that had used and abused the world over.

The channels of information of those involved in liberation struggles in the Western Hemisphere were particularly vibrant in the 1930s, fed by the material discontent and the increased distribution of information on world events. In the Caribbean, anti-colonial, anti-imperial, and anti-fascist movements heightened considerably with the coronation of the Haile Selassie in Ethiopia in 1930 and the subsequent Italian invasion in 1935.²¹⁶ Gordon Rohlehr emphasizes the role of calypso as a key medium of disseminating information in this period, as it publicly challenged and portrayed “the context of hunger, unemployment, economic depression, worker militancy, desperation, struggle and sheer survivalism” in the face of official indifference to petitions, hunger strikes, and mass demonstrations.²¹⁷ In 1937 Trinidad was ripe for conflict with the mass of the black and brown population laboring under a small white elite in control of industry, and only 6% of the population enfranchised under direct rule by the a British Governor on the island and the Secretary of State in the metropolis.²¹⁸ The eruption of mass discontent could hardly have been unexpected. The regime’s response was not unexpected, for it only revealed the function of the national security state as an agent of targeted physical suppression.

When strikes broke out in the oil sector in south Trinidad on 19 June 1937 the primary response on behalf of the state was to contain and subdue workers, done by targeting the leaders and deploying the full brunt of the police force.²¹⁹ In the following days the strike spread to agricultural sectors, workers around Port of Spain, and even government workers, all met in response by the arrival of two Royal Navy ships with Royal Marines to ensure control and restore confidence to the elite.²²⁰ The intervening forces were deployed in strategic areas across the island, allowing the Police to begin targeting labour leaders and subdue the unrest. A series of intimidation demonstration flights were conducted over the oilfield areas and thousands of pamphlets containing official notices to desist were dropped over T&T.²²¹ By 2 July attempts at negotiations broke down and in response to a message of public defiance from union leader Uriah Buzz Butler (a WWI veteran) the Governor

“immediately authorized offensive action against Fyzabad village which was known to contain many of the ringleaders” and “gave orders for arrest of Butler”. The Royal Marines and the Trinidad Police conducted a surprise raid at 6am, “a cordon was thrown around the village” and the force “commenced a house to house search, arresting 22 men and women”.²²²

Token offers were made to the workers in a move by company directors along with local and metropolitan government officials to frame the issue around “industrial” aspects of the dispute in order to depoliticize the problem.²²³ The simultaneous reality was that police platoons conducted targeted searches, seizures, and arrests such that by 5 July the strikes were broken.²²⁴ On 3 July the Secretary of State for the Colonies met with a delegation from the West India Committee representing oil, cocoa, sugar, asphalt, shipping, and commerce interests in Trinidad. The group referred to the calls for wage increases as “preposterous” and threatened to move assets to more secure locations, while making demands for permanent naval and air bases on the island.²²⁵ It is here that the Secretary of State decided it necessary to formally institute trade unions in Trinidad as a means to control the militancy of working class.²²⁶ Direct channels for special interests are always a key function.

The Forster Commission was established in October 1937 as an “impartial” vehicle through which the British sought to satisfy public discontent by demonstrating its effort to address the issues and formulate recommendations.²²⁷ In reality the Commission was controlled by the British, paid for by the colony, and primarily gave attention to the interests of the elite during the course of its six weeks of enquiry on the island.²²⁸ The Commission offered nothing of substance to the workers, and the elite was aware of this in their call for the publication of the report to be delayed until troops were stationed on the island.²²⁹ In fact the report even saw “weakness” in the governor’s actions such to the extent that he was forced to use ill health as a reason to resign by the years end.²³⁰ A Naval vessel and some of the troops dispatched to Trinidad, remained until March 1938, and the overall outcome of the 1937 riots was the creation of “constitutional channels” for mediating labor disputes and an admission by the outgoing governor that no real concessions were made to the workers, because “in terms of cash”, 1938 found them “far worse off than they were in 1928.”²³¹

The baseline ideological concern was in place prior the onset of WWII, and before the formalization of the postwar national security state. In June 1938 Colonel Sir Vernon Kell followed up on a report titled “Communism and the West Indian Labour Disturbances”,

produced using M.I.5 intelligence.²³² Colonel Kell's action was to distribute the report to relevant persons and begin to field another round of intelligence gathering, with a direct request for informants to "send us the names and descriptions of agitators who have been conspicuous during recent disturbances." The analysis admitted that there was "no direct evidence to show that the Moscow Comintern has been deliberately fostering labour unrest in the West Indies. On the other hand there are communist organisations in this country which exist to inspire and support negro movements."²³³ A few organizations of concern were listed, but most important in the M.I.5's intelligence was the International African Service Bureau, to which Malcom Ivan Nurse (known as George Padmore) and C.L.R. James, both born in Trinidad, were closely connected. The M.I.5's claim that the London-based organization was key in coordinating mobilizing efforts in Trinidad proved to be an exaggeration in the later analysis,²³⁴ but 'threats' of communist infiltration organizing remained the underlying concern to the British security officials. The Anglo-American commitment was firmly in place and set to ensure the status quo continuation of interests in the Caribbean.

The colonial state with support from the Royal Navy intervened to maintain the political and economic status quo across the islands of the British Caribbean throughout the decade of depression and unrest of the 1930s.²³⁵ The wider Caribbean remained under the sphere of influence of the US such that the Special Services Squadron was created in 1920 to "promote friendly relations" and "better understanding between the United States and other republics in the Western Hemisphere."²³⁶ This "better understanding" was actually based on the protection of US citizens, corporate interests, and any overarching strategic security concerns, evidenced by 51 occasions between 1920-1934 where the State Department requested the squadron to intervene in response to political unrest.²³⁷ Anglo-American security dominance was well in place leading up to WWII, though increasingly reliant on US imperial underpinning.

Trinidad in World War II - interchange in imperial security

In noting the particular importance of the Anglo-American special relationship it is also important to situate the synergy that existed between the differences in position of the two empires. A detailed report from the Governor of T&T to the Colonial Office in September

1942 gives an extraordinary insight into the interchange between the British and the US with respect to differences between colonial and imperial empires, and the enduring Anglo-American bond that would come to heavily shape the outcome of the postwar international order. The Governor's first note was a point of concern regarding the US proposition "to grant full self-government to Puerto Rico in 1944" which had set an example and stimulated "popular reform movements in the British West Indian Colonies."²³⁸ The Trinidad Governor met with his counter part in Puerto Rico, Governor Tugwell, who was a key US figure in the Anglo American Caribbean Commission, and also a member of the "Roosevelt Brain Trust". The report was that, "Mr. Tugwell sees in Puerto Rico nothing but a perpetual drain on the United States Treasury," and "[i]n spite of all the United States has done ... he sees little hope of substantial improvement in the condition of the masses even under United States rule, and nothing but catastrophe under an autonomous government."²³⁹

The imperial powers had come to the realization that maintaining the responsibilities of governance in a colony was no longer profitable, or necessary to ensure the political-economic alignment of these areas in the context where international alliances amongst Western powers increasingly ensured the status quo. For Governor Tugwell in Puerto Rico, "his advice to Washington would be to get out as decently, as completely and as quickly as possible."²⁴⁰ In stating this position Tugwell was certain that if independence was granted in Puerto Rico, the US would retain a portion of the harbor and the airfield "in either permanent sovereignty or on long lease." The 'anti-colonialism' the US stood for in this period was hardly a program of liberation for oppressed peoples, but was more so an effective discourse and strategic maneuver that advanced its imperial interests.

The agenda of US imperialism is evidenced in the Caribbean, and given an apt description by a uniquely placed source in 1942. The British Governor's analysis of US strategic interests in the region highlighted the Panama Canal as most telling, because it was "as important to the United States as the jugular vein" or "the 'Colon' is to a man", and thus "in Panama we have the genesis of United States Colonial Policy."²⁴¹ The defence of Panama as a site of key strategic importance depended "on such outlying places as San Juan, Trinidad, Galapagos, etc." As the US influence was primarily upheld by its network of bases the Governor concluded that there was "a certain uniformity and sequence in United States policy" that suggested its empire was "mainly concerned with strategy and communications".²⁴² The Governor admitted a certain disadvantage with the British position

vis-à-vis the US, where in addressing the operation of US bases he noted that “United States leases are maintained more cheaply in British than in American territory” because of legal mechanisms surrounding customs agreements. Beyond the continual economic advantage that the US always sought to ensure the US bases were essentially “sovereign areas from which the local population, with all the liabilities its presence entails, has been conveniently expelled.”²⁴³

In sum, the problem for the Governor was that “the ‘tyranny’ of the British system can be compared unfavourably with the ‘liberality’ of the United States in granting full self-government to Puerto Rico etc.” He did consider self-government in the British West Indies and but was struck by the liabilities involved:

The grant of Dominion status has worked fairly well with our own people, but we have yet to find out whether it will work with other races in India, Africa or the Colonies. Partial trials in Ceylon and Jamaica have not been encouraging. Even to try it out in Trinidad means that we leave ourselves at a strategical and commercial disadvantage to the United States of America with its sovereign base and no political responsibilities. If the local autonomous government proved unstable, there would be every justification or excuse for using the military bases for commercial purposes which would place the Colony in financial difficulties.²⁴⁴

The disadvantage that the British faced with respect to the US did not deter the fundamental realization as to what was needed for the British to secure their own interests in this changing geopolitical context. The importance of Anglo-American bond was definitive in the Trinidad Governor’s bottom line sentiment: “I am one of those who believe that the United States and the British Empire must stand together or fall. And, for that reason, it is essential that all causes of friction present, potential and future should be removed or corrected in advance.”²⁴⁵

On the eve of WWII circumstances were such that Britain was in a weak position relative to the US, and thus the Caribbean was marked by a colonial powers in decline and an a singular imperial power on the rise. In 1918 Britain had over 400 destroyers in the Royal Navy, but only 153 upon entry into the war in 1939 and suffered heavy losses in the first years of battle.²⁴⁶ As early as 1939 a secret agreement was signed where Britain granted the US seaplane base allocations in Trinidad, Bermuda, and St. Lucia.²⁴⁷ In September 1939 the Pan-American Security Zone was established along with the Atlantic Squadron Neutrality Patrol to counter German U-boat entry into the Caribbean and Panama Canal Zone.²⁴⁸

These moves were led by the US as part of an active plan to integrate the countries of the hemisphere into a security framework through which it could ensure its influence. The Havana Conference of American Foreign Ministers in mid 1940 declared a unity of action in the Americas on matters of security, thus was a key institutional outcome in response to US concerns for the consequences of the collapse of European Allies on the political stability of countries in the Caribbean.²⁴⁹

As the survival of Western Europe was put into question in the early direction of WWII, the prime interest of the US was to secure its hemisphere. May 1940 saw the fall of France, the retreat of the British at Dunkirk, and the first Nazi U-boat attacks in the Caribbean targeting the oil tankers and the world's largest refinery in Curacao.²⁵⁰ This circumstance registered with US war planners as a worst-case scenario, while the US population's sentiments increasingly fell into line with the official disposition. This is noted by a Gallup poll in June 1940 that recorded a response of 81% in favor of the US acquiring valued European possessions in the Caribbean. The poll results corresponded with outright calls by a US diplomat in the region for annexation of the oil rich islands of Trinidad, Curacao, and Aruba using national security rhetoric, with a qualification to filter those islands seen as a liability.²⁵¹ Also in June came the initial recommendation by the War Plans Division to acquire territory for naval bases in the Caribbean, and the largely unopposed passage through Congress of the Two Ocean Navy Act that slated a 70% increase in naval tonnage.²⁵² Beyond recognizing the need to hold its perimeter the US administration anticipated entry into the European conflict.

Winston Churchill was formally appealing to Franklin Roosevelt for the transfer of destroyers by May 1940, placing less emphasis on the destroyers themselves than on the inevitable entry of the US into the war.²⁵³ Roosevelt resisted these requests publicly while attempts were made to utilize loopholes in the Neutrality Act to transfer military assets to Britain,²⁵⁴ and once the case for the "executive supremacy in foreign policy" was sound Roosevelt announced the bases-for-destroyers deal on 3 September 1940.²⁵⁵ The deal was instated via executive decree as it did not require Congressional appropriation of funds, and the announcement came with this emphasis by the President: "The value [to] the Western Hemisphere of these outposts of security is beyond calculation. Their need has long been recognized by our country and especially by those primarily charged with the duty of

charting and organizing our own naval and military defense.”²⁵⁶ Roosevelt considered this deal the most important action to reinforce national defense since the Louisiana Purchase.²⁵⁷

In the exchange Britain received 50 aged destroyers, and a commitment by the US to support the war effort while the US obtained 99-year leases on territory for major bases in Newfoundland, Bermuda, and Trinidad as well as for smaller outposts in Antigua, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Bahamas, and Guyana.²⁵⁸ Rear Admiral John Greenslade headed the Board of Experts that was tasked with selecting the sites and overseeing establishment of the bases,²⁵⁹ and highlighted Trinidad as the “southern keystone” of hemispheric defense.²⁶⁰ Trinidad was vital to US strategists because its geographic location served as an access control point that covered the southern and eastern approaches of Atlantic entry to the Panama Canal. The island’s position also ensured it was a key node in the supply lines of oil and bauxite shipments from Venezuela, Trinidad, and Guyana to both the US and Britain.²⁶¹

The Governor of T&T reported in October 1940 that he had been reliably informed that in Washington’s evaluation Trinidad represented forty of the fifty destroyers as it would be able to “serve, if necessary, as a jumping-off ground for operations by the U.S. Army in South America.”²⁶² Similarly, on 6 November, the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies reported that dredging operations had failed in Guyana, and because Trinidad was in close proximity and had a naturally protected deep-water harbor the island would be the transshipment point for Guyanese bauxite.²⁶³

By the end of 1940, and continuing into the first quarter of 1941, British, Allied, and Neutral ship losses averaged 400,000 tons per month,²⁶⁴ while US war plans indicated that the overarching framework of entry into the war centered on “the paramount territorial interests of the United States”.²⁶⁵ To this regard Britain was left with the responsibility of securing the North and South Atlantic,²⁶⁶ while the US instituted an Atlantic-Caribbean Sea Frontier within which lay the Caribbean Coastal Frontier that was divided into three zones (Puerto Rico, Guantanamo, Trinidad).²⁶⁷ According to the Greenslade Board, the Caribbean frontier existed to ensure “complete control of the Caribbean area fundamental to our national defense.”²⁶⁸ The first order was to ensure a US military perimeter.

Coupled with the declaration of an imperial zone of influence was the concern for internal security in the region, seen to be a direct function of social, political, and economic conditions in situ. Charles W. Taussig, a former president of his family-owned American Molasses Company (sugar interests based in Puerto Rico), was one of Roosevelt’s “Brain

Trust” advisors closely involved with the New Deal and led the initiative for what was later to become the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission (AACC).²⁶⁹ In the fall of 1940 he reported back from investigations into the background and consequences of the 1930s labor unrest in the Caribbean. Taussig made an immediate appeal to Roosevelt citing fears of “well-organized seditious activities, such as might originate in Europe” that posed a serious concern with respect to the ability of the British to maintain control and ensure security both in the immediate and long term circumstance.²⁷⁰ A solid base of information was seen to be necessary for the initiation of a program to establish integrated economic and political control of the region. It is very important to trace the beginnings of what became the AACC, and whose interests and concerns were being secured

The Moyne Commission was Britain’s formal response to the labor unrest of the 1930s, and took an overall position that separated political and economic reform, concluding in the end that economic diversification was riskier than commitment to the sugar industry.²⁷¹ This fit into the overall position of the British Empire in decline, noted by the default on WWI debt and the formal turn from unrestrained economic liberalism in 1932 to favor the system of Imperial Preferences it relied upon to endure the depression.²⁷² The US was hit hard by the depression without the buffer of colonial dependencies that the British had. This further pushed US free trade interests as it became the world’s largest creditor and undisputed industrial and financial power. The challenge the US faced was to breakdown the system of Imperial Preferences in the interests of its commodity exports and foreign capital investments, while acknowledging that Britain remained a key factor in stabilizing the world system and a necessary counterpart in the effort to rework and re-establish a global political and financial system according to its dictates.²⁷³

Taussig led the US effort that used the leverage of the bases-for-destroyers deal to counter the British hold on its Western colonies, utilizing the underlying security framework to lobby for a position that called for an integrated approach to political and economic change in a trajectory towards self-determination.²⁷⁴ In reality the initial report by Taussig and other formal channels gave an overall evaluation that admitted a dearth of intelligence on the Caribbean.²⁷⁵ Thus the administration committed to dispatch another Commission to the Caribbean in late 1940 as an initiative that was a counterpart to the Greenslade Board,²⁷⁶ focused on local political, economic, and social dynamics on the ground in the British Caribbean islands.²⁷⁷ Prior to departure Taussig consulted with members of the black

intelligentsia in New York, Washington, and Atlanta, meeting persons such as Walter White who provided important endorsements that allowed greater access to black political figures in the Caribbean.²⁷⁸

Taussig's overall effort was to plan for a process of smooth base construction and operation, with particular concern for the dynamics of race and jurisdiction that could lead to security problems in the Caribbean and political issues at home in the US.²⁷⁹ On 19 March 1941 Roosevelt issued an instruction to Navy and War Secretaries in the region where he highlighted that "in acquiring bases" in the British Caribbean the US was forced to face "situations" which many "refer to as the 'color line,'" and that in this circumstance "Officers on duty in these [islands] must conform with the practice" in situ by utilizing "tact and discretion."²⁸⁰ Despite some formal overtures that suggested otherwise, in both key elements of institutional regulation of the US bases and in common practices of US servicemen, certain manifestations of Jim Crow remained in force.²⁸¹ Despite its efforts to counter British colonialism there is no doubt that the US only represented domination of another kind.

It is also interesting that in the Caribbean there is material evidence of the US war posture despite its rhetoric of neutrality in the first years of the war. On 11 March 1941 Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act that formalized and expanded the program of supplying aid to the Allied war effort, in a move that discarded any semblance of neutrality.²⁸² The first Congressional appropriation under this Act took place on 27 March, corresponding with the finalization of the coalition between US and Britain in the form of the ABC-1 plan for global war against the Axis.²⁸³ One of the primary rounds of negotiations between the British and the US to determine the framework that governed the leased bases took place during the same period, contending over responsibility and control across many spheres: legal, administrative, security, jurisdiction, port fees, surveys, postal service, health measures, customs, and duties.²⁸⁴ All the way through, the special relationship between US and Britain is a key function of the national security state.

The Anglo-American bond was firm in the commonality of greater strategic interests, but there were persistent differences to be negotiated in person. This process was tedious and discussions almost ruptured on different occasions as British officials were dismayed by the inability of the US delegation to make effective decisions, and expressed great frustration with the need to revisit previously agreed upon terms because the US envoy had to have everything approved by Washington.²⁸⁵ The final agreement only came about with

concessions made by Churchill on matters of jurisdiction and customs duties, as the US obtained exemptions from tax and service fees.²⁸⁶ The US insisted on maintaining sole jurisdictional control within the leased zones, and only accepted concurrent jurisdiction outside the zone after obtaining an exception for instances that were of “military nature”.²⁸⁷ The ambiguity of this term in a context of criminal jurisdiction demonstrates the use of national security devices to systemically displace the statutes of law. The actual effect of the legal device comes forth when focusing on the US’ response to serious incidents that occurred in relation to the base. The evidence reveals the persistence of the underlying agenda of domination.

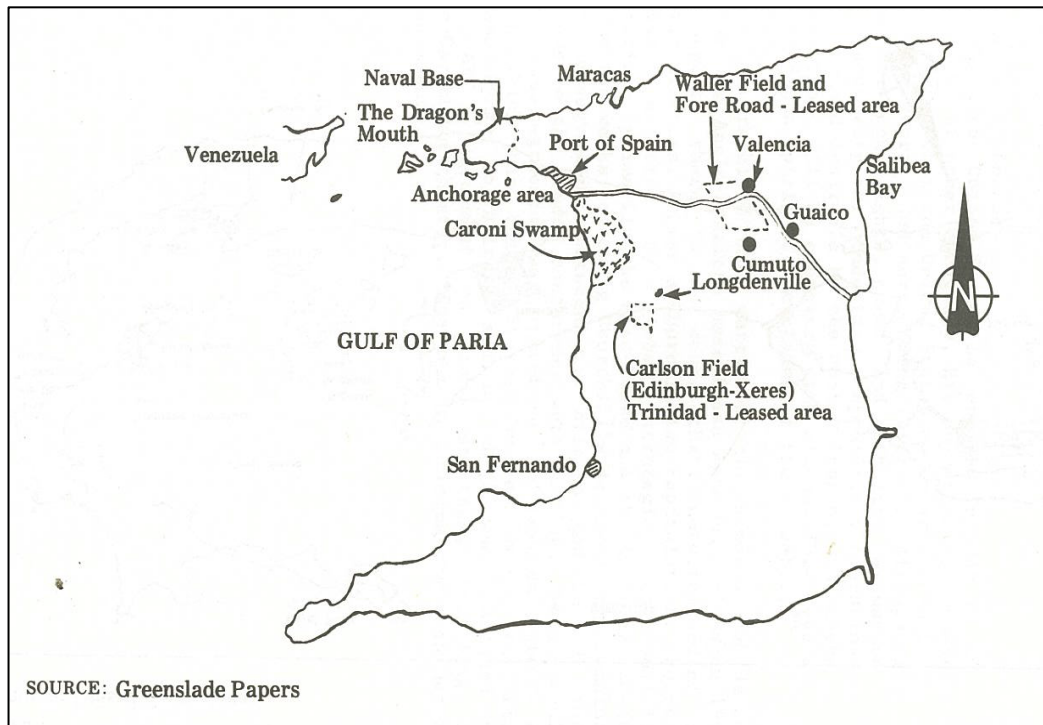
The Caribbean in WWII, setting the stage for postwar continuities

The dominant power of the US was evident in the legal arrangements as well as in the process of physically establishing bases in the region. The Greenslade Board initially selected five sites in Trinidad, with prime attention being given to the Chaguaramas-Tucker valley naval base on the northwestern peninsular.²⁸⁸ The other four sites comprised of an Army and Air Force base in the Cumuto-Valencia-Guaico region, an airfield near Longdenville, an Atlantic-facing naval outpost at Saline Bay, and a section of the wharf in Port of Spain.²⁸⁹ The governor of Trinidad at the time, Sir Herbert Young, was the only senior British official to formally oppose the Greenslade Board on both the selection of sites and the question of jurisdiction.²⁹⁰ Young cited concerns of local residents’ access to public lands and his suggestion of the Caroni swamp as an alternative to Chaguaramas was not met well by US officials who cited obstructionism.²⁹¹ The British governor was soon forced to resign citing medical issues under pressure that came from Rear Admiral Hoover of the US Navy.²⁹²

On 1 August 1941 the US commissioned the Chaguaramas naval base, and the Waller Field and Carsen Field air bases.²⁹³ The leased areas in Trinidad are shown on Map 1. The actual provisions to Trinidad were beyond what was recommended by the Greenslade Board, to further include blimp facilities, an escort vessel repair base with three dry docks capable of repairing ships and destroyers, a 150-bed hospital, additional radio stations and ammunition bunkers.²⁹⁴ 30 August saw the finalization of negotiations that governed the bases, only forced to a conclusion by the actual commissioning of the bases.²⁹⁵ The document was titled *United States Leased Bases: Agreement Between the United States and the United*

Kingdom Regarding Local Defenses, or ABC-3, and was ratified by both governments by mid December. The agreement was ingenious as it gave the British a nominal role in the organization of local defense while it guaranteed that the US dominated the command system, and its success made it a template for application to the French and Dutch Caribbean between 1942-1943.²⁹⁶

Map 1. Trinidad: Leased Bases Areas



Source: Fitzroy A. Baptiste, *War, Cooperation, and Conflict: The European Possessions in the Caribbean, 1939-1945* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), Map 5, Trinidad: Leased Bases Areas.

The US announced its entry into the war in December 1941 and immediately assumed formal responsibility for defense of the Caribbean. In February 1942 the Caribbean Sea Frontier was established, retaining the three organizational sectors of Guantanamo, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad. A Joint Operations Centre was situated in Guantanamo “to function as a clearing-house and source of information on all Sector operations and as a coordinating centre for planning and initiating air and surface operations.”²⁹⁷ The first major U-boat offensive in the Caribbean also began in February 1942 under operation *Neuland* first targeting British vessels near Aruba, sinking 17 ships (mostly tankers) in two weeks.²⁹⁸ The May offensive involved 37 U-boats, again targeting supply lines with each U-boat sinking

between 6-8 ships to the effect that the Caribbean oil refineries were forced to produce at approximately 30% less capacity.²⁹⁹ The dire circumstances on the ground brought the need for a full range of measures to secure greater strategic interests for the imperial powers.

In this period where Axis submarine raids struck with devastating impacts the Operations Commander in Trinidad reworked the details of defence plans in a projected case of invasion.³⁰⁰ A problem existed for the British in bolstering their local forces, for “while the right type of man might exist in a Colony, not many of this type were in the local forces.” The hope then was that “the sinkings have brought home to the young whites that the war is all around them and induced them to think about applying for a commission.”³⁰¹ Despite an evident racial bias as to what demographic was suitable for upholding the defence of the Colony, overall British strategic interests were paramount and the general wellbeing of Trinidad itself was ready to be sacrificed. This is revealed in the records where the British were prepared to implement a “scorched earth policy” which involved the use of “military explosives” to be “employed in the destruction of oilfields and refineries”.³⁰² The environmental, social, and economic impacts would have been devastating for all in the immediate impact, and inter-generationally, though disproportionately along lines of race and class.

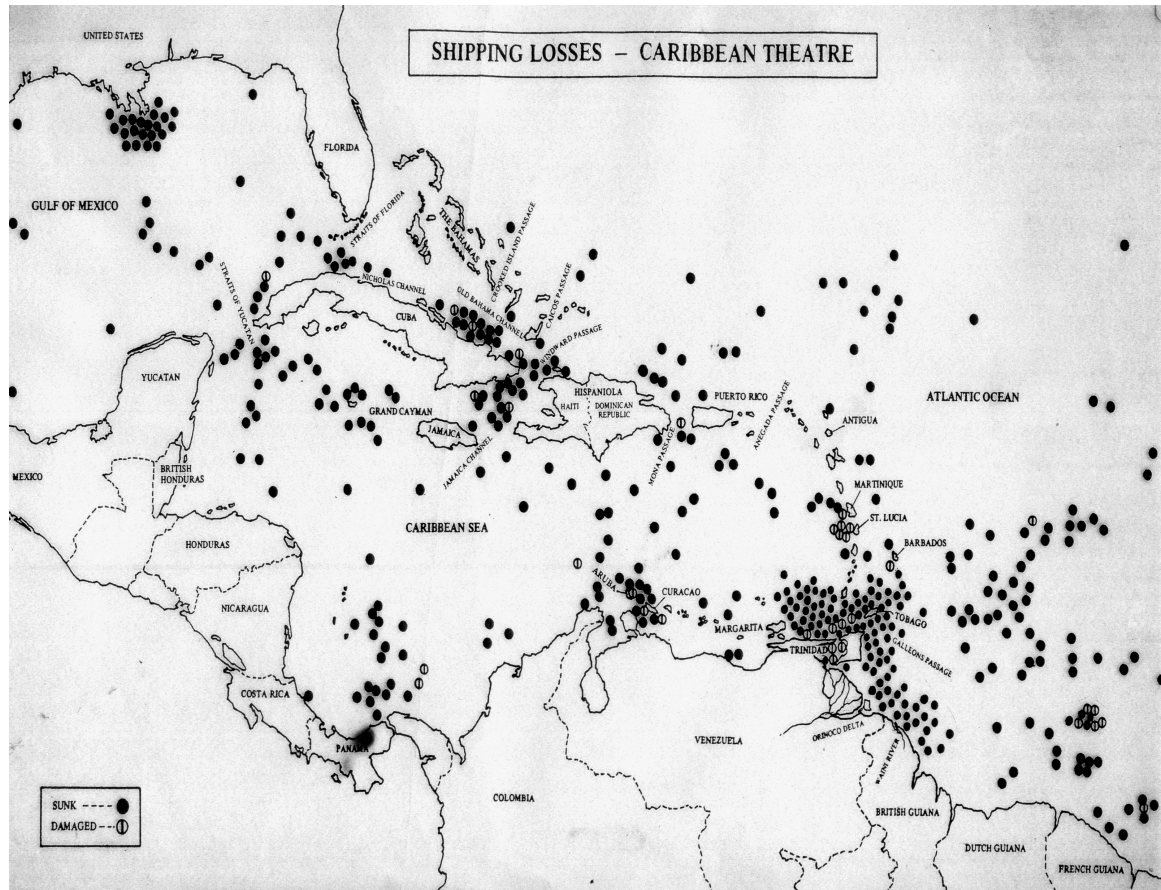
The Anglo-American Caribbean Commission was formed during the period of the war when the Caribbean was most negatively impacted. Most immediately, the AACC was forced into being in March 1942 as a measure to counter the destabilizing effects of the U-boat war on the population of the Caribbean.³⁰³ Taussig’s report was submitted in January 1942 with the primary concluding recommendation that a joint US-British commission be created to address common problems in the region.³⁰⁴ The German offensive seriously disrupted supply lines in the area, with the shipping interruptions resulting in sharp price increases, accompanied food shortages, and resulting malnutrition.³⁰⁵ This is the first instance where the local government in the Caribbean formally began to encourage and make attempts to support agricultural food production for local consumption.³⁰⁶ The underlying concern was for the consequences of the economic destabilization on the islands with respect to internal security and the political orientation of the population. Thus the AACC was created to maintain social stability as a means of safeguarding the US security perimeter, pushed by the US with the underlying premise that hemispheric security was the foundation for its longer-

term ambition to ensure political alignment and commercial openness in the British Caribbean.³⁰⁷

The British Navy institutionalized the convoy system since the beginning of the war in 1939, and had developed considerable experience in the effective coordination of supply and protection vessels, which they shared with their US counterpart.³⁰⁸ For years the US resisted the British system in favor of designated area patrols; a point that proved to be a major source of tension as the US completely neglected established principles of submarine warfare. By April 1942 the US gave way and agreed to institute the convoy system, dismayed by their evident inability to prevent the increasingly high number of ship losses in the Caribbean.³⁰⁹ The system of convoys that was then established centered around Guantanamo-Aruba-Trinidad (GAT-TAG) as the main Caribbean feeder, where Trinidad was the foundation as it housed the Escort Vessel Administration operational center that coordinated air patrols by day and surface patrols with radar equipped vessels by night.³¹⁰ The convoy system was operationalized in September and a month later an additional southern leg was added to the GAT-TAG route after heavy losses were recorded in bauxite supply lines from Brazil and the Guyanas.³¹¹

In May 1942 British Escort Group 5 arrived in the Trinidad sector with two destroyers and six corvettes. The British team did a review of Trinidad's security perimeter and exposed major weaknesses in minefields and other submarine defenses put in place by the US.³¹² The British also set up a high frequency radio distribution finder on Chacachacare island off northwest Trinidad to intercept U-boat communications. A Royal Air Force squadron arrived in August. By the end of 1942 Allied bauxite supply was struggling to meet demands for the aircraft production programs underway, and Britain was down to two months oil supply reserves.³¹³ A special convoy was immediately instituted to ensure continued supply to Britain,³¹⁴ and a US State Department report at the time expressed serious concern for the consequences of the U-boats targeting the supply lines from the Caribbean, which remained a "vital source of a number of strategic materials."³¹⁵ The most prominent were petroleum and bauxite, however the region was also either a producer or transit zone (bottleneck) for rubber, copper, precious stones, gold, silver, and other minerals necessary for the war industry.³¹⁶

Map 2. WWII Merchant Marine Vessel Losses – Caribbean Theatre



Source: Chaguaramas Military History & Aerospace Museum, http://caribbeanrollofhonour-ww1ww2.yolasite.com/resources/CaribUboatWW2/Shipping_Losses_Caribbean_Theatre.jpg

A small island in Trinidad’s Gulf of Paria became an important transshipment point for iron ore,³¹⁷ however the threat loomed large as 137 vessels were sunk in the Gulf of Paria area between February 1942 and December 1943.³¹⁸ Furthermore in January 1943 when U-boats sunk seven out of nine tankers of a Trinidad-Gibraltar “Oil Torch” convoy.³¹⁹ Historian Fitzroy Baptiste’s research shows that between “1942-1943 a 150-mile strip around Trinidad suffered the greatest concentration of shipping losses experienced anywhere during World War II.”³²⁰ Despite these record losses, visualized in Map 2, the average number of vessel entries and exits for the Gulf of Paria area in 1943 was approximately 3,500 Merchant Marine vessels and 1,000 warships.³²¹ The above description is a highlight of the brief, but critical, ‘Battle for the Caribbean’. Trinidad’s strategic importance was most certainly not lost on any US war planners.

By mid to late 1943 the U-boat threat in the Caribbean was largely removed, after which troop allocations began to reduce and in the latter part of 1944 most facilities were downgraded except those in Trinidad, Guantanamo, Puerto Rico, and the Panama Canal.³²² In US defense plans the Panama Canal was arguably the most important location external to the US for the Navy,³²³ and despite not being attacked it was without question a vital asset in the overall Allied war effort.³²⁴ The pattern is the same for the wider Caribbean, where the importance of the region is not assessed on the amount of combat but on the volume of trade, and the evaluation is that the Caribbean remained extremely significant to the US maritime empire that maintained a system of imperial security based upon external defense and internal control.³²⁵

The security frameworks institutionalized in the Caribbean during WWII by the US are the prototypical formulations of the template for the postwar global national security strategy of the US.³²⁶ The British Caribbean in this particular circumstance can be seen to function as both core and periphery, where the islands were “core in geostrategic and symbolic terms, but peripheral in population and economic importance.”³²⁷ The CIA referred to the region as a unique form of military frontier that was physically removed from the enemy frontline, thus the importance of the “belt of bases” was the projection of power beyond the foundational concern of safeguarding the underbelly of the US.³²⁸ Trinidad was named by the CIA as a key site in its network of global military transport indispensable to US national security strategy.³²⁹ The geopolitical security of Trinidad with US bases in place and U-boat fleets driven out, but for the local population the negative impacts were much longer lasting.

The US base occupation in practice

The racist imperialism the US embodied could hardly be hidden when examining the function of the bases-for-destroyers agreement in its different locations. Newfoundland was the only site within the scope of the bases-for-destroyers deal whereby the local population was white by a large majority. In this case the US constructed on-site accommodations for local whites employed at the base.³³⁰ In contrast, over 8,000 base-workers in Trinidad were forced to make long commutes on trains that were dangerously overcrowded. There were numerous occasions of persons dying after falling off a train. This was a constant source of conflict especially after the authorities imposed measures to control and punish “disorderly

behavior”.³³¹ These punitive measures came without any amends to provide more adequate transportation, or any consideration of providing housing on site. The liabilities were routinely posted on the side of the local coloured populations.

In the Caribbean, and in the US practice there, de facto segregation reigned supreme.³³² The function of jurisdiction and race followed a similar pattern, where US servicemen were regularly subject to the full scope of law before the all-white judges and juries of Newfoundland.³³³ In none of the other territories were US personnel subject to the jurisdiction of the colonial authorities for matters of serious crime, for the only noted cases were of minor crimes such as traffic violations.³³⁴ The national security state bridges the common function of exclusion in the routine operations of the bases and in the courts of law.

In negotiations with the British the US made it clear that they were unwilling to have white personnel tried by “colored” judges or even arrested by “native” police officers.³³⁵ The British had no principled position to suggest otherwise, for in their actions they defended the capability of the judges (mostly white) but not the juries (mostly non-white). The British dismissed the jury system as “lenient” and “unreliable” as they expressed concern for a “perverse” verdict by a colored jury.³³⁶ The British system of juries had been established in the colonies during the period where those eligible to form juries were whites only.³³⁷ In this circumstance when it was more than likely a jury would be colored the British actually considered implementing the US system whereby there was an informal process to ensure a predominantly white jury.³³⁸

Within months of the US bases in Trinidad being operationalized the first incident of murder of a local Trinidadian by a US serviceman took place. The Governor noted that the “circumstances appear to be precisely the same as those in [the] recent Antigua Case.”³³⁹ A US court martial was quickly organized and took place a month later where the US soldier faced charges of murder.³⁴⁰ The result of the hearing was an acquittal of charges, despite the fact that the soldier made no statement of his own, and the intelligence that came to the Governor had him first report that the circumstances “point conclusively to the fact that an American soldier stationed at Cumuto was the murderer.”³⁴¹ A member of the Bar Council in Trinidad took the position that the verdict was wrong, if not perverse. The Governor relayed, the “impression had been created that the court martial was so staged that there was never any possibility of conviction.”³⁴²

Similarly, the Trinidad Attorney General noted that the US Commanding General undertook “great trouble” “to secure as satisfactory a composition as possible of the Court.”³⁴³ He commented on the fact that there was no action taken to discipline the soldier even though the court proceedings proved that on the same night he had threatened a civilian and was illegally carrying a loaded weapon with him at the time.³⁴⁴ Although the Attorney General was sure that a conviction would have been the result in local courts the conclusion was that a new trial would not be undertaken, despite public protest. Within the week of the court martial the Governor reported another incident where “a United States military policeman had fired shots under the influence of drink, (mercifully with no ill effects)”.³⁴⁵ In November 1942 the Colonial Office reported on inquiries into repeated incidents where US soldiers outside of the base territory “have been given directions by the Trinidad police” and instead of complying, “the American soldiers concerned have engaged in arguments and offensive language culminating with the commission of acts of violence against the persons of the members of the Trinidad police force.”³⁴⁶ The only follow-up on this matter in the records was a note where the US claimed their personnel were provoked,³⁴⁷ and a subsequent agreement by both sides to “promote and keep up the good feeling as regard the U.S. Armed Forces” in situ.³⁴⁸

A March 1943 case of the shooting of an unarmed local by a US serviceman did bring a five-year conviction for murder by a US court martial.³⁴⁹ The US was sure to exercise sole jurisdiction in this circumstance as the incident had taken place on the US base, and despite a very light sentence for a murder case the fact that a conviction was at all obtained is possibly due to the circumstance that both the accused and the victim were employed by the US military police on the island.³⁵⁰ In September 1943 a member of the US Navy assaulted a tram conductor when it was demanded that he pay the fare, and even though two Trinidad Police officers were able to de-escalate the situation there was no formal reprimand on the matter.³⁵¹ Further in this pattern was the incident of a US civilian who was charged in the Trinidad courts for assault on a local man in April 1944. The outcome was a formal objection and demand to cease proceedings by US authorities, and a later report that the US civilian had left the colony.³⁵² The US ensured de facto impunity through a complex bureaucracy and a military backing.

In the highlights of these incidents of violence on behalf of US persons it is shown that the US operated in Trinidad with a functional system of impunity, as there were

bureaucratic and legal mechanisms in place to deflect any attempts to ensure accountability. The legal operation of the bases in Trinidad during this period utilized many of the mechanisms by which the contemporary US Status of Forces Agreement function, principally giving US visiting forces all the access and rights of movement in a given territory while ensuring that these forces are jurisdictionally protected from any due process in T&T's legal sphere.³⁵³ These Status of Forces agreements are specific to each place and time and can be wide in scope or very specific; the one currently in operation in Trinidad was signed for a period of two years,³⁵⁴ but has been routinely updated to the present.³⁵⁵ The bases-for-destroyers agreement gave an original 99-year lease, and covered a wide scope of affairs, but similarly its operational function was specific to the place and context in which US forces were operationalized, as noted by the difference of treatment in Newfoundland and Trinidad.

The construction of the bases required the displacement of about 2,000 local residents, with several villages being erased.³⁵⁶ In Newfoundland the British authorities made strong formal complaints against the displacement of residents, whereas there was no such effort in Trinidad. At the peak of base construction in Trinidad about 23,000 “native labourers” were employed.³⁵⁷ The British advised the US to observe the “prevailing” local wage standards as a ceiling, and when the US later decided to raise the wages the British requested a delay, expressing concern for the US driving up wage rates that would put an uncomfortable pressure on the local government and the oil industry to follow suit.³⁵⁸ However by 1942 base workers received double the wage of government workers.³⁵⁹ The US bases did result in a wartime economy boom in Trinidad, but the overall consequence was high inflation due to sectoral imbalances and uneven employment opportunities. There was overall instability in the society due to the combination of high liquidity, declining agriculture, and a scarcity of imported food and consumer items accompanied by forced rationing.³⁶⁰

The broad powers accorded to the US allowed for prolonged invasions of ordering and control, such as the ability to directly affect health measures in a number of ways.³⁶¹ Key in this was the “war” declared on the anopheles mosquito, unsanitary conditions, and venereal disease, all inevitably linked to residents by US planners. In the Cumuto residential area near the Wallerfield airbase in Trinidad, the US Corps of Engineers conducted a survey of “native” residents and responded with a program to construct a “sanitized zone” as a means to address mosquito control and unsanitary conditions.³⁶² The US lobbied successfully

to have various colonial laws amended, including provisions for the US to enforce quarantines as necessary. This accompanied the routine inspections of US servicemen to control the consequences of “exposure” to local women that was claimed to be the source of the venereal disease problem.³⁶³

The cycles of hierarchy and power constantly reproduce themselves, in both discourse and practice, distorting who receives the disproportionate consequences of liability and who/what is positively secured. A popular calypso from the period provokes the illusion of what the US really stood for in ‘the good war’:

They buy rum and coca-cola
Go down Point Cumana
Both mother and daughter
Working for the Yankee dollar.³⁶⁴

Point Cumana in Trinidad is one of the nearest villages to the Chaguaramas naval base and thus was a point of significant interaction between the local population and US servicemen. The Andrews Sisters made the record famous in 1945 when it topped the US Billboard charts. However the song was stolen from a local calypsonian whose original copyrighted version was overtly anti-imperial, and was only able to obtain some financial settlement (not full copyright) through the courts in 2006.³⁶⁵ The disposability of the local population is reproduced incessantly, showing the interests of national security in this period where it is the US being secured while those within its security zone external to its (white) nation are constantly pushed into precarity.

Wartime communications were strictly controlled and limited by the overt censorship programs set in place by the British and the US. In Trinidad while the US carried the principal responsibilities of defence once it entered the war, the British were the ones physically coordinating most of Trinidad’s communications and thus maintained the system of censorship on the island. In 1941 the Attorney General requested “immediate action” against a *New Dawn* publication that was “dangerously subversive” because it promoted “anti British” views.³⁶⁶ The British Ministry of Defence file for censorship in Trinidad, Jamaica and Bermuda contains reports on the system in place for the duration of the war, detailing the establishment of the various offices and procedures to attain the goal of 100% outward censorship on the islands, for this was the control point.³⁶⁷

100% outward censorship was achieved,³⁶⁸ though not without difficulty, and the file also contains many pamphlets and information briefs for the public regarding the laws and

requirements to be followed, always with bold emphasis on the dangers of loose information in the context of war.³⁶⁹ Within this system there was the function of select high-level committees to handle “most secret material connected with counter-espionage activities other than routine examination”,³⁷⁰ and there was also an integration of the censorship system into the customs and immigrations departments as travelers had to obtain security clearances where any documents travelling had to be reviewed.³⁷¹ After the cease-fire was declared in Europe in 1944 the Imperial Censorship program in the Caribbean region was still set to “continue full examination of mails to and from neutral countries and some, if not all, South American countries.”³⁷² The primary reason noted in this regard was the apprehension for the wider area in which the Caribbean countries were situated, and although South America remained a concern the immediate factor noted was the Panama Canal,³⁷³ as a strategic point that was somewhat exposed but understood to be under US protection.

Thus in practice the US functioned with impunity despite incidents of violence directed at the local population, and the system of censorship in place curtailed the local populations communications, all fundamentally set to maintain the Anglo-American sphere of influence. The population was repeatedly burdened in the restrictions on their daily life supposedly for their safety in only these wartime conditions. A systematic analysis reveals that it was power and capital being secured while the local population was made dispensable, and disregarded as these wartime ‘extraordinary’ measures soon became routine facts of daily life under the independent national security state.

A 1943 “Report on General Conditions and Terminal Censorship in Trinidad” gives substance to the disparities between the elite and the wider population, revealed here through the control of communications, with both political and economic intentions. The report opened by noting that “Industrial depression on the island is acute”, the “food situation is bad” (exaggerated by a customs dispute), and for the local population overall conditions could “scarcely be worse”.³⁷⁴ The censorship program was functioning well, though only under stress with some inability to retain personnel as “Trinidad is a most trying place to live in” with its tough work conditions and awkward social context. It was noted that the “only social life is enjoyed by the younger girls who are invited to parties and dances given by the Americans. For the rest of the staff there is nothing.”³⁷⁵ Here the British were cautious of the gendered impacts of a US military base with regards to the British staff that

could and did simply leave when they were fed up. The reality was that the local population was subject to significantly more volatile gendered and non-gendered impacts of the US base, and did not have any such mobility to simply relocate.

The conditions for the local population were harsh, and sometimes critical as medical attention was almost unavailable, and when it was, the quality was poor, and often prohibitively expensive for the working person.³⁷⁶ The local elite however had the means not only to relocate bodies and assets when needed, but in some contexts even had the ability to completely disregard the regulations for their own interests of control and profit, without any reprimand, while the ordinary person had no choice but to live within the confines of the national security state and its persistent interventions. This is noted by the report on censorship where, “[a]s usual, in this colony there are a few families who own and control everything and ‘business first’ is their slogan.”³⁷⁷ These interests were linked to the Financial Secretary, who was bold enough to publicly claim that he was the “financial dictator of the colony”. The report stated there was “ample proof that the regulations are being contravened with appalling regularity”, and only minor cases “have been dealt with”.³⁷⁸ In line with these executive abuses was the uncovering of a scheme for a radiotelephone system that violated the censorship regulations in what could only be described as “a commercial racket” conducted by a US company and sponsored by the local government. The conclusion of the report with respect to censorship was that “Trinidad has now become one of the most important Transit stations in this Hemisphere and its importance is slowly increasing”, thus the final recommendation was a call to more than double the number of active staff.³⁷⁹ Always, the underlying theme was the US being secured, while the Caribbean remained a region to extract from.

The AACC and the beginnings of Caribbean independence

The Caribbean is perhaps the only area in the world where it is possible during the war to give a preview of what the post-war world may look like. Within this area is represented independent republics, colonies of three European powers, and possessions of the United States. Major problems of regional, hemispheric, and world trade are involved. Political aspirations of subject peoples are being pressed. Racial problems exist in an aggravated form. Substantially all the problems of a post-war world exist in this gulf between North and South America.

(Charles W. Taussig, 22 June 1942)

The Anglo-American Caribbean Commission was announced on 9 March 1942 by President Roosevelt: “For the purpose of encouraging and strengthening social and economic cooperation between the United States of America and its possessions and bases in the area known geographically and politically as the Caribbean, and the United Kingdom and the British colonies in the same area, and to avoid unnecessary duplication of research in these fields”.³⁸⁰ The AACC was formally inaugurated in February 1943 in collaboration with the US Office of War Information.³⁸¹ This wartime agency carried through its function beyond the end of the WWII, reformulating itself as the Caribbean Commission in October 1946 when France and the Netherlands were incorporated. The Commission then became a “consultative and advisory body” in name, supported in a “legal capacity” to “concern itself” with “measures, programs and policies with respect to social and economic problems designed to contribute to the well-being of the Caribbean area.”³⁸²

The report of the Moyne Commission was suppressed for the duration of the war,³⁸³ and stood as an effectual announcement to the Caribbean populations that economic diversification away from raw material production was not an option in an era when Britain relied on the system of Imperial Preferences to re-establish postwar political and economic stability.³⁸⁴ The Moyne report did however include a recommendation for a move towards “representative government” in the Caribbean,³⁸⁵ and the formal proposition for independence in the Caribbean came from the British in the form of a West Indies Federation.³⁸⁶ Trinidad endorsed the Federation as early as 1945, with de-facto support being given by the US, and this expression by the US Consul in Trinidad in the same year: “The Colonial Government hopes to delay more active agitation for increased local participation in the government of this colony by directing thoughts and energies of the local population towards the eventual Federation.”³⁸⁷ The AACC was a US creation, and was supported by the British as each sought to make it work for their respective interests and priorities. In the lasting outcome of the AACC’s work the needs of the region’s population were surely secondary.

In a 1946 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Taussig published a brief titled *A Four-Power Program in the Caribbean*, and the section on the actual affairs of the AACC during the war quickly reveals the bottom line as to whose interests were being served by the Commission:

The Commission took the lead in organizing a coordinated program for keeping the area supplied with food and other necessities. It helped to establish a system

of bulk purchasing. It organized a schooner pool. When the spread of venereal disease in Trinidad threatened our armed forces, the Commission united with the local government and several American agencies in establishing a Caribbean Medical Center which developed effective methods of control.³⁸⁸

Taussig's initial research board in the Caribbean was firstly concerned with dynamics of the US troops there, and this tenant persisted in the organization,³⁸⁹ ready to ready organize a clinical intervention to assist US troops. Although some local food production programs were indeed activated in the immediate wartime context of food shortages,³⁹⁰ this principle did not become a lasting policy thrust of the AACC, nor would it produce any substantial fruits in the initial regard. One of the most active components of the AACC's actions was its program of radio broadcasts that sought to counter Nazi propaganda in the sphere of "psychological warfare".³⁹¹ Knowledge production on its terms is always an essential function of the national security state, and the AACC served this role most effectively.

The most popularly known aspect of the AACC was its Research Council, where there was space for Caribbean participation, however it was established from the outset that this aspect of the program would be purely "advisory".³⁹² Figures such as Eric Williams and Arthur Lewis worked for the AACC in the early parts of their careers, during which time they both established themselves as major Caribbean intellectual figures. The long-term features of the Commission outlined a basic 'charitable' program of development that saw a significant degree of US involvement in various affairs, generally recommending economic liberalization. The platitudes regarding food production, housing, and education, along with the proclamations that Caribbean participation was important, were betrayed by the bootstrap logic of what has been described as the *burdened individuality of freedom*³⁹³:

With fairness it can be held that its present condition is partly the fault of nations who dominated it politically and economically; but it cannot evade some share of responsibility itself. Selfishness and narrow insularity here and there within the Caribbean have contributed to its social and economic problems.³⁹⁴

Again in true form of representing its interests the Commissions report goes on from this admonition to highlight that "the Caribbean has become a major source of strategic metals" with a list of 34 materials. The report prominently notes a Defense Plant Corporation nickel facility in Cuba, valued at \$30 million USD, major oil refineries in Aruba, Curacao, and Trinidad, and bauxite from Guyana which was the only available source for the US and Canada at the time.³⁹⁵

A March 1945 meeting between Charles Taussig and Nelson Rockefeller deliberated on the new “advisory role” the AACC was set to take. Both agreed the organization would still be useful in countering any action that might follow from the openly expressed interests of greater Latin America-Caribbean political integration at the recently completed Inter-American conference in Chapultepec, Mexico.³⁹⁶ Within this geopolitical area that was now being defined by a steady thrust of anti-communism, led by the US, Rockefeller’s position also aligned with the State Department in the continued refusal of Member-status representation for Caribbean countries on the AACC. The concern behind this refusal was the establishment of “a Caribbean block [sic] which would be a menace to the solidarity of the Pan American System.”³⁹⁷ The AACC was a vehicle for ensuring US influence in British territories in the Caribbean and maintaining internal security as it worked to compile a large database of information to influence US government programming in the region. The AACC, like the OSS, which it was surely overlapped with, depended on people proficient in compiling information in a political context. In the US it was increasingly common for academics to uptake such functions, in service of their nation and their belief in its proclaimed freedoms.

Ralph Bunche was the head of the Political Science department at Howard University and took up a post between the State Department and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in 1942/1943, working as a Senior Research Analyst and an area specialist for Africa and dependent territories.³⁹⁸ Bunche also was a longtime member of the AACC, and thus there is no doubt about the organization’s overlaps with US security agencies. After completing his PhD in 1938 Eric Williams took up a teaching position at Howard University in 1939, and by 1942 evidence shows that he was actively seeking work in the realm of security-intelligence research.

Williams’ own efforts in this regard are documented in records of correspondence records between himself and various high ranking British and US officials as he sought a wartime research job position. Initial requests were made through contacts in the British Ministry of Information, and on 7 September 1942 Williams wrote to a colleague expressing his disappointment at being denied an opportunity “in the Office of the Coordinator of Information under Col. [William J.] Donovan, now the Office of Strategic Services under the [Joint] Chiefs of Staff.”³⁹⁹ In this letter Williams further notes that “I was considered suitable except for one thing – I was not a citizen of the U. S. A.”⁴⁰⁰ The OSS was the primary

intelligence agency of the US during WWII, and specialized in the recruitment of academics for purposes of national security; it was also the predecessor of the CIA.

The result of Williams' persistence was an advisory position in the Research and Analysis Unit of the Office of Coordinator of Information "for advice on matters relative to the Caribbean".⁴⁰¹ In a speech on the AACC Williams stated unambiguously that he was informed by "the Office of Strategic Services, that I had been appointed a consultant to prepare a brochure on the Caribbean for the use of United States troops to be sent there".⁴⁰² In March 1943 he took a major step in his career by obtaining a part-time position on the AACC. Williams credited Charles Taussig with giving the approval that led to his appointment, however he was not content until he was given an established full-time position.⁴⁰³

In this struggle Williams formulated a pamphlet with sharp criticisms of the AACC on the point of continued denial of Caribbean representation, using the threat of its publication as a means to leverage his position as someone with a proficient set of research skills and a will to challenge those who obstructed his goals. In June 1943 during an AACC conference at Howard University Williams presented a challenge to colonialism in his paper on *The Economic Development of the Caribbean up to the Present*,⁴⁰⁴ however he made a careful note to praise the Moyne report and Sir Frank Stockdale, the British co-chair of the AACC and Comptroller of Development and Welfare in the West Indies.⁴⁰⁵ These moves are important to trace, as it is very difficult to come to terms with and make sense of the evident separation that was Eric Williams the anti-colonial scholar,⁴⁰⁶ and Eric Williams the *Aspiring Imperial Bureaucrat*.⁴⁰⁷

During and after the Howard conference there were increasing protests regarding the lack of any Caribbean persons in positions of power on the AACC, and in the following months a consensus emerged between British representatives and US officials in the State Department.⁴⁰⁸ Their concern was that repeated denials of Caribbean representation would further inflame opinions in the region, and this was something that could not be risked amidst the extensive geopolitical uncertainty. Williams was soon informed of his impending victory to obtain an established position, and made the decision in October 1943 to withdraw his pamphlet criticizing the AACC because its publication would be problematic considering his "present position".⁴⁰⁹ In November, Sir Frank Stockdale formally recommended Eric Williams to a fulltime position on the Caribbean Research Council of the

AACC, to be effective March 1943 and Williams stated clearly “my salary [was] being paid jointly by the British Colonial Office and the State Department of the United States.”⁴¹⁰

In his own account Williams highlighted the laborious efforts he was forced to make to proclaim himself suitable for work with the Caribbean Commission, noting repeated investigations by the FBI, both of which found nothing and “cleared me of all suspicion” of any charges of communism.⁴¹¹ A FBI memorandum dated 11 October 1941 written by none other than its Director, J. Edgar Hoover, noted one of these background checks on Williams and concluded decisively that “there is nothing to indicate that [Williams] is engaged in any activities inimical to the best interests of the United States Government.”⁴¹² The FBI stated flatly Williams was not a communist, and there was no further investigation needed.

Williams committed twelve years to the AACC, half of the length of time he spent as head of government in T&T. This fact indicates that from the beginning of his political career Eric Williams was not in any way prepared to break with Anglo-American power structures, despite his voluminous rhetoric that suggests otherwise. This is most evident in Williams’ vision of an independent constitution for T&T, which in no way set out to fundamentally decolonize the Crown Colony principals embedded in T&T’s constitution. This is the focus of the next chapter as Williams’ outlined his platform in political speeches. In the immediate context the analysis begins to shift to independent T&T by reviewing the Crown Colony formation leading up to the initial opening up of self-government in T&T.

In 1897 a Trinidadian planter had no reservations in making open appeals to a Royal Commission for the importation of more “coolies” into the colony with specific emphasis on the strategic outcome of countering any uprisings by the black population.⁴¹³ Similarly in 1919, George Huggins, a powerful white merchant in Trinidad, led a petition to the Crown protesting the end of Indian indentureship. He argued that this would result in a loss of opportunity to leverage the size of the Indian population against the Black demographic, and expressed a specific concern for any circumstance where these two groups found organized unity.⁴¹⁴ Indentureship was ended in 1920, followed almost immediately by labor disturbances in 1921, and the subsequent establishment of the Commission on constitutional reform in T&T.⁴¹⁵

The report of the Wood Commission was the basis for the changes made in 1924 that brought the first elected positions to the Legislative Council (LegCo). In this instance the LegCo was now composed of seven elected and six nominated “unofficial members”, with

twelve “official members” that were British appointments.⁴¹⁶ The governor held two votes and the “official” or (British) majority was ensured. The property requirements in place for voter eligibility were restrictive to the extent that less than 6% of the population was able to participate in the 1925 elections.⁴¹⁷ Although these modifications did include the first move to restore some semblance of representation to Tobago,⁴¹⁸ the overall outcome was that the Crown Colony system of control by an unelected executive was held firmly in place. In 1926, the first year of the LegCo with elected members, Captain Cipriani pushed the Council to debate a formal report that advocated instituting fixed hours for labor in the industries. Cipriani along with the other elected members supported the report’s recommendation, however when the vote took place the elected members were forced to vote against the report.⁴¹⁹

In 1941 the number of elected members was increased to nine while the “official” members were reduced from twelve to three.⁴²⁰ The nominated element remained at six and this gave the non-elected members a majority inclusive of the governor, who retained a “power of certification” that provided him the means to force any law into being that was rejected by the LegCo, in the interests of maintaining order.⁴²¹ Universal adult suffrage was first introduced in T&T in August 1945, slightly reformulated under the Legislative Council (Elections) Ordinance in April 1946, and the first election under these conditions took place on 1 July the same year.⁴²² In the lead up to the 1946 election certain elements of the elite made attempts to block the removal of literacy restrictions on voting and property qualifications for contending representatives in an effort to bar large segments of the non-white populations from participating. Their lobby was only shut down by intervention of the Secretary of State.⁴²³ Even though voter participation increased substantially to 50% of the population,⁴²⁴ the reality is that the dominance of the Crown Colony system remained in place with the unelected “official” majority remaining intact and no formal mechanisms in place for the executive to be held accountable.

Persistent “Industrial Trouble” was also a feature of Trinidad in 1946.⁴²⁵ In February 1946 the Colonial Office expressed relief that “the dangerous situation which led the Governor to dispatch No. 1 has now been averted”,⁴²⁶ but as the year came to an end the Trinidad Governor again reported that the “situation in the oil fields has deteriorated” as strikes threatened a shutdown due to effective marches and coordinated work stoppages, supposedly enforced by “mass intimidation”.⁴²⁷ The Governor’s fear was that “the possibility

of recurrence of the riots which took place in 1937 is ever present” and thus his claim of intimidation was used to enforce a “proclamation declaring processions and assemblies” in the affected areas “to be illegal for 14 days” with possibility for extension. He further noted that it was “already increasingly difficult to disperse the crowds with gas-bombs and several arrests of ringleaders have been effected.”⁴²⁸ A Crown Colony constitution that foreclosed any democratic possibility, a US base occupation in-situ, active censorship programs in place, and the targeted suppression of workers by the armed forces are the features of the national security state in T&T at the end of WWII.

This chapter situated the oil industry in T&T as an asset of particular importance to the British Empire in the first half of the twentieth century, and the consequent relationship where the Crown Colony state forcibly upheld corporate interests against those of the local population. The layer of impact the US had once Trinidad became a site of strategic importance and established bases there, was similarly a case where the population is secondary and seemingly disposable as compared to foreign interests of power taking advantage of local resources. The chapter closes with the US occupation still in place, the oil industry secured, and the slow bureaucratic march toward self-government under way with the first election under universal adult suffrage.

Despite this trajectory the Governor remained a powerful centralized figure that commanded the government, with little checks on accountability. Democratic political representation was still a far off ideal to be attained. The government primary function was to uphold private/corporate capital (mostly of foreign interests) invested in the country’s oil industry, and still, the plantation economy. Thus the Crown Colony mode of governance was intact, backed by imperial military forces in situ, and with a police force ready to break up worker mobilization upon command. The following section engages the period that was the move towards self-government, and the purpose of that chapter is to show that the formation described above remained intact and active in service of the same interests, despite the achievement of independence.

Chapter III, 1947-1962

The formation of the national security state of independent Trinidad and Tobago

This chapter covers postwar period in T&T up to the year of political independence, delineating the progression from a non-elected majority in the Legislative Council (LegCo) to a fully elected House of Representatives under a new national government. In this period the T&T constitution was changed the most in its history, and the argument shows that despite these changes the principles of the Crown Colony mode of governance remained fundamentally intact and the national security state active in its function of internal security and suppression of organizing. Despite the declaration of political independence the continuity of the national security state is traced through four themes: (i) a constitution with a high degree of executive control that persists at the expense of an empowered elected legislature, (ii) predominant organization of the economy towards international dominance, (iii) the persistence of labour unrest and the security state's targeting of worker organization and (iv) the formation of a political party that was able to form a government and maintain the existing conditions despite a progression towards independence.

The context of the formation of the People's National Movement (P.N.M.) as the first political party to form a national government and its relation to the population are situated via an analysis of the P.N.M.'s electoral performance during this period. Eric Williams was the political leader and unquestioned authority in the P.N.M. party, especially as he was the head of the T&T government from 1956 right through to his death in 1981. Williams is most significant due to the tension between his academic reputation as an anti-colonial and possibly anti-capitalist historian and his political commitment to the West and its capitalist project despite his various performances of defiance. This analysis evaluates what the local conditions were before he assumed power with the P.N.M. In doing so, the formative changes that the P.N.M. government made and those it omitted on the trajectory towards independence are distinguished. These material shifts in the organization of state power are important to trace for they hold the substance against which William's commitment to decolonization in Trinidad and Tobago are to be measured.

The record is unmistakable in the fact that Eric Williams did not remove the fundamental Crown Colony features of government, thus his proposed constitution maintained the disproportionate degree of executive control. The continuity in an executive

dominated government is coupled with an economy that remained primarily oriented toward serving international capital by policy. This continuity was accompanied by unbroken patterns of social and economic discontent and a context where Williams' P.N.M. resorted to further executive action in order to establish electoral power. Consequently, the national security state remained intact in 1962, and perhaps with distinct vigor as the newly established government of independent T&T had everything to lose in the face of a renewed tone of internal discontent.

The conditions of Postwar Trinidad

Between 1947 and 1956 there was a general trend toward a reduction in executive dominance of government, while between 1956 and 1962 there was a key component of reversal towards greater executive power. This switch in 1956 corresponds to the arrival of the P.N.M. into government and represents its program of constitutional progression. The context of this switch and Williams' rationale behind it is important, however the conditions in 1947 must first be situated to give context to the changes after 1956. In 1947 Williams was managing his time between duties as an Assistant Professor at Howard University, his work with the renamed Caribbean Commission, and as a research consultant with the Foundation of Foreign Affairs, all based in Washington D.C.⁴²⁹ He would leave Howard in 1947/1948 to work full-time with the Caribbean Commission as he took up positions as Head of Research Branch and Deputy Chairman of Caribbean Research Council in Washington. From 1948, Williams spent increasing time in Trinidad as one of four senior officers of the Central Secretariat for the Commission.

Internal Security was the prime concern of both the colonial government on the island and in London. The main source of disturbance to that security in the post war period lay in labour disturbances and threats of 'subversion' that took issue with the organization of the economy. Routine reports produced by the Special Branch of the Police Force formed the backbone of local intelligence operations in postwar Trinidad. Infrequently, intelligence would be gathered from reports produced by trusted persons who would spend time in the colony and relay their observations and analyses to the Colonial Office. Prevalent in both formats of reporting were the underlying security concerns due to social disturbances directly attributed to the poor living conditions and labour frustrations.

Two Colonial Office reports written by British persons who visited Trinidad for a few months in 1947 gave prime attention to the hardships the local population faced. These hardships were recorded by noting the high unemployment numbers, the weakness of rent board protections, and a comparative statistic that in 1947 Trinidad generally had the highest costs for basic foods in the British West Indies.⁴³⁰ The observations of one Mr. Seel noted that in consideration of the “high cost of living” “accentuated by the dependence on imported foods” and considerable unemployment, “it is easy to see how Trinidad has been a playground for agitators.”⁴³¹ His comment on wage policies was that, “it seems quite hopeless, for instance, to obtain a definite statement of wages actually being paid in the sugar estates, and it is therefore impossible to deal with assertions made frequently that labour is being exploited.” The underlying social tensions were aggravated by “the existence of large incomes side by side with much glaring poverty.”⁴³²

Weekly and Monthly Intelligence Reports were put together using information from the Special Branch. According to a Colonial Office memorandum of 1948, the “basis of collection of intelligence in Trinidad is in the furnishing of regular reports on labour relations, communal feeling, subversive activities”,⁴³³ “racial feelings”, communist organizing, and public opinion of the government.⁴³⁴ A local intelligence report of the same year noted that in the event of a serious outbreak of threatening disturbance, support troops from Jamaica would be made available within forty hours.⁴³⁵ In a line of correspondence between the Trinidad Governor and the Secretary of State regarding the organization of “intelligence and security” the Governor reported on the implementation of various components of the system, and highlighted the formation of a special “Defence Branch” made up of selected officers to deal with “matters of internal security and defence”.⁴³⁶ He also commented on his “personal contact” and regular correspondence with the Director of MI5 and gave his opinion that an MI5 officer should once more be stationed in the region that was “such fertile soil for communist and other subversive activities”.⁴³⁷

The potential for intervention persisted as an active option for the colonial government, where also in 1948 the Governor issued an alert to the Royal Navy’s Commander in Chief for America and the West Indies because the “[i]nternal security situation in Trinidad” was now a “cause for anxiety” due to the outbreak of a general strike with incidents of sabotage.⁴³⁸ Although the situation had not yet got “out of hand” the Governor feared an escalation of violence, and in the event where things deteriorated such

that the Police were unable to maintain control he requested naval intervention.⁴³⁹ The Commander-in-Chief gave the approval a day later with notice that a Royal Navy vessel with troops would be available within 36 hours and the possibility existed for infantry to be flown in sooner if necessary.⁴⁴⁰

Internal security in Trinidad was also a matter of concern to the highest levels of British security planning at points of tension, as noted by a report and subsequent decision-making meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee in 1952. The report addressed the details of a plan for intervention in response to “communist agitators” amidst labour disturbances that presented a threat to the “oilfields and refineries”.⁴⁴¹ The meeting finalized the arrangements for “an Infantry Battalion to be sent to Trinidad to deal with internal security troubles”, either transported from Tripoli or Jamaica and supported by Navy frigates already in the region, upon confirmation from the Governor of Trinidad.⁴⁴²

Although there were no actual circumstances that precipitated British military intervention in T&T during the postwar period, the US occupation of the base territories continued to have consequences on the local population and government. A Colonial Office report on matters pertaining to the US base in Trinidad for the second half of 1947 noted that the US Navy employed between 2,000-3,000 locals and the Army 1,000-1,500.⁴⁴³ There were ten incidents involving US servicemen and local residents reported to the Police, none serious and all dealt with by US authorities in full cooperation with the Trinidad Police. The US also applied to retain its legal rights to the one-mile radius around Le Branche Rock near Manzanilla off the east coast of Trinidad for areal bombing practice. By this period the US removed its installations from Five Islands in Gulf of Paria, but made measures so that the local government could continue to operate its Quarantine Station there in tandem with nearby Nelson Island.⁴⁴⁴

More serious incidents related to the US base were experienced in 1948 and 1950, where on both occasions a US serviceman’s actions resulted in the death of a Trinidadian, and a US court martial returned a decision of acquittal. In 1948 an officer on duty at the US naval base in Chaguaramas fired ‘warning shots’ at a small local fishing vessel at night resulting in a man being hit and killed by a bullet. The Attorney General’s report on the matter commented on the “peculiarity” of a US court martial where the Judge Advocate is both legal advisor to the court and prosecutor at the same time, and as there was no summary aired or any impartial review of the facts, “it is impossible to know what actuated

the court in coming to its conclusions.”⁴⁴⁵ In providing his review of the evidence the Attorney General did not dispute the Court’s verdict in dismissing the prosecutors’ plea for a charge of manslaughter. He noted that the US serviceman was following the procedure of given orders. Therefore it was a reasonable conclusion that there was no intent to murder, and “that the bullet was deflected in the direction of the boat when it hit the water would not be an unreasonable explanation of the facts.”⁴⁴⁶

The 1950 incident brought out a different reaction from the British officials, but as far as the records tell the result of US impunity remained. In this case a motorcar driven by a US serviceman was involved in an accident that resulted in the death of a local Trinidadian.⁴⁴⁷ A US Court of Enquiry carried out a month after the incident exonerated the US serviceman. However, two months later a local summons was issued for the US serviceman and it was revealed that he was transferred out from the colony. The inquest concluded that there was ground for a manslaughter charge, and the British official remarked that in the past US officials “have been extremely high handed in questions affecting their own forces.”⁴⁴⁸ Sir Robert Wray of the Colonial Office commented that the “U.S. authorities should not be allowed to get away with this”, for in this circumstance it appeared “very much as if the offender was spirited away” and “if so this is not the first time that has occurred.”⁴⁴⁹

No records of any follow up or action on the issue with the US were discovered in the searches conducted through the available declassified files. This presents a point to register the commonplace notice of files omitted or destroyed in these records, as noted in a War Office folder of files from 1948-1954 that was declassified until 2007 on the “Scheme for Defence and Internal Security in Trinidad”. Among others, this folder contained a six page list of documents that were destroyed, many of which were intelligence reports and defence plans, reports on movement of troops, “Unrest in Trinidad”, and one on “Methods of Dealing with Civil Disturbances”.⁴⁵⁰

Government files are opened to public review decades after the events as some commitment to history and transparency, but it is known that these files are first filtered for select portions to be destroyed.⁴⁵¹ This function is a overt example as to how power shapes what is registered as knowledge in its outright ability to circumscribe information at the source. Not only is the work of the this thesis processing through information that was secret at the time of happening, thus the knowledge of what occurred is belatedly retroactive, but in the same measure what is available is still limited by what is not permitted outright.

The consequences of this are a topic for many studies of their own. What is of concern in this discussion on the national security state and its relations to knowledge production is the fact that this system is built on the function of knowledge hierarchies (centralized intelligence gathering systems that can ascribe material indefinitely confidential). In latter sections of this thesis, the network of institutions that support this system is given more consideration.

The highlights above indicate that the Trinidad population was still living under conditions where a foreign national security apparatus overshadowed daily life to a significant degree and it remained that local Trinidadians were disposable while the US untouchable. Similarly, the British security apparatus on the island kept a card of intervention at hand while the intelligence services conducted their daily observations on local happenings and persons of interest. In this way the possibilities for social organization toward decolonization were institutionally limited in scope, for certain ideas were openly prohibited, deemed subversive, and clamped down on. These mechanisms served to uphold the interests of foreign capital that dominated the island's economy, as they were also cogs of a larger program of territorial strategic control in global power struggles.

The Crown Colony constitution in motion

The progression towards constitutional independence continued to reveal the division of local interests as they corresponded with or deviated from the underlying external interests. In 1948 a series of memorandums were sent from various interest groups in Trinidad to the Colonial Office. Each sought to lobby for their desired composition of government in light of the upcoming constitutional changes. The Trinidad Chamber of Commerce put forth its position for retention of a nominated component in the LegCo despite the admission that “it is indisputable that fully responsible government should be the objective of the people of the Colony.”⁴⁵² This position of “responsible opinion” argued that the Colony was suffering from ills that were “principally economic” and the electorate was not yet “possessed of that political discrimination which is one of the pre-requisites of full responsibility.”⁴⁵³

Similarly, the Petroleum Association and the Sugar Manufacturers' Association put forth memorials to the Colonial Office adopting a line consistent with the Chamber of Commerce. Their calls for retention of a nominated element of the LegCo were also

couched in claims regarding the existing political immaturity of the population. Consequently, it was maintained that “with a wholly elected legislature” the interests of the most important industries “would not obtain any representation whatsoever.”⁴⁵⁴ The Petroleum Association put weight to its input by highlighting that its contributions to the economy were around 20% of the government’s revenue and that its exports amounted to 75% of the Colony’s total.⁴⁵⁵ Likewise the Sugar Manufacturers Association emphasized that it was the single biggest employer and “trustee of a considerable amount of capital”, both foreign and local. Therefore, they argued that the nominated component was necessary to “safeguard the interests of these investors and preserve their confidence” which would in turn secure the “economic and political stability” of the Colony.⁴⁵⁶

During the same period seven Counties put forth signed petitions with calls for full representative government. A meeting in the County of Caroni, for example, put forth a memorandum to the Colonial Office demanding a fully elected single chamber based on adult suffrage.⁴⁵⁷ This letter further called for an Executive Council elected from and accountable to the legislature that had the power to remove the executive by a vote of no confidence. All of the significant Trade Unions in the Colony as well as the Caribbean Labour Congress put forth memorials to the same effect.⁴⁵⁸ In forwarding these petitions to the Colonial Office, the Governor commented that there were no public meetings held in support of retaining the nominated component, for in fact those who supported this position “are not among those elements in the community who organize and participate in public political meetings.”⁴⁵⁹ The division of interests is evident in the difference in lobbies for constitutional change.

In January 1949 the Secretary of State wrote to the Governor of T&T emphasizing the need to ensure an “orderly process” towards the introduction of an elected legislature, noting that at “this stage in the development of Trinidad and Tobago the nominated positions could not fully be removed “without seriously disturbing confidence in the economic and financial stability of the colony.”⁴⁶⁰ When the next changes to the constitution in T&T were formalized in 1950, the LegCo was composed of eighteen elected and five nominated “unofficial members” while the “official” appointments remained at three.⁴⁶¹ These modifications brought the first majority of elected members to the LegCo. Also for the first time, the Executive Council began to be placed within an accountability framework now composed of the Governor, three “official” appointments (Attorney General, Colonial

Secretary and Finance Secretary), and six members of the LegCo, five of which were elected. In this formation the LegCo could remove an elected member of the Executive with a two-thirds vote, however there was no institutional mechanism to challenge any of the nominated positions.⁴⁶²

The subsequent changes to the constitution occurred in 1955, and moved further towards self-government. This level of autonomy was unprecedented in that it entailed strong democratic ideals of institutionalized checks to executive power and accountability for elected representatives, which did not exist in England then or today (in England or T&T).⁴⁶³ These changes shifted the LegCo such that there were twenty-four elected and five nominated “unofficial members”, and two British “official” members.⁴⁶⁴ The speaker was elected by vote in the LegCo, as was the position for the Minister of Finance (no longer a British appointment). The Executive Council was now composed of the Governor, two “official” members (Attorney General and Colonial Secretary) and ten Ministers all elected from the LegCo, one of which was the Chief Minister with whom the Governor consulted before allocating the other portfolios.⁴⁶⁵

In this formation the Ministers of government, including the Chief Minister, were directly responsible to the LegCo along lines of electoral representation and not according to party dictates. Apart from this progression, a central component of security held by the British was the retention of the Governor’s reserve powers. These powers could be used to trump any local government policy direction considered a threat. Despite a local configuration which suggested dispersed government power, a key component of executive power remained intact to ensure that the continuation of vested interests was upheld by a national security state.

In December 1955 the Governor reported to the Colonial Office in anticipation of the next general election that was slated to take place in 1956. His characterization was that “little progress has been made in the development of responsible political parties”,⁴⁶⁶ for it was apparent that “personalities are far stronger at present than parties” and thus “there should be some one person who is clearly authorized to speak for Trinidad and Tobago” and “who can answer for the Government as a whole”.⁴⁶⁷ The Governor also made a point to “admit that” the recent changes made to the constitution appear “to lead to a more democratic form of government in which the executive is compelled to respond to the pressures of elected backbenchers; but the fundamental object of constitutional reform is to

place so far as possible the management of the Government in the hands of the elected representatives of the people.”⁴⁶⁸

Eric Williams’ entry into politics and the formation of the P.N.M.

In this detailed memo the Governor also highlighted seven parties set to compete in the 1956 election, noting the prominence of the P.D.P. and Butler’s party,⁴⁶⁹ but made no mention of the P.N.M. or Eric Williams. Despite the fact that he did not mention Eric Williams explicitly, his wish for “one person” “authorized to speak for Trinidad and Tobago” and the “Government as a whole” would in fact be fulfilled by Eric Williams. Here it is important to focus on the process leading to Williams’ appointment since the underlying dynamic of centralized control is closely linked to the central thrust of the Williams’ policies and the formation of the P.N.M. as it sought to establish a ‘grassroots base’. One component of this dynamic is the extent to which Williams was able to present a substantive challenge to the British as the colonial power he had made his academic career and initial political reputation in Trinidad confronting. Another component is the US base occupation which became his primary campaign against colonialism once he attained control of the T&T government.

The grassroots base Williams sought to claim was already coming together before he entered the political arena. The Teachers Economic and Cultural Association (TECA) was formed between 1935 and 1939 by Black and colored radicals that opposed the routine discrimination institutionalized in the religious and state schools overseen by white managers.⁴⁷⁰ The organization was only formally registered in 1942 with a mandate that demanded “equality of opportunity in education”,⁴⁷¹ worked to attain further cultural and economic support for teachers in the country, and generally facilitated a wide range of cultural and political educational initiatives across the country.⁴⁷² One of the early achievements of the group was the “Equal Pay for Women Teachers” campaign launched in 1946.⁴⁷³ Shortly after the campaign, D. W. Rogers and John W. Donaldson formed the Peoples Education Movement (PEM) in 1950 under the auspices of the TECA.⁴⁷⁴

Later in 1950, Eric Williams wrote to Rogers and Donaldson requesting an opportunity to collaborate with the education movement, and eventually joined the effort as a “consultant”.⁴⁷⁵ The active network built up through the years of work carried out by the

PEM would become Williams' base of grassroots support once he formally entered politics in the mid 1950s. In many respects Williams inherited a political base that was established while he was still working with the Caribbean Commission. Williams attained his local reputation through the network of the PEM, featuring in public lectures organized in collaboration with the Library Association. A 1954 report by the Trinidad Intelligence Unit of the US Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence on one such lecture reveals the US security complex's interest in local intellectual-political events.⁴⁷⁶

The informant attending the events reported on details of topics discussed, and named communist suspects such as C.L.R. James and George Padmore as part of the evaluation of Williams' political leanings.⁴⁷⁷ The report noted that known communists congratulated Williams for his lecture. However during the question period, these persons were surprised to hear Williams denounce the Soviet Union as an "utter Totalitarian State". The report's final evaluation was that Williams' "pet theme is racialism" and although his "political views are to the left", he "is not known to have taken part in any Marxist activities".⁴⁷⁸ The report concluded that as Deputy Chairman of the Caribbean Research Council of the Caribbean Commission, Williams' salary was partially paid by the US government, and in closing there was no further concern.

Eric Williams' career with the Caribbean Commission was coming to a close in 1954, as noted by the head of the British section S. E. V. Luke: "I have no doubts that Williams is a source of serious weakness in the Caribbean Commission secretariat, and that it would greatly benefit from the termination of his association with it."⁴⁷⁹ The reason for such a position was the evaluation that Williams was an "intense individualist" who "showed himself unable to work harmoniously with his superiors, his equals, or his subordinates."⁴⁸⁰ These traits were deemed "most undesirable for the Head of a Branch in which practically all technical services are centralised" because "other activities of the Branch suffer in the process from lack of attention, guidance and supervision."⁴⁸¹ Williams' break with the Commission began when his contract was only renewed for one year in 1954 instead of the regular protocol of five years. The notice given to Williams stated that this was "due to conflict" between the Secretary General and himself over the direction of the research program.⁴⁸² The notice reiterated that the sole responsibility and authority in this regard lay with the Secretary General.

The head of the British section of the AACC, S. E. V. Luke met with Williams to dispel any argument that he was a victim of “racial persecution” and to “ensure that [they] are not left with an embittered and anti-British Williams on [their] hands”.⁴⁸³ To support the roundedness of the case for Williams’ dismissal Luke had the following to say:

The Commission gave him every chance and their final decision not to renew his contract was reached, after much hesitation, by the unanimous vote of the sixteen members of the Commission, the majority of whom are West Indian or Puerto Ricans and who are, in addition, Williams’ personal friends. On the evidence, there was no alternative. I believe Williams may emerge as a leading West Indian figure... he must do so as a politician and not as a civil servant, since he conspicuously lacks the qualities that are essential in the latter.⁴⁸⁴

Williams maintained his “consultant” role with the PEM while he held his position at the Caribbean Research Council. However shortly after his dismissal from twelve years of service with the (Anglo-American) Caribbean Commission, Williams engaged his “two teacher friends” D. W. Rogers and John Donaldson with the idea to develop an extensive program of lectures and establish a political party.⁴⁸⁵

The first lecture Williams gave under the TECA banner was his momentous 21 June 1955 lecture titled “My Relations with the Caribbean Commission”. The lecture outlined the broad course of Williams’ time at the Commission and concluded by stating the reason for this speech was to clear his “name and reputation from any imputations of inefficiency or failure or factious opposition or disloyalty” during his time at the Commission.⁴⁸⁶ In this discourse Williams acknowledged his disagreement with the Secretary General, and claimed that because his work ethic could not be challenged, the decision to remove him was made in private.

There is no sure way to evaluate the depth of Williams’ claim as compared to the Colonial Office’s position. However, it should be noted that the Public Records Office file on “Correspondence Concerning Dr. Eric Williams” 1954-1955 does contain a consistent bureaucratic record of the Commission’s deliberations on Williams’ work building up to the 1955 decision not to renew his contract.⁴⁸⁷ Although Williams’ conclusion to this speech is widely quoted, I have not elsewhere come across a single reference to the statements he made on his work for the US military and intelligence services during the war. Nevertheless for the popularly quoted Williams, “the issues are not personal but political”, and his

intention was then to “let down my bucket where I am, now, right with you in the British West Indies.”⁴⁸⁸

Within a month of Williams’ Caribbean Commission speech the decision was made to form the Political Education Group that would conduct political mobilization in tandem with the lecture schedule.⁴⁸⁹ It was D. W. Rogers who first suggested the idea of hosting the lectures in what came to be known as the “University of Woodford Square”, only initially supported by John Donaldson while others made disparaging and prejudicial remarks.⁴⁹⁰ Similarly, at the first lecture only Williams, Rogers, and Donaldson got up on the public platform in Woodford Square, and in a later reflection on the occasion Rogers notes that two members who refused to appear on stage were given the top positions in the party.⁴⁹¹

These details give some insight into the P.N.M.’s internal structure as it contained the divergent interests of those who primarily sought institutional power and those who worked towards representation for the broad base of the population. The PEM hosted 51 more lectures across the country, from Charlotteville to Scarborough in Tobago, and Port of Spain to Point Fortin in Trinidad, all before 20 January 1956.⁴⁹² The only two persons to attend all of the lectures were Rogers and Donaldson who had the responsibility of organizing each lecture, and literally walked for miles to mobilize attendance.⁴⁹³ These two persons also took up the charge of political organizing in the consistently neglected “Behind the Bridge” areas on the outskirts of Port of Spain known to be areas of concentrated poverty, and stereotyped as hostile.⁴⁹⁴ The substance of Williams’ program for change as he appealed to the population is outlined in the speeches he gave on this lecture circuit leading up to the 1956 election.

It becomes increasingly evident that Williams’ political direction as head of the government was not a break from existing patterns in any major way, but more enduringly it was a continuation of the status quo. In July 1955 Williams gave a speech in Woodford Square titled “Economic Problems of Trinidad and Tobago” where he noted the lack of change between 1950 and 1955. In his analysis, the economy was dependent on an oil industry facing depleting reserves and a sugar industry providing fewer jobs, and the “obvious alternatives” lay in industrial development and tourism.⁴⁹⁵ Williams’ solution was to turn directly to the work of Arthur Lewis, a Saint Lucian Economist who had worked for the Caribbean Commission and produced a pioneer study on economic development in Puerto Rico. The program articulated by Williams was to encourage the development of “light

industries using imported raw materials” which “should be based on appeals and incentives to established manufactures in England and the United States.”⁴⁹⁶ In sum, Williams argued that the “British West Indian industrialisation programme must follow the example of Puerto Rico and produce for export rather than for its limited domestic market.”⁴⁹⁷

Williams gave his following Woodford Square speech two weeks later and addressed the issue of constitution reform. Here, he argued for a new constitution based on the principle that “single chamber legislature is colonialism, in conception, in form and in operation.”⁴⁹⁸ His overarching goal was to enter “the stream of democracy”, which could be done “only by substituting a legislature of two houses.” Williams then called for a “lower house of elected members”, described as “automatic if you are to have a democracy”, alongside his insistence on “a second chamber of nominated members.” He claimed that the problem “with the constitution is not the principle of the nominated system, but its practical operation” and thus “[t]he nominated system is so essential that, if it did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it.”⁴⁹⁹

In Williams’ formulation, the upper house positions would be filled by “six members representing special economic interests, chosen by those interests themselves” (oil, sugar, commerce, cocoa, shipping, and local industries), five members from religious denominations, and two from distinguished public life as recommended by the Chief Minister.⁵⁰⁰ The insistence on nomination was also reapplied to the Executive Council, to be composed of the Governor, Colonial Secretary, and Attorney General as the British appointments, a Chief Minister position taken up by the leader of the majority party, and five Ministers selected by the Chief Minister.⁵⁰¹ The organization of government envisioned here and operationalized by Williams once he got into power did not depart from the Crown Colony principles of government in any fundamental way. Both modes of governance were characterized by executive control in service of special interests and the displacement of popular representation. More specifically, these two speeches demonstrate how Williams’ policies addressed the government’s constitutionalized executive dominance and the economy’s orientation toward external interests retained prior governance patterns, thus leaving the fundamental basis of the national security state intact.

The reality that Eric Williams was not prepared to fundamentally change the organization of the State and the economy would become overtly evident in the period after independence as the population’s discontent upsurged in various forms of demonstration.

Of focus now in these formative years is the organization of the party with respect to the population, traced through the vehicle of electoral representation. On 15 January 1956 the Political Education Group was closed, and on 24 January the P.N.M. was formally inaugurated.⁵⁰² At this inaugural conference D. W. Rogers was removed from his position as a party officer, and John Donaldson had to engage an intense struggle to retain a position on the executive. In Rogers' account he notes that other members who were not present at the P.N.M.'s inauguration would later come to attain executive positions as deals were made,⁵⁰³ and it quickly became visible that from this early stage "loyalty to the party meant loyalty to the Political Leader of the party exclusively."⁵⁰⁴

The P.N.M.'s platform for the 1956 election was proclaimed as a 'jobs' program to invigorate the economy in a "welfare state" approach of increased allocations to infrastructure, health, education, and food.⁵⁰⁵ This economic development plan relied on foreign capital investment for energy-based industrialization and economic "diversification", explicitly packaged with a rejection of socialism. Diversification was both a means to create job opportunities and an attempt to move away from reliance on the petroleum industry, thus the slated mandate was to develop agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism industries.⁵⁰⁶

At the center of Williams' attacks on the existing political system were the entrenched corrupt practices that he vowed to uproot.⁵⁰⁷ A local Intelligence Committee report in early 1957, not long after the P.N.M.'s first electoral victory, noted that "contrary to the most enthusiastic assessments" the P.N.M gained thirteen seats in the LegCo.⁵⁰⁸ This success for the P.N.M. was seen to be primarily due the "personality of Dr. Eric Williams, to his ability as a speaker" in advocating "nationalism" and "honesty and integrity in public affairs". The analysis however, was that the P.N.M. now held power with "Williams as its virtual dictator", and the party was fortunate in the polls because it "had no prior record on which it could be attacked, while most of its opponents had plenty to hide".⁵⁰⁹

The reconsolidation of the national security state amidst a struggle for power

The 1957 Intelligence Committee report is revealing in its language, explicitly situating the concerns of political economy within its security framework. The committee's "main activities were directed towards the containment of the threat to security occasioned by the unstable political situation during the pre-Election period."⁵¹⁰ Thus "in 1956 there was ample

cause to study political activity from the security aspect; until after the Elections in September a situation existed throughout the territory which threatened the peace and internal security.” However, the “situation at the end of the year was much better than could reasonably have been anticipated.”⁵¹¹ This was because “in 1956 Communism made no headway in Trinidad” and in fact continued to “lose ground” along with the “pleasant surprise” that was the arrival of “party politics” with the P.N.M. The concluding analysis was that “[f]rom a security point of view the danger remains in the possibility of the survival of racial politics as represented by the P.D.P.”⁵¹² At this point the P.N.M. was not a security threat to the British colonial interests.

The September 1956 election registered 80% voter turnout,⁵¹³ and a P.N.M. victory that secured thirteen of twenty-four seats, while the P.D.P. only won five seats, and the Butler Party, the Labour Party coalition, and Independents won two seats each.⁵¹⁴ While P.N.M. won the largest number of seats in the election, it only attained the minimum number needed to form a government, and did not secure a victory with mass popular support as it only got 39% of the vote (P.D.P. 20%, Butler 11%, Labour 5%, Independents 15%).⁵¹⁵ Despite having the legal authority to form a government, Williams realized that he was in a vulnerable position vis-à-vis the weak electoral support. Moreover, the P.N.M.’s minority position in the LegCo barred him from making any of the constitutional changes he mandated.

Even though he held constitutional authority to form a government, Williams was reluctant to accept the responsibility without an assured legislative authority, and thus he made a direct appeal to the British Government. The Secretary of State agreed with the request to amend the constitution and directed the Governor to defer the two of the five nominated seats to Williams’ selection, thereby ensuring a P.N.M. majority in the LegCo.⁵¹⁶ In this fact it is noted that Eric Williams the anti-colonial scholar relied upon the Colonial Office to form his first government, and thus the P.N.M.’s first majority in the LegCo was not attained through democratic means but rather by executive appointment. Eric Williams published his *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* in 1962 and in it he stated that the P.N.M.’s “first achievement was the abolition of the Crown Colony system.” This claim was somehow supported by the immediate admission that the Colonial Office agreed to the party’s “request to modify drastically the system of nomination by including among the five

nominated members two People's National Movement members selected by the leader of the Party who had become Chief Minister.”⁵¹⁷

In this discourse Williams described his effort to establish a bicameral house as a “dramatic reversal of the Crown Colony pattern of Legislature”,⁵¹⁸ however when the case was brought to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1959, his reply was that “I am willing to accept either a bi-cameral or a uni-cameral legislature, whichever is endorsed by the electorate.”⁵¹⁹ The Secretary then sought to remind Williams that in 1956 an “important modification of the constitution was made by convention” in agreement that the changes would be limited to the P.N.M.’s selection of nominated members on the LegCo and modifications of the boundary commission until another election took place.⁵²⁰ There was no principled opposition to Williams’ modifications of the constitution on behalf of the Colonial Office in this response, and further less so in their acquiescence to him in granting his further requests for changes between 1959 and 1961, all before the next election took place.

A report by the US Consul in Port of Spain notes that prior to assuming leadership as Chief Minister in 1956, Williams also made a direct appeal for technical assistance and capital investment from the US, leading the Consul to report to Washington that despite Williams’ apparent militancy he respected the US.⁵²¹ It would stand that the US had serious economic interest in Trinidad and accompanied assurance of domestic political stability with the fact that in 1956 Texaco, the third largest US oil company at the time and known for belligerent bargaining, acquired the Trinidad Oil Co. for twice the market price.⁵²² In 1956 Texaco not only made major acquisitions of existing oil assets in Trinidad, but also set about formulating its operations on the island around a transshipment complex hub.⁵²³ In 1957 breakthroughs in oil tanker construction closed the relative geographic space of the world’s oceans such that vessels were now readily able to circumnavigate Africa, and the Caribbean became a major transshipment facility. By 1959 the region was the world’s largest exporter of oil products.⁵²⁴

In this instance when the oil market was strong and the assets desired by foreign capital Williams made no move to attempt to acquire a key component of the industry. He was in no position to challenge the US in a move that would bring him into association with the categorization as communist, and thus a threat. The continued strategic importance of the region heightened any position towards the oil-dominated economy, and the decisions

made had to directly consider the ability to endure the response from Washington. Williams' first concern was to secure his internal hold on government, so at this point he was open in his appeasement of the US and requesting foreign aid.

The configuration of political boundaries within T&T for the 1958 Federal election was different such that there were only ten seat divisions, while in the 1956 general election there were twenty-four.⁵²⁵ P.N.M. candidates were only able to win four of the ten seats in the Federal government in 1958,⁵²⁶ and thus the Colonial Office realized that the power it held to shift electoral boundaries had a determinative impact on the ability of the P.N.M. to hold power. In the T&T County Council elections of February 1959 the P.N.M. attained 48.4% of the total vote and won 34 electoral seats while the opposition Democratic Labour Party received 41.9% of the vote and took 33 seats.⁵²⁷ This result further evidenced the limited degree to which the P.N.M. wielded electoral power. The constitutional changes made in the establishment of the system of Cabinet government in July 1959 demonstrated the extent to which the P.N.M.'s agenda relied on executive power to maintain political control.⁵²⁸ Under this Cabinet system the Premier was now head of the T&T Government and had the power to appoint or fire Ministers without any vote from the LegCo.⁵²⁹

In November 1959 the Secretary of State held a round of "Trinidad Constitution Talks" with the government and the Opposition as the P.N.M. continued to push for the introduction of the bicameral legislature before the election. A memorandum written to prepare the Secretary of State for these talks noted the prime concern with supporting Williams' request was that the Opposition in Trinidad would make a campaign out of the fact that "the Secretary of State would in effect be entering the Trinidad party-political arena on the side of the P.N.M."⁵³⁰ A conclusion of the memorandum was that "there are genuine advantages in a Senate now. The position of the nominated members in the lower house is already thoroughly awkward." Thus the decision was to agree to the introduction of the bicameral legislature, because refusal "would only postpone and prolong the row, whereas otherwise we shall have a short sharp protest from the Opposition but as good a chance of peace as has ever existed once the election is over."⁵³¹

The above memorandum was written prior to the talks, and it is important to note the extensive minutes of the Secretary of State's deliberations with the Opposition pretending to weigh upon matters that had already been decided.⁵³² At a Press Conference on the "Constitution Talks" Williams stated that the "reallocation of boundaries, delimitation of

boundaries, will take effect before; the General Election will be fought on the new boundaries.”⁵³³ When inquired as to the composition of this “Delimitation Committee” Williams admitted that it is the legislature (which he controlled) who would appoint the Committee and approve its report, and when pressed further the orator of Woodford Square claimed, “I don’t remember, I would have to check up on the files... I can’t be expected to carry all these things in my mind; it’s not a serious matter”.⁵³⁴

The 1960 Representation of the People Act shifted the electoral boundaries, overseen and managed by a politically appointed Elections Commission and Boundaries Commission, and included the replacement of the ballot box by voting machines.⁵³⁵ Williams’ constitutional changes built up an effective institutional buffer to his ability to retain power, but what was most needed was a popular cause to garner mass attention and support for the P.N.M.

The march on Chaguaramas

The residual US base at Chaguaramas presented itself as the target for a public campaign “against colonialism” as Williams was drawn into the debate on where the Capital for the Federation of the West Indies would be located. In a May 1957 vote on whether the Capital of the West Indies Federation should be located in Chaguaramas, the Trinidad delegates abstained from the vote and Williams took an observer position in the negotiations.⁵³⁶ In this circumstance the US Department of State expressed “warm appreciation” for Williams as he deferred to the Colonial Office in these early Capital negotiations, and the opinion was formed that Williams could be further relied upon to disrupt the Caribbean front.⁵³⁷ Despite a lack of support from the Trinidad delegation the decision went in favor of Chaguaramas and when the Federation Standing Committee formally requested the removal of the US base the Colonial Office lamented that the Committee “made the most embarrassing solution of the site for the capital which they could possibly have made.”⁵³⁸

At the following meeting in London, Eric Williams took a strong position in support of the Federation Standing Committee and the decision to locate the Capital in Chaguaramas. In what was a shock to the Department of Defense military officials at the meeting, Williams made a case for the removal of the US base from Chaguaramas primarily citing the British Governor’s 1940 protests against the location of the base in that area,⁵³⁹

and argued for West Indian independence to be respected in its choice of Capital site. Williams' challenge to the US base in Trinidad was primarily site specific, for he never did take a position for the complete removal of US navy, military or other security agencies from Trinidad.⁵⁴⁰ His case was also mostly built on challenges to the validity of agreements affected by shifting political landscapes since the war ended and the Federation was being formed, and allegations of the US abusing certain aspects of the agreement, including economic concessions it retained since the war.⁵⁴¹

In the records consulted, there was not a single record of Williams making out a case against US imperialism in principle during his Chaguaramas campaign, and similarly not a record of him highlighting the extrajudicial killings carried out by US servicemen in the number of incidents that occurred over the years. As an astute politician Eric Williams understood that the limit of his power was demarcated by his limits in what he was willing to challenge. Nevertheless his campaign was not void of risks, or opportunities. A comment by an official in the Colonial Office on Williams' position with respect to the US base and the consequent issues of legislation reveals the balance of power: "Dr. Williams seems to be giving himself a considerable length of rope so that if we do have to twitch the noose rather sharply by reminding him of the existence of reserve powers it will be against a background that it is he rather than we who are manifestly being unreasonable."⁵⁴²

The Federation of the West Indies came into being in 1958. Although Williams had mounted his campaign to remove the US base from Chaguaramas the Federation was without a Capital site. A 1959 Colonial Office report on "Talks with Dr. Williams on Chaguaramas" opened by noting the Premier's claims "that these are matters on which the Federal Government is not competent to negotiate" and thus Trinidad needed separate representation as the only island in the British Caribbean with an active US base.⁵⁴³ The Governor's evaluation was straight to the point:

Now that Dr. Williams has achieved a Cabinet system, including control of the police, he has to look for a new 'cry'. He knows that social and economic issues are more easily exploited in opposition than in power, and he sees in Chaguaramas a political platform which can carry him through the next couple of years. It is a politically attractive platform... the American bases afford a target for 'anti-Colonialist' emotions such as we no longer present.⁵⁴⁴

The substance of Williams' challenge amounted to the point where he could then "extract a sizeable sum from the Americans for calling off the campaign" and there was no

fundamental concern to the Governor because “he is probably quite prepared for some compromise at the end of the day.”⁵⁴⁵

According to the Governor’s meeting with US Admiralty and Ministry of Defence, the Gulf of Paria was of “considerable strategic importance” as the only available natural deep water harbor where the southern Caribbean bordered the Atlantic and remained a “very valuable assembly area for convoys”. The strategic concern was heightened by the concerns that the “the Soviets have built up a very large submarine fleet.”⁵⁴⁶ The US Air Force gave a tour of the tracking station that Williams had made protests about, noting that it was the biggest of its kind in the world and essential in providing a defence against intercontinental ballistic missiles.⁵⁴⁷ In the Governor’s own analysis Chaguaramas was important to the US for “another reason, which they seldom mention”, in that it would provide a base from which an intervention to “control Venezuela and Venezuelan oil fields” during a time of “crisis” could be launched. His position on the matter was that it “is probably to our interests that they should retain that capability” and that “Williams could not, of course, drive the Americans out of Chaguaramas”. The concern was that the issue could “create a running sore” which “would give an opening to Communist influence”.⁵⁴⁸

The Governor’s assessment of the situation did not indicate any immediate threat or directed responsive action to Williams’ campaign other than to strategize how to bring the US to negotiate with T&T as a unit government. This position differed from US national security officials with a direct stake in the issue, for certain elements had an active agenda to remove the source of the problem, i.e. Eric Williams. The extent of these plans are not fully known for only limited insights have thus far been revealed in documentation, as noted by an FBI file from 13 August 1959 on “Eric Williams and Internal Security in Trinidad”. This memorandum records a request from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Navy for information of “personal nature” about Williams, as these agencies were actively interested in having him defeated in the upcoming election. As noted in the earlier FBI memo by J. Edgar Hoover, Williams was not a concern for the FBI and thus the FBI’s “Action” line at the end of the memorandum notes a decline of the request.⁵⁴⁹

The highpoint of Williams’ Chaguaramas campaign was 22 April 1960, previously proclaimed by Williams to be the day of West Indian “independence”. As the base remained in place, the “March to Chaguaramas” was an official protest against both the British Governor and the US consul.⁵⁵⁰ In the lead up to the march Williams increased his public

attacks on the base, and proclaimed that the “road to independence leads through Chaguaramas”. C.L.R. James edited the P.N.M.’s party newspaper during this period, and inevitably this was the most ‘radical’ phase the party has ever seen.⁵⁵¹ A Colonial Office file records an official notice from the US Consul regarding their concern for the Trinidad Police as a reliable means of securing the population during the march if things escalated due to their loyalty to Williams. The Governor’s intelligence network revealed that the US would have an aircraft carrier just beyond the horizon of Trinidad on the day of the march.⁵⁵²

Two days before the 22 April march the Governor reported to the Secretary of State that he “met all available Ministers this morning, and [the] meeting passed off better than I expected.”⁵⁵³ He reported on the plan for a “mass meeting” and a march in which “small delegations would break off” to present memorials to the Governor and the US Consul, set to last four hours and end with speeches. His conclusion was that “I do not (repeat not) anticipate trouble.”⁵⁵⁴ On 22 April the Governor’s telegram to the Secretary and the Senior Naval Officer of the West Indies simply read: “Demonstration and march passed off without incident. Numbers much below those expected.”⁵⁵⁵ The height of the imperial confrontation surrounding the march against the US base was not the challenge it has been made to be, and with detail of context it is in fact underwhelming due to its lack of substance. Furthermore, the internal workings of the party were such that any resistance displayed was already on the retreat, most notably evidenced by the ejection of C.L.R. James and the radical wing of the P.N.M. in opposition to the concessions that were made by Williams.

In June 1960 the British Colonial Secretary discussed the outline for a new round of talks with the US Department of State representative where the format would be a tripartite basis with substantive components of direct negotiations between the US and the respective “unit” governments.⁵⁵⁶ A September NSC preparation meeting reaffirmed the importance of the region due military assets and raw materials and took the position that communism was the prime threat. With respect to the issue of Williams and the base, the military’s emphasis was that “the strategic position of Trinidad is the only suitable one in the area as [an] ‘anchor’ to the Caribbean island-chain.”⁵⁵⁷ Along with this reaffirmation of strategic importance the US security state had calibrated Williams’ campaign. To their satisfaction there was no anti-imperialist threat at hand when the Commander of the Office of Naval Intelligence requested FBI assistance because the Navy was “particularly interested in any

information which might give us a clue as to the bottom asking price of Williams.”⁵⁵⁸ The sad reality is that Williams’ famous “Massa Day Done” speech on 4 December 1960 was given after the concessions began,⁵⁵⁹ already his growl or bite showed no teeth.

The renegotiation of the Caribbean base leases began in November 1960 and finished in the first months of 1961.⁵⁶⁰ The culmination of Williams’ confrontation on the base issue was wittingly exposed by the leader of the D.L.P. opposition on 19 December 1960 after the first round of talks, where he sang a calypso aloud in the LegCo that was composed in support of the march on Chaguaramas: “we don’t want charity, give we back we land, Uncle Sam, we want back we land.”⁵⁶¹ Stage two of the talks took place in February 1961, in Tobago, and it is here that most of the details of the resolution to the Chaguaramas base issue were put in place. The outcome was that the US retained the essential functional portion of the Chaguaramas base with a review set for ten years, while it conceded to give up 20,000 acres (approximately half) of the leased territory in Trinidad. A key component of the deal was economic aid as a measure to ameliorate the sense of local injustice. The aid primarily came via assistance with five major capital projects centering on infrastructural development of roadways, a harbor expansion, and a university college (which became the University of the West Indies).⁵⁶²

A British Defense Ministry review concluded that in light of the overarching US influence the real post-independence threat in the region was not external interference, but internal “political unrest.”⁵⁶³ In Trinidad, Eric Williams did all he could to prevent the internal unrest from displacing him, and was increasingly secured as the threat vis-à-vis US destabilization subsided. The last major bulwark to Williams’ hold on power in these formative years came in the form of the Trinidad and Tobago (Constitution) Order in Council, 1961, passed in June of that year. A prime function of the Bill was the introduction of a twenty-one member Senate; twelve on the advice of Premier, two of the Opposition, and seven economic, religious, social interests at Governor discretion.⁵⁶⁴ A Boundaries Commission was also formed to review electoral boundaries, composed of a speaker, a judge appointed on the advice of the Governor, two members on the Premier, one on the Opposition.⁵⁶⁵ Williams seemed to be in full control of the State as independence approached.

Aid, independence, and business as usual

In September 1961 Jamaica held a referendum as to whether it would stay in the Federation and brought a close but shocking negative result. This circumstance produced Williams' infamous remark that "one from ten leaves nought",⁵⁶⁶ and a decision that immediate independence would be sought for T&T on its own. The run up to the December 1961 election in Trinidad was marked by violent rhetoric and actual outbreaks of conflict. A State of Emergency was enforced in known opposition areas of Saint Augustine, Barataria, Caroni East, and Chaguanas, and this was accompanied by targeted police searches where the opposition leaders claimed victimization.⁵⁶⁷ Williams' campaign was overtly pro-West and pro-Capitalist and he went further to publicly denounce the radical wing that had been purged from the P.N.M. as he declared "communism" one of the five dangers to the party.⁵⁶⁸

In the December 1961 election the P.N.M. recorded a victory, winning 20/29 constituencies with 48% of the vote.⁵⁶⁹ Coupled with these changes to consolidate the function of countrywide governance, the P.N.M. moved to suspend local government elections, successfully remaining in force until 1968.⁵⁷⁰ The last iteration of Williams' protests against the US base came after the election when he advanced a challenge claiming that the US had promised to completely fund the major capital projects (including the College of Arts and Sciences in Saint Augustine) but had only put forth a contribution of 60%.⁵⁷¹

The Governor's report on this matter stated that "[r]elations between the United States and the present Trinidad Government, under Dr. Williams, have been very much a love-hate affair."⁵⁷² The Governor noted that Bill Christensen was taking up the post of US Consulate in Trinidad and that he had become instrumental in managing diplomatic affairs. This was because Christensen "had previous dealings with Dr. Williams when they were both concerned with the activities of the Caribbean Commission". The Governor kept "in close touch" with Christensen, who was now the source of "most" of the Governor's information, and was well placed for the task as he maintained "fairly frequent access to Dr. Williams, and close contacts with him."⁵⁷³ Christensen's analysis was that in the field of economic aid, "Dr. Williams is showing himself insatiable" and this new action was "clearly intended as a means of putting more pressure on the Americans for granting economic aid on Trinidad's terms."⁵⁷⁴

In April 1962, five months before T&T's independence, the Governor reported on the

closing of the matter of US aid with respect to the base. Once more Bill Christensen was the key feature, and the Governor described the successful outcome as “a direct result of the initiative he has taken to try to get Dr. Williams back from the limb on which he had perched himself”.⁵⁷⁵ After noting that works were underway the report highlighted a comment by Christensen that Williams “seemed almost pathetically grateful to have been given a way out of the extreme position he had taken in relation to American aid.” Thus the Governor concluded, “Dr. Williams seems to have readily seized the opportunity to improve his relations with the U.S.” and the hope was that “this phase of sweeter relations” would continue.⁵⁷⁶

The 1962 Independence Constitution of T&T remained very similar to the 1961 version.⁵⁷⁷ A Governor-General replaced the Queen as the symbolic head of state, who would only act on the advice of the Crown or the British Prime Minister. Other changes to the constitution were such that a speaker was now listed and an Opposition Leader formally recognized. The Prime Minister effectively replaced the Governor in a constitution where the newly established Parliament was institutionally subordinate to the Executive.⁵⁷⁸ In 1962 prior to the declaration of independence Eric Williams wrote to the Secretary of State with the assessment that “[q]uite frankly I see our role as an independent country in this light: the crucial issue is defence, with Trinidad and Tobago sitting astride the triangle of pro-Soviet influence from Cuba, to British Guyana and across to Venezuela with its Communist minority.”⁵⁷⁹ Williams put T&T in “obvious” contrast to these countries in order to establish an appeal for financial assistance from the UK to “expand” democracy and thus act as a form of containment. The thrust of the message was a direct appeal for support with the local Telephone Company, in which he was considering privatizing its operations, as well as support for the British West Indian Airways airline that was set to be the regional carrier.⁵⁸⁰

Similarly, on 31 August 1962, the day of independence itself, the Governor-General met with Williams to give his brief courtesies but was held in discussion by Williams for over half an hour. He reported that the thrust of the “frank one sided discussion” was that “Trinidad did not wish to be abandoned by Britain to the Americans either politically or economically.” Again, Williams’ case was to appeal for more foreign investment in Trinidad, in this circumstance to “make it a show place of successful British decolonization.”⁵⁸¹ On the day the T&T flag was first hoisted the constitution in place was not fundamentally different from that under formal Crown Colony rule. Also on this day it is shown that the empowered

head of T&T was primarily concerned with having a good relationship with the formal colonial power, openly making appeals based on the importance of foreign capital.

The posture of the new government as it saw its role between the interests of the corporate economy and that of the workers is revealed in a communiqué of the British High Commissioner in November 1962. The message contained a report from a recent meeting between the government, the Regiment, the Coast Guard, the Police, as well as leading businessmen and the General Managers of Texaco and BP.⁵⁸² This meeting was concerned with oil and sugar workers strikes and was convened with urgency when the threat of the Civil Service joining the strike action became real. According to the T&T Government this situation was apparently “not a coincidence, but was part of a sinister left wing plan” and the evaluation was that it must be assumed that strikes will lead to violence and sabotage.⁵⁸³ The most telling conclusion to the meeting was that Williams’ Acting Prime Minister, Dr. Solomon, invited the oil companies to arm their security guards.⁵⁸⁴

Based on the parameters of analysis used to delineate the national security state, there is no doubt that the formation remained intact, still rooted in its Crown Colony foundations. In 1962 the external orientation of the economy was secured by government policy, determined by an executive that was ready to act in service of corporate interests with outright worker suppression. The attainment of political decolonization did not remove the national security state under Eric Williams. The analysis showed that the centralization of government actually increased under Williams’ tenure, to the effect that the P.N.M. relied on executive measures to attain hold on electoral power by manipulating the constitution and electoral institutions to suit. Despite his rhetoric of anti-colonialism and his symbolic march against the US base in Chaguaramas the substance of Williams’s political position was commitment to the Anglo-American system of reliance on foreign private/capital as the driver of the economy coupled with an anti-communist commitment in the post-war order. The next chapter shifts to the first decade of independence, giving attention to the details of how the national security state remained intact. In this case it was mobilized primarily against the population Eric Williams and the P.N.M. claimed to represent in independent T&T.

Chapter IV, 1962-1972

The national security state of T&T in the first decade of independence

The previous section situated the coming to power of the P.N.M. under Eric Williams, his struggles with the US, and the assistance given to him by the Colonial Office in attaining a strong hold on government through executive actions. It was shown that the national security state remained in place with its Crown Colony features of strong executive control, open suppression of worker organization and the prominence of foreign military forces on the island, all set to protect the major private/corporate interests that owned the principal stake in the islands' economy, essential resources, and services. The focus of this segment is the continuity of all of these patterns in the first decade of independence that culminated in the first 'national' crisis; the uprisings of 1970. The patterns of executive dominance are linked directly into an analysis of how this formation affected the security forces that are designed to secure the State in the interests of private capital. In this period Trinidadian personnel took over command of the security services, breaking a long line of British Commanders and Commissioners. The strong continuities of executive dominance, and the direct interference of the civilian executive of government in the affairs of the security services ensured that this transition was not a smooth or stable one. Nonetheless the national security state remained intact, and it is the population that was compounded with all of the violent negative impacts, state liabilities, and continued suppression.

The initial segment of the chapter details the context of independent T&T as a national security state of internal control, and as a proxy of strategic importance to the US. In this section the ideology of capitalist fundamentalism and Western alignment is situated as the basis of the national security state, where anticommunism is the vehicle into which any resistance is collapsed and targeted; the contrast of Guyana and T&T demonstrate this. The body of the chapter covers the affairs of the security services, primarily concerned with the social context surrounding the Regiment due to its role in the 1970 uprisings. The Police Force is also situated, as it became the Police Service in this period, consistent in its function of arresting Trade Union and Black Power leaders and suppressing mobilizations. The concern in this section is the impact of direct interference in the security agencies by the government executive, and insight into the means through which the national security state endures despite undergoing some ruptures.

Independent T&T: An anticommunist national security state

In 1962 Eric Williams wrote to the Secretary of State about the “crucial issue [of] defence” against the “triangle of pro-Soviet influence” T&T found itself located in. At the time Guyana was the closest ‘communist’ government to T&T, then under the leadership of Dr. Cheddi Jagan and the Peoples Progressive Party (P.P.P.). Jagan had been given the designation of Soviet proxy in public by the US Government and especially the media during this period.⁵⁸⁵ However, the forces had been overtly displayed against him since 1953 when the British landed military troops, suspended the constitution, and imprisoned Jagan and other top P.P.P. members. A US State Department file from 1961 highlighted this background of the then current P.P.P. Government that was re-elected despite the previous intervention and a split in the P.P.P. The file noted, “since the restoration of the democratic process in 1957, the elected government has behaved reasonably well”.⁵⁸⁶ The paternalistic power relationship is inherent in this statement, where the US was ready to discipline the Caribbean government on its move towards autonomy.

Jagan was re-elected in 1961, and faced with this circumstance the US Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research stated there was an “effort to get along with Jagan” but at “the same time resources are to be built up to enable a harder line to be put into effect”.⁵⁸⁷ A harder line was indeed later enforced despite “the belief that Jagan himself was not a controlled instrument of Moscow; that he is instead a radical nationalist who may play both sides of the street but will not lead British Guiana into satellite status”. The real problem was that “it is another matter to accept the general thesis that we should support and live with a British Guiana under Marxist leadership with what this implies for the structure of the economy and the character of its political and social institutions.”⁵⁸⁸

While the US was opposed to Caribbean governments with Marxist tendencies, the officials dealing with Guyana made no mistake in noting that the real danger was in politically aggravated “racial tension between Africans and East Indians in the colony”.⁵⁸⁹ At a meeting in Washington on 17 March 1962 the White House representative, Mr. Fraser, “said that he felt British Guiana was in the United States' sphere of influence.” The danger then existed “in the real possibility that chaos would come to the colony and bring communism after it ... This racialism had been stimulated by Burnham's African bias and by the actions of D'Aguiar.” Burnham became the primary leader of opposition against Jagan,

and would later form a coalition government with D'Aguiar after the destabilization program successfully had Jagan ousted. Mr. Fraser further stated, "that Jagan was a nice man but he was surrounded by a mildly sinister group of advisors, several of whom were the worst kind of anti-colonialist."⁵⁹⁰

Despite these admissions, and notice that British companies in the colony were not worried about nationalization, the favored outcome of the meeting was that "[w]e must maneuver British Guianese opinion into wanting some kind of an adjustment in the present political machinery."⁵⁹¹ In this case an amendment of the constitution to introduce "proportional representation" would assist "in affecting the outcome of a new election." Arthur Schlesinger Jr., President Kennedy's assistant, followed up this line of action in a letter of July 1962 where he agreed "that there is no future in Jagan" and thus the question was: "Does CIA think that they can carry out a really covert operation - i.e., an operation which, whatever suspicions Jagan might have, will leave no visible traces which he can cite before the world, whether he wins or loses, as evidence of U.S. intervention?"⁵⁹²

There is ample evidence that the US had an active destabilization campaign in Guyana during this period.⁵⁹³ Proportional Representation as an idea for Guyana was implemented from Anglo-American circles, introduced in 1963, and large sums of money were directed toward unions and other organizations that supported the Burnham-D'Aguiar challengers to Jagan.⁵⁹⁴ Of note here are records of files that show US favour for Burnham, as he had discussed giving the US "the legal right to reactivate the base in British Guiana [1½ lines of source text not declassified]."⁵⁹⁵ Furthermore, regarding a Burnham-D'Aguiar coalition,

under present conditions, such a government would collapse by itself. However if the United States Government was prepared to shore it up, this would change the situation, specifically if the US could provide money [1½ lines of source text not declassified]. The Secretary pointed out that Africans control the police and the towns so that Jagan would be relegated to agitating in the countryside.⁵⁹⁶

The simple, but most important point in acknowledging this context is to note the ever-present threat of open imperial intervention into the political process in the Caribbean. Which governments were targeted in this period was a direct measure of their social and political program of decolonization and whether their economic policy remained committed to the Anglo-American capitalist camp. Any transformation of the political and economic system would not be tolerated.

The US national security state, consolidated in 1947, set out to extend its claim of the

Monroe Doctrine to a global scale with an anticommunist insistence. In the Caribbean, the ‘soft underbelly’ of the US, the anticommunist insistence had a particular emphasis due to proximity, and the enduring defiance of Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution. In 1963 the US ambassador in T&T reported that Williams “adopted a generally constructive position toward the US”;⁵⁹⁷ the P.N.M. government presented no threat, as it was loud in its anticommunist thrust. The national security state of T&T was turned inward on any dissent, all under the charges of ‘subversion’ utilizing the underlying anti-communist sentiment. In this manifestation the national security state of T&T serves as a proxy for US foreign policy, and is in turn reinvigorated by its alignment with the imperial powers as the P.N.M. faced internal threats from its own political base. Furthermore, as there was no Soviet-backed communist conspiracy in Guyana or T&T, the real consequence of the existing national security complexes is the undermining of independent Caribbean thought.

In 1962 Special Branch Intelligence Reports continued to list “communism” as the top concern, recording details of named communists and their various activities of interest. As there was no real threat of an organized communist takeover, attention was focused on cases such as that of Martin Sanchez, an Education Officer at the primary school level, charged with an agenda to “propagate communist ideology”.⁵⁹⁸ The report noted that an Enquiry was formed because of “his conduct at school where he was until recently employed.” An example of this “conduct” in concern was that Sanchez gave a lecture on “Socialism and Democracy” during “Civics” period.⁵⁹⁹ Furthermore, when confronted by the Head Teacher Sanchez retorted that the Head was a “stooge of the Church”, and spoke favorably of the leader of the Teachers’ Reformist Group who was convicted for “possession of subversive literature.” This report also contained intelligence from a source that provided personal information and commentary on Sanchez regarding his background and possible intentions; as an orphan Sanchez “feels that he has never been given a fair deal in life.”⁶⁰⁰

Following reports on the matter called for “every possibility to be explored of the Ministry of Education imposing sanctions on school teacher Sanchez”,⁶⁰¹ for although he had lost his job at the Roman Catholic school he was able to find a position at a Muslim school.⁶⁰² When Sanchez was brought before a Commission, it was reported that he continued to host meetings and possess “subversive literature”. In addressing a call to “demonstrate why he should not be terminated” Sanchez responded that it was only because of “Marxist” ideas that actions were taken against him, and in anticipation of dismissal he

was already looking for other jobs, outside the country if possible.⁶⁰³ In addressing the general issue, the Intelligence Committee called for a “review of existing legislation and machinery for control of subversive literature” and expressed direct concern that “the real security threat in the labour situation of the Sugar Industry is the deliberate subversive efforts of Arthur Smith, an active communist”.⁶⁰⁴

These 1962 Intelligence Reports listed banned publications and named communists, and highlighted specific concern for figures such as the labour leader George Weeks who was attaining increased prominence. Also listed was C.L.R. James, who in this period gave a lecture on the “British Democratic Tradition and the West Indies” and argued that “democracy in the West Indies would have to be fought for on economic grounds”.⁶⁰⁵ Cheddi Jagan’s visit to Trinidad was recorded, listing his meetings with political parties and labour organizations. In 1963 the British High Commissioner reported on a discussion where Eric Williams thanked the Commissioner for information on Guyana and “started with an attack on Dr. Jagan”.⁶⁰⁶ According to the High Commissioner’s report, Williams “said that in light of the current situation, Trinidad was writing [Guyana] off.” Despite this dismissal Williams stated that there should be more constitutional protection for “an Opposition” and “an impartial commission to re-define electoral boundaries”. Further, these “constitutional guarantees should perhaps be ensured by means of a United Nations force.”⁶⁰⁷

Here, while maintaining his complicity with the imperial anticommunist insistency, Williams also reveals the contradictions of his position in advocating democratic constitutional advances that he refused to institute himself. This is demonstrated in a quote from the High Commissioner as he reported on the case of Guyana, and made a point to note that Williams “said specifically that he would publicly oppose any proposal to put forward proportional representation because of its repercussions in Trinidad.”⁶⁰⁸ Continuing in this contradictory pattern Williams further “complained bitterly of Jack Kelshall” who was in Trinidad on behalf of the Guyana Government. Williams “said he had in mind to deport Kelshall,” and when the Commissioner commented that Kelshall was Trinidadian, the Prime Minister said “he could have it both ways”, because if he arrived in Trinidad as a representative of the Guyana Government, “Trinidad would treat him as a Guianese” and it would give him “great pleasure to have [Kelshall] deported.”⁶⁰⁹

In April 1963 Eric Williams announced in the House of Representatives that two

Commissions of Enquiry were being established, one into the Oil Industry and the other into “subversive activities”.⁶¹⁰ A report from the British High Commission in early May addresses this general context with the title “Dr. Williams and His Policies”.⁶¹¹ The report began with an observation that Williams’ government was over-centralized, and “[t]he result is that problems needing attention are frequently left unattended because Dr. Williams has not pronounced.” His analysis of the situation was that,

Trinidad also has two faces and, like the two faces of Dr. Williams, both are relevant to the country’s relations with her neighbours. The per capita income of Trinidad is the envy of many... [but] the high per capita income is not fully reflected in the standard of living of a large number of people of Trinidad, and the poverty in the slums of Port of Spain is probably as bad as anywhere in the West Indies.⁶¹²

The persistence of unemployment was getting worse and was coupled with “constant emigration”. A significant portion of this exit flow was “highly trained and skilled Trinidadians” who showed “no keenness to return to their native land where material rewards are less and frustrations greater.”⁶¹³ In many respects emigration served to release some of the internal pressure in the society, as there were less people with mobility and aspiration *stuck* on the island. This flow also had (and continues to have) intergenerational consequences as noted by the phenomena of ‘brain drain’.⁶¹⁴

In his comment on the two Commissions of Enquiry the British official stated the one into the oil industry had the objective of “milking” it for more revenue. On the other hand the “enquiry into subversive activity” was “regarded as a sop to the oil industry”, and “unless indeed the objective is to whitewash the unions” it won’t improve the economy “because talk of Communist influence” “is bad for investment.”⁶¹⁵ The Mbanefo Commission, as the enquiry to subversives became known, was formalized in September 1963 and set out to determine “the nature and extent of subversive activity” “with particular reference to its influence in the Trade Union movement, the public services and the youth organisations; to ascertain the extent to which external influences contribute to such activity”.⁶¹⁶ Lloyd Best wrote to Kari Levitt in the same month from his post at the University of the West Indies campus in Trinidad. The letter inquired whether important files relating to their Plantation Economy work had been sent, and noted that it “is not at all unlikely that the authorities are holding them up - the way things are in Trinidad at the moment.”⁶¹⁷ In commenting on the context of Trinidad and their efforts to grow the newly established New World Group, Best

warned that “[o]ne of the things we want to guard against is the building of a one-man organisation, be it group, paper or place. That is what killed the PNM from the start.”⁶¹⁸

The following letter from Best to Levitt in this series is in October, and in it Best expressed shock that he was “called up before the Commission of Enquiry into Subversive Activities, incredibly.”⁶¹⁹ Best charged that the P.N.M. government was “in a state of panic and trying its best to suppress articulate criticism in the country and to frighten real opposition.” The circumstance was dire because “the official opposition is more corrupt and bankrupt than the government” and “the establishment” was active in its attempts to “buy off Union leadership where possible, and where not, witch hunt.”⁶²⁰ According to the official discourse, C. L. R. James was “directing from London, a movement which aims ultimately to overthrow the Government”. For Best, such a proposition showed that “the Government is completely out of touch with reality or that they are prepared to go to any lengths to suppress democratic aspirations, or both.”⁶²¹ There was no sense of despair in his conclusion, only resolve, for he intended “to put out a pamphlet; Towards a Police State in T&T”.

Sowing the seeds of discontent: political interference in the security services

The T&T security services are an essential function of the national security state, explicitly so for internal control. This is set apart in scale from the precedent national security state analysis of the US which is inherently an active imperial posture of hemispheric and global dominance, with strong components of internal control. What also makes this case stand apart from the national security state of the US is that the security services in T&T have been openly marked by a high degree of political interference. This directly introduces volatility into the forces, as it does create conditions that directly undermine the government’s attempts at establishing security control. As a result the independent national security state of T&T increasingly relies on the US security state for its backing.

The T&T Regiment was created in 1962, and by 1963 there was a Commission of Enquiry into the armed forces, to evaluate (i) “conditions of service”, (ii) “community relations”, and (iii) the “disturbances at Carenage May 1963”.⁶²² The Defence Office file on the matter noted that the Regiment existed for “two functions; performing ceremonies, and [to] act as [a] riot squad to support Police if things get out of hand.”⁶²³ In 1963 the

Commanding Officer of the Regiment was Lieutenant Colonel Pearce Gould, an Englishman. His memorandum to the Commission gives insight into the “conditions of service”, which were directly affected by political activity, or lack thereof, when it came to matters of responsibility.

The Commander noted that, “On 1 April 1962 the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment was no more than an idea” but a year later it had a Headquarters at Teteron in Chaguaramas, and a force of three companies totaling 503 officers and soldiers.⁶²⁴ Prior to this any regular forces on the island were imperial troops controlled by the War Office of London. The basic problem was that there was “no experience of the administration, discipline and problems of regular military forces either within or without the Civil Service. Furthermore there were few people with even five years of military experience available to start off the Regiment.”⁶²⁵

The memorandum gave its focus of attention to the material conditions the Regiment had to face, and the root cause of each of the problems lay with political bureaucracy. A key issue was that of fuel, where due to the strategic importance of supply and large usage requirements the Regiment submitted required proposals for a fuel station at the base in August 1962, but only got approval in May 1963.⁶²⁶ The six-mile distance from the Teteron barracks along a single narrow road to the nearest gas station proved a source of great frustration and functional compromise. This was compounded by the fact that approvals for accommodation quarters were delayed and housing opportunities lost, while applications for furniture and appliances submitted since September 1962 still had not been forwarded to the US Aid Mission.⁶²⁷

This case was a repeated scenario for matters of essential clothing, ammunition, and militia equipment, all held up for periods over three months because of considerable delays in getting things authorized by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. With respect to the Regiment’s rank and file relations the Commander noted that any “antipathy is only in the lower ranks” and that the incidents at Carenage were “not symptomatic of general dissatisfaction with conditions or of bad relations with the public at large.”⁶²⁸ The Commander was generally correct in his evaluation of the troops’ relations with the public, however he would be later proven wrong regarding the general dissatisfaction and to whom it would be directed.

A study by military historian and security analyst C. M. Kelshall on *Armed Forces and Government* (2011) focused on the case of the T&T Regiment and concluded that it was the

breakdown of civil-military relations that led to the events of 1970. For Kelshall (and Williams himself) it is important to note that the T&T Regiment was “a condition of Independence” set by the British,⁶²⁹ and it was hurriedly put together in such a way that “no attention was paid to the quality of men recruited”. The focus was on quantity “so that a sizable force could be presented to impress the crowds” and the Crown on the day of Independence.⁶³⁰ Due to the lack of persons with rank and experience available, the decision was made to enlist “short service officers” made up of former Customs and Immigration officers, bank clerks, and a number of ex-civil servants who were put through three to five-week training programs.⁶³¹

The idea was that this cadre would ‘hold the fort’ until the selected younger officers completed their professional training at Sandhurst Military Academy in England. Upon their return to T&T these trained officers were set to take over the positions of rank, but by this time “the temporary short service officers were advisors to the ministry (as senior officers) and they would have hardly advised phasing themselves out.”⁶³² This created a situation where the discontent would no longer be confined to the rank and file of the Regiment, but now professionally trained officers had an ongoing and aggravated legitimate grievance against the military hierarchy, as well as the government. The entire issue was compounded by fact that the location of the Regiment HQ at Teteron in Chaguaramas was based on a “purely political move on the part of Dr. Williams” as an attempt to counter the remaining US military presence in Trinidad, despite the fact that the US provided a considerable sum towards construction of the base.⁶³³

The issue of discipline and accountability in the security services was also a key issue. The 1963 Commission of Enquiry noted there was also aggravated tension as the local officers began to actively push for the removal of the British seconded officers and the Commander.⁶³⁴ A record from September 1963 brings these tensions together in a case where one of the higher ranked local officers was involved in an incident with three British officers at a cocktail party hosted by the Police.⁶³⁵ In this event Quartermaster of the Regiment, Lt. Col. Joffe Serrette, allegedly attempted to physically assault one of the British officers, and although there was no actual altercation, formal reports against Serrette were made. In dealing with the matter Commander Pearce Gould noted that Serrette submitted a written statement that conflicted with the accounts of the British Officers and, no witnesses would come forth to give “any evidence which was in any way adverse to Serrette’s case”.⁶³⁶

The conclusion to the matter was that the British officers were being transferred out the country, and Pearce Gould decided against a “show down” with “Trinidad Ministers.”⁶³⁷ Serrette became Commander of the Regiment in 1965 when the last British officers left, but was pressured into retiring in 1968 after losing political favour in 1966. The British official writing the memo on this incident thought it relevant to include the comment that a senior Defence Advisor described Serrette as “efficient, a bully, and a womaniser.”⁶³⁸ In this pre-1970 context the last element leading to the breakdown of the Regiment was the appointment of Lt. Col. Stanley Johnson as Commander, after which there was “an unmistakable decline in standards of discipline and morale in the unit.”⁶³⁹ These conditions would result in a revolt within the Regiment as it was put under pressure by the conditions of the country leading up to 1970. The rank and file was in the same position as the public with its open discontent. As stakes heightened there was an underlying current that sought to dispose of the government.

Throughout this period the police was consistent in its service of upholding the government and maintaining public order, suppressing worker mobilizations and protecting the assets of industry. Despite that function, the organization did face serious problems similar to those of the Regiment. While there was a Commission of Enquiry into the Regiment in 1963 the police faced one in 1964. This was provoked when a clerk from the University of the College of the West Indies died in custody after having been beaten by the police,⁶⁴⁰ and the official statement was that “no one was responsible”.⁶⁴¹ The case later rested on a single officer who was charged for murder, acquitted, and then was able to have later manslaughter charges dropped much to public disapproval. The overall Commission was set to enquire into the “organization, administration and discipline of the police force”.⁶⁴²

While the enquiry was underway a “Police Scandal” emerged separately where ten policemen, including the Assistant Commissioner and a Senior Superintendent, were suspended for involvement in a “racket connected to the issue of gun licences”.⁶⁴³ The enquiry itself revealed “deplorable” living conditions of the police barracks, and a characterization of training methods that were “sadistic”.⁶⁴⁴ The biggest scandal in the Commission of Enquiry emerged when the Police Association submitted a memorandum with evidence that there was direct interference in police duties by the Minister of Home affairs, Dr. Solomon (who served as Acting PM).⁶⁴⁵ The incident in question occurred in

January 1962 when Dr. Solomon went to a police station where his stepson had been charged and detained, and made demands for him to be released from custody irregardless much protests from officers on duty. Solomon stated he would talk with the Police Commissioner in the morning.⁶⁴⁶

Despite the fact that the Opposition put forth a no confidence vote in Parliament, which failed, there was no statement from the government on the matter and two years later the High Commissioner commented, “official silence prevails”.⁶⁴⁷ His concluding comments on the Commission of Enquiry was that the findings were “generally well received”, and in his feedback to one of the official authors of the report he stated, “I think you were prudent to skate over the Cadogen case and Dr. Solomon’s ‘interference’”. The High Commissioner also commended the “well publicised Government overtures to Police integration” with the move to appoint a new Home Minister and change the name to “Police Service” instead of “Police Force”.⁶⁴⁸

Highlights from the Commission’s report were given public broadcast, and prominent in the list of recommendations was for the Commissioner of Police, and the service, to be “free from interference on the part of Government”.⁶⁴⁹ In addressing the organization of the police, the recommendation was that “as soon as conveniently possible, the Police Force be trained, equipped, staffed and commanded as a Police Force pure and simple ... and not as a quasi-military body”. The quasi-military historical legacy of the T&T police is noted in the fact the police force is the oldest institution in the country, thus has been the at the forefront of controlling the population since 1592.⁶⁵⁰ In this period police deployment in response to protests escalated up to the 1965 Industrial Stabilization Act (ISA), which created a final court of arbitration for worker disputes and contained measures that effectively curtailed the ability of worker organization to withhold labour as a means of collective bargaining.⁶⁵¹

The Black Power ‘Disturbances’

During a period of high tension in 1965 before the ISA was passed, a memo for the British Prime Minister noted that Eric Williams tabled the possibility of requesting military support. This request came in light of threats arising from “subversive elements” which were seen to be the cause of “labour troubles in the oilfields” and the projected concern regarded a violent outbreak, heightened by a comment regarding “gun running”.⁶⁵² The request was met

with tentative support, and the file noted that Williams previously indicated that he would obtain US assistance if needed. In 1968 the Transport Workers Union maintained a strike action beyond the Industrial Court's ruling against them, claiming they were unfairly treated.⁶⁵³ The workers were joined in solidarity by university professors and students, but the State's response was a series of arrests and a threat to fire any who did not return to work. This suppressed organization and soon enough work resumed.

Lloyd Best put out a pamphlet in defence of the workers, noting that GDP had increased fivefold since 1951 but "the nation has ended up with large-scale unemployment and inequality of a sort that produces profound frustration".⁶⁵⁴ As the Black Power mobilizations began in 1969 the police faced another round of increasing tension, and this escalated during the "February Revolution" of early 1970 when Black Power protests were at their highest point. At the forefront of this emergent movement was the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC) that sprung forth from student leadership at the Trinidad campus of the University of the West Indies.⁶⁵⁵ The conditions that catalyzed these events were the now deep set and widespread currents of discontent against the P.N.M. government, and the depressed economic conditions across the country.

A key event that triggered the outbreak of NJAC mobilization was the Sir George Williams University affair in Montreal, Canada.⁶⁵⁶ In this incident black Caribbean students (many Trinidadians) were caught in a standoff with the University over allegations of racism, and it escalated in an occupation of the computer lab, and a subsequent surprise tactical action against the students by the RCMP.⁶⁵⁷ The outcome was the destruction of the computer lab, and the arrest, trial and eventual deportation of a number of the students involved. These events brought initial protests that were directed towards Canadian Banks and an action to block the Canadian Governor-General from visiting to the University in Trinidad.⁶⁵⁸ By 1970 this discontent began to shift and square itself on the P.N.M. government.

Although the Black Power movement began to target the T&T Government explicitly, their actions still maintained a challenge to US and Canadian institutions, and on 25 February the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Port of Spain was occupied in a highly impactful symbolic protest.⁶⁵⁹ The next morning nine NAJC leaders were arrested and it was this targeted action after an impactful moment that catalyzed the public attention and sympathy, and thus the Black Power movement grew significantly in size. In March the historic procession from

Port of Spain to Couva was organized as the movement began to realize that a genuine mass movement was needed to pose a real challenge to the government,⁶⁶⁰ and in Trinidad that required a direct organizing link between African and East Indian populations.

At a court hearing for the NJAC leaders on 25 March, Dave D'Abreau (Makandal Daaga) pointed a finger at the police guard: "You police should be on our side. The Army is on our side. All we need now is your help to seize power."⁶⁶¹ At this point the NJAC movement was militant and growing in size, and definitely posed a security threat to the establishment as it openly appealed to the black urban populations from marginalized areas on the Capital's periphery. A resident US commentator reported, "although NJAC never organized terror campaigns, the molotov cocktails became an extension of the movement."⁶⁶² The prejudice and condemnation through rhetoric of fear is not new, but is consistently manipulated by those in service of the national security state and is used as a means to justify the extraordinary difference in coercive power that maintains the status quo. It should be noted that most of these firebomb attempts were directed at Canadian Banks or the US Consulate, broken storefront glass was not uncommon, and "vigilante groups began to form in the middle-class, wealthy, white housing developments which surround Port of Spain."⁶⁶³

There was no Police support for the Black Power movement, but more so there was increasing resentment directed at the Police by the population. The height of the mass movement came when a young NJAC supporter, Basil Davis, was shot and killed by a policeman almost two weeks after the Cathedral affair.⁶⁶⁴ A file from the British High Commission on 10 April notes a line of intelligence from a well-placed disaffected P.N.M. member who informed that there was a considerable degree of interchange between Black Power leaders in Trinidad and in the US. More importantly, with "strict confidence" the informant said that "many young professionals and technicians, including those in government service, were fully committed to Black Power and the government could not rely on the Army since both officers and other personnel had to some extent been affected".⁶⁶⁵ A further comment on the Regiment was that certain officers who had been sent to Sandhurst were "influenced during their time there by the views of their African colleagues."

On 13 April A.N.R. Robinson resigned from his post as Minister of External Affairs in protest against Eric Williams, and the Acting Police Commissioner informed the British High Commissioner that the government was preparing to declare a State of Emergency,

ban protest demonstrations, and arrest the NJAC leadership. In this measure the Police and Regiment were called to prepare for the plan, and the High Commissioner's comment was that things would depend on the police remaining loyal because "[m]any elements in the regiment are certainly unreliable".⁶⁶⁶ At this point, great pressure was built up on Williams to clamp down on the Black Power movement. Here it is important to note the factors as to why Williams was not in a rush to declare a State of Emergency. This consideration illustrates the fact that the national security state does not depend on one strongman individual 'dictator'. Rather, the national security state is a multifaceted formation with the ability to sustain social turbulence and endure radical challenges by channeling the liberal currents of those challenges into its service, control, and profit mechanisms in the long run.

When the Sir George Williams students were being charged and later deported from Montreal to Trinidad in 1969 Williams successfully moved the government to cover all their expenses related to fines and fees etc.⁶⁶⁷ The P.N.M. also introduced a cash program to reduce unemployment and enacted a five percent levy on corporations and wealthy individuals. The British High Commissioner met with T&T's first local non-white Governor-General, Solomon Hochoy, on 17 April 1970 to discuss the "Black Power" situation. Hochoy thought that Williams,

will not ask for the proclamation of a state of emergency until he is surer than he is now that the mass of the people have lost patience with NJAC ... he is also anxious not to put the police and the regiment to the test which the imposition of curfews and bans on assemblies would bring about, so long as fairly widespread sympathy with black power activities remain.⁶⁶⁸

Eric Williams addressed the Black Power issue with two public talks in this period of 1970. The first was "Revolution and Dignity", given on 23 March. The discourse situated T&T in the context of a "worldwide revolt against authority", noted by decline of the church, "third world" protests "against foreign investment", and notably "the revolt of black people against growing indignities".⁶⁶⁹

Despite the attempt to apportion blame to the population for their "lack of awareness" regarding government policy and its slow process, Williams perhaps made his strongest statement in support of Black Power:

But the fundamental feature of the demonstrations was the insistence on *Black dignity*, the manifestation of Black consciousness and the demand for *Black economic power*. The entire population must understand that these demands are perfectly legitimate and are entirely in the interest of the community as a whole.

If this is Black Power, then I am for Black Power. The *question is how to* provide the means by which these *legitimate* demands can be satisfied.⁶⁷⁰ (emphasis added)

For Williams, the demand and advocacy for Black dignity was unquestionable and consistent. A reading Williams through his thesis of *Capitalism and Slavery* one might expect that his demand and active work for Black economic power would be consistent, critical, and anti-imperial, but his political record indicates otherwise. His use of *legitimate* was a qualifier that underscored the emphasis on the *question of how to* address these conditions of concern. Despite a strong statement, Williams had already built his own exit door departing from the path towards the real challenge that is Black Power.

On the 3 May, after the foreign aircraft and vessels had vacated the area of T&T, Williams gave his second address, titled “The Black Power Disturbances”.⁶⁷¹ In this speech Williams responded to questions from “[b]oth home and abroad” as to why he waited so long to respond to the movement.⁶⁷² Principally this was because the resentment of discrimination was a “legitimate grievance”, and so he stated, “I identify myself fully with its constructive aspect.” The delay was “tactical”,⁶⁷³ for “these young idealists” had to see that there were “ulterior motives” “seeking to use slogans of black dignity and black economic power as the basis of enlisting mass support.”⁶⁷⁴ After stating that the movement had “degenerated into race hatred” Williams claimed that “if I had told the general population of the larger plan I have indicated to you tonight, 75 per cent of you would have been sceptical and would not have believed it. You had to be made to put your finger in the wound in order to have believed it.”⁶⁷⁵ In 2018 this might be described as gaslighting.

Williams’ rhetoric regarding Black Power-inspired “race hatred” was not just whim of discourse, for the infamous “Public Order Bill” passed on 7 August 1970 included an offense of inciting racial hatred, which could result in a \$2500 fine or 2 years in prison.⁶⁷⁶ The Commissioner of Police strictly regulated the organization meetings or marches, and the Police was authorized to search people’s premises without a warrant. Detained persons would face a tribunal and would not be held more than three months without review.⁶⁷⁷ The Bill was met with sharp protest and opposition, and although it was repealed a month later the British High Commissioner noted that by early October the “Government now proposed to rush through, in

separate legal packages, legislation dealing with such matters”.⁶⁷⁸ This did indeed occur, and when the original Bill was repealed the Minister of Home Affairs submitted his resignation, which Williams refused to accept.⁶⁷⁹

The Regiment-backed coup d'état of April 1970 that failed

On 20 April 1970, the day the decision was made to enact the State of Emergency, Williams summoned the British High Commissioner. The Commissioner's report on this occasion noted, the immediate threat that forced this response was that the general strike action driven by the oil workers and Black Power leaders was now joined by “public utilities including electricity, water, docks and airports.”⁶⁸⁰ This action posed a direct threat to shut down all of the country's integral utilities and services. Black Power militancy was not a serious threat to Williams, but widespread solidarity action that sought a physical shutdown of the country did pose a real security threat. This action was an open material challenge to the standing economic and political powers. Williams told the Commissioner that he had been issued a “virtual ultimatum” by interests such as the “Pro-Government Labour Congress” who “would take matters into their own hands” unless action was taken.⁶⁸¹

The State of Emergency was signed on the night of 20 April and was publicly announced the following morning after the targeted arrest of 25 Black Power and Union leaders.⁶⁸² The events that followed as the State of Emergency was put into force are still yet to be clarified with testimony and record validation. Established historical accounts refer to 21 April as the culmination of the mass protests of 1970 when the Black Power and Union leaders were arrested, and notably, a subsequent Regiment *mutiny* in response to the government's demand to put down the protests.⁶⁸³ At a 2012 panel discussion on the topic Major General Ralph Brown stated that he was briefed with weekly intelligence reports through the whole period in 1970. He concluded that there was “no connection between the *mutiny* that took place and politicians and the Black Power movement.”⁶⁸⁴ [emphasis added]

This claim runs counter to evidence that indicates otherwise. Although the intelligence reports did not make the connection between a Civil and a Military component to establish grounds for treason charges, a record of conversation between

the British High Commissioner and the Governor General on 11 June 1970 adds this to consideration:

In [Hochoy's] view the marches and demonstrations could have been kept under reasonable control if the trouble had not been compounded by the mutiny of the Regiment, which he described as '*unexpected*'. The mutiny of the Regiment was not merely the result of dissatisfaction with service conditions and prospects; it was part of an *organised plot to achieve a coup d'état*. If Captain Bloom and the Coastguard had not prevented the move of the mutineers from Teteron the Government might well have been forcibly disposed.⁶⁸⁵ [emphasis added]

The High Commissioner's qualification of the supposedly '*unexpected*' actions of the Regiment, coupled with his previous comments on the Regiment being "unreliable"⁶⁸⁶, indicates that he was forewarned of the possibility of an organized revolt to overthrow the government.

The High Commissioner did include a similar conclusion in his following diplomatic report, noting the "threat of a *coup d'état*, possibly of a bloody character, by Black Power extremists in conjunction with mutinous soldiers had been narrowly averted".⁶⁸⁷ [emphasis original] This "narrow" escape was attributed to three primary reasons. The first factor was the response of the Coast Guard, who were informed of the rebellion at the Regiment base by persons who remained loyal to the State and ran to inform.⁶⁸⁸ Due to the revolting forces' complicated internal power struggles the Coast Guard had the time to prepare two-armed patrol boats and drive around the point to fire shells into the Army base. When the Army trucks eventually tried to leave, the Coast Guard fired upon the convoy.⁶⁸⁹ As the trucks took fire a piece of shrapnel hit and killed a soldier,⁶⁹⁰ halting the convoy, bringing its turn back to the base and ending the armed advance on the Capital.

C. M. Kelshall situates the formation of the Coast Guard alongside the Regiment and notes its small size, its being called to action in hurricane response twice, early exercises with the US and Royal Navies, and the successful establishment of discipline and control in the force from time spent at sea on a vessel.⁶⁹¹ The Coast Guard was seen to be the key bulwark, loyally under the command of Captain Bloom, whom the High Commissioner described as a "tough and shrewed Yorkshireman".⁶⁹² The High Commissioner also commended the Acting Commissioner of Police, a "white Trinidadian who rose splendidly to the occasion", along with "an officer of darker skin who is Head of the Special Branch".⁶⁹³

The Police faced widespread protest, looting and vandalism in Port of Spain and some other urban areas on the day of 21 April, and the situation was indeed tense as fires spread and a few deaths recorded.⁶⁹⁴ By noon the High Commissioner reported, “all the wanted leaders have been detained and the utilities under guard. So far there has been no Black Power reaction.”⁶⁹⁵ Standing apart from that, there was a total lack of communication from the government to the population informing and updating as events proceeded, to the extent where it was noted that BBC bulletins were being rebroadcasted when some communication began.⁶⁹⁶

The second factor the coup was narrowly averted was the role of negotiations in de-escalating the stand off, warranted by the course of events once the soldiers in revolt returned to the base. This is noted by the High Commissioners assessment:

On the face of it, the outcome is extraordinary. The mutineers have successively given up each card they held - the hostages, their ability to filter out of the base and join black power elements outside, the sympathy they could expect from the various interests concerned if they held out for the release of the political detainees and the dismissal of ministers, and finally their arms - in return for no more than some chance of avoiding court martial charges.⁶⁹⁷

In the process of negotiating the surrender the State relied almost entirely on former Commander Lt. Col. Joffe Serrette, who was called from retirement and sent to head the negotiating team with soldiers. Serrette was re-appointed Commander of the Regiment and given executive authority to negotiate agreeable conditions, and in the end made questionable accommodations to the soldiers in coming to the terms of surrender.⁶⁹⁸

The court martial found an initial conviction but disregarded pleas from the Defence, and the Appeal court threw out the initial sentences as it found the court martial to be a mistrial.⁶⁹⁹ The term mutiny was solidified into history through the court process. There were no civilians held at the base and the State had no evidence of such a connection, thus the treason charges were never substantiated and the courts only deliberated on ‘a mutiny’. History thus far has left it at that, and this work begins to ask directed questions, based on evidence, as to what is at stake when we forego our understanding of history. Evidence from the official record has been presented here to suggest that the Regiment’s actions were part of a pre-planned attempted coup d’état. The depth of this position and its significance calls for further work in itself that goes beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the historical analysis undertaken here could not have remained intact had it avoided this recognition.

The national security state approached the de-escalation of the Regiment's uprising of 1970 through executive action, where one person was arbitrarily empowered to undertake negotiations.⁷⁰⁰ In so doing provisions were made that effectively compromised the State's integrity, and forced the process of law to overturn the convictions. The specificity of the Appeal case was, "that [the revolting officers'] actions were condoned by their Commanding Officer," and this fact "was not allowed by the Court Martial".⁷⁰¹ The Appeal Judge, Mr. Aubrey Fraser, stated, "it is perhaps the acme of irony that the two men who boldly and brazenly proclaimed themselves to be the leaders of a mutiny in the regiment and whose plans and purposes were aimed at disruptive and dangerous courses should escape punishment for their actions. But the law must take its proper course."⁷⁰²

The third and perhaps most fundamental but 'external' reason for the outcome of a failed coup d'état was that those in revolt were not prepared to overcome the pressure that lay on the larger scale where foreign intervention loomed. It would stand that the fear wrought by the loss of one man at the hands of the T&T Coast Guard that caused the convoy to stop was inherently magnified by the known realization that a larger intervention was probable. Raffique Shah, one of the officers who led the revolt, stated in court that they saw warships on the horizon.⁷⁰³ The British High Commissioner concluded, "the well-published presence of foreign naval vessels and of the arrival of arms, blown up by rumours of actual landings of Venezuelan troops, may have been an element contributing to the irresolution of the mutineers."⁷⁰⁴

For Williams, the events of 21 April 1970 were definitely a severe shake up. Records of the British High Commissioner of that period noted the sharing of information between the US Ambassador and himself, and updates on their respective interactions with Williams. On 20 April, the day before the State of Emergency and the Regiment revolt, the British High Commissioner noted a discussion with Williams where the PM anticipated the need for external military support.⁷⁰⁵ Williams stated that he did not want OAS support as it "was dominated by the US". The preference was for a Commonwealth country, and Nigeria was suggested in large part because "such help could not be white".⁷⁰⁶ Jamaica refused, as did Guyana, primarily because of the negative impacts that action would have with their own populations who were sympathetic to Black Power.⁷⁰⁷ As it came to be on the day of 21 April the High Commissioner reported, "My American colleague whose confidence should be respected has told me that Dr. Williams has telephoned him repeatedly this afternoon

pressing for any kind of American help.”⁷⁰⁸

The only material foreign backing came from the US as it supplied fifty machine guns and 75,000 rounds of 9mm ammunition, ten 81mm mortars with 200 rounds, one hundred 51mm mortar smoke bombs and fifty 81mm smoke bombs.⁷⁰⁹ The US refused Williams’ request for armored scout cars and anti-tank weapons. The US also sought to avoid high publicity and any image of intervention “but [would] justify action, if necessary, as a commercial sale to a constitutional government, whose arsenal has been captured by mutineers.”⁷¹⁰ A memo relaying the details of the arrival of the first consignment of arms stated that, “[a]t the news of the promise of American arms, Dr. Williams is reported to have swung from depression to a state of euphoria and to have withdrawn all other requests for arms supplies.”⁷¹¹ Reuters reported that “two British guided missile frigates, the Sirius and Jupiter” were on “special alert” along with “five U.S. warships hove to off Trinidad after dashing to the area.”⁷¹²

Thus containment was ensured. The records suggest that the US and British vessels were sent for conducting evacuations if necessary,⁷¹³ and the most probable posture of intervention came from Venezuela who at this point was prepared to shore up the Williams government against any radical overthrow.⁷¹⁴ For the purpose of this critical historical engagement, it would be only speculation to say what forces would have intervened if things did escalate and take a course towards the Cuban Revolution. Cuba was the inspiration and intention, however the attempt was not materially supported by Cuba or the Soviet Union. That being said, links were set so that Cuba would immediately recognize a new revolutionary government had one been established. Speculation aside, the national security state endured.

The un-reconciled consequences of 1970 and continuity in the national security state

In early May the British High Commissioner reported that “two near white ministers” were relieved from Cabinet duties as an “expected” “concession to the Black Power movement” and that the Ministry of National Security replaced the Ministry of Home Affairs.⁷¹⁵ A National Security Council was also created at this point in early May, chaired by the Prime Minister and represented by the various heads of security agencies.⁷¹⁶ Liberal symbolism of ‘representation’ was put into action as some commitment to uplifting Black people through

targeted State support had to be displayed. However the State simultaneously underwent further consolidation of power as the new National Security executive was founded upon the repression of worker organization across the country. The Black Power movement had been given all the attention, but it was the mass cross-coordination of worker strikes threatening to shut down all of the essential utilities, infrastructure, and services in the country that forced the State of Emergency. Black Power leaders were key targets in the arrests made at the outset because they were able to channel the mass discontent into a mobilized social formation, and at this point the Black Power movement was not separate from the worker mobilization.

This link between the Black Power movement and the organized labour mobilization presented the utmost threat to the national security state and its position in the imperial order of the West. Thus national security in independent T&T was established to destroy that link, explicitly so as the Ministry of National Security was created in 1970. To do so, the national security state channeled liberal undercurrents to debase demands of Black Power from its class basis through overtures and partial gains that were offered as long as the fundamental organization of the economy around external interests remained in place, as it has. The initial response and lasting consequences of the actions of those groups that uphold the national security state reveal the interests of what is being secured, with its concomitant mobility, and who is left to confront the problems with no opportunity of escape.

In a summary report by the High Commissioner on 21 July, two months after the attempted coup, it was noted that, “[m]any white Trinidadians had dispatched their wives and children to Barbados and large sums of liquid money had been sent out, much of it never to return, to Nassau, London and other places overseas.”⁷¹⁷ The interests secured by the national security state are consistent, and similarly so with who had the means and mobility to move their valued persons and assets out of harm’s way, regardless of the outcome. In this same report the Commissioner noted that Williams,

has had to rely heavily on the police and Coastguard to remain in power. Perhaps more awkwardly he has had to rely on a single man, Brigadier Serrette, to end the army mutiny: and the aftermath of these singular events is still very much with us. The security forces, and their leaders, are now very prominent in the body politic, and new pressures and ambitions may be at work. In the continuing absence of any effective Parliamentary Opposition the threat, if there is one, to Dr. Williams’ position would most likely come from somewhere inside his own governing establishment. But on the surface at least no such prospects are visible⁷¹⁸

Williams did face some internal threat as presented by A. N. R. Robinson who resigned from his Ministerial post. In this instance Williams informed the High Commissioner that there was a plot of “mischief against him”, revealed by “unusual telephone calls”. This was confirmed to Williams when he surprised Robinson by not leaving for his planned trip to Jamaica on 13 April without any notice.⁷¹⁹

In the immediate aftermath of April 1970 Eric Williams was Prime Minister and held the portfolios of Finance, Planning and Development, National Security, and Tobago Affairs.⁷²⁰ By the end of the year Williams undertook a Cabinet reshuffle and officially gave up the other portfolios to only retain position as PM. The British High Commissioner noted that this shift “would suggest a devolution of responsibilities but closer examination indicates that such is not the case in practice.”⁷²¹ This was because Williams continued “as Chairman of the Budget Committee, the National Security Council and of the Co-ordinating Committee of Community Development.” In effect executive dominance was retained, for the evaluation of any such change was “the amount of decentralisation it brings both within the Government and within the Cabinet itself”,⁷²² and in this measure there was no substance to it.

Williams would later introduce constitutional amendments “to strengthen party discipline” and “prevent floor crossing”, provoking the comment of a British Foreign Office official who observed that the “situation certainly looks close to resembling that in Guyana of a virtual dictatorship with a single party which does not command majority support”.⁷²³ In December 1970 the government acquired one of the major radio stations on the island as well as the Trinidad and Tobago Television station, and enforced a “monopoly on political broadcasts” where the Opposition were “forbidden to even buy commercial air time.”⁷²⁴ There is no question as to whether the national security state remained intact, dominated by a strong executive with no apparent mechanisms to enforce accountability on the use of power.

It was important to situate the context of the pressures in the Regiment that had built up before 1970, and the fact of their origin in political interferences. This is necessary in understanding the events of 1970, but also what has come thereafter. The High Commissioner at the time noted that the Police were to be strengthened as a result of the Regiment’s actions in April 1970.⁷²⁵ The analysis presented has also considered the same

patterns of political interference and executive impunity at play in the Police Service. With the currents of executive dominance unchecked, the decision to strengthen the police indicates the continuation of the status quo. Counter to the advice of the 1964 Commission of Enquiry, the Police Service were not reorganized away from its “quasi-military body” origins but indeed further strengthened as such.⁷²⁶

As he faced the court martial, Raffique Shah, one of the leading soldiers in the Regiment uprising stated, “[i]n almost every section of our society, in the public service and in the private sector, there is some form of corruption.” However, he continued, “I don’t think Trinidad and Tobago is unique in this respect.” In speaking directly from his experience Shah noted, “The Trinidad and Tobago Regiment is no exception”, thus in any institution, “when senior members of the unit take an active part in corrupt practices, it becomes scandalous.”⁷²⁷ The consequences come down the line to undermine the respect and standard of discipline, hence a breakdown. Scandal had not stopped, noted by a headline in the Trinidad Express on 17 November 1970, which stated, “Shah: Serrette said what happened was 2 years too late”. In this article it states that Serrette was fired from his post as Commander of the Regiment in 1968 “because he refused to bow to certain High Government officials”, and thus what is implied is that had the revolt occurred before his dismissal in 1968 it would have likely succeeded with support from Serrette as Commander.⁷²⁸

Another layer of scandal is highlighted by a US foreign correspondent resident in Trinidad during this period, who is given more attention in the next Chapter as his links to the US national security state are considered. For Frank J. McDonald, “it is both ironic and sad that ten years after” Williams led his 22 April 1960 protest march calling for the eviction of the US base from Chaguaramas, the Prime Minister now “thought it necessary to call on the Americans to return.” Thus, “[n]othing other than this ironic twist of history could possibly demonstrate more effectively how bankrupt Williams’ government had become.”⁷²⁹

Scandal would come full on to the Police Service before long, increased in power and executive control as noted by the notorious rise to prominence of the ‘Flying Squad’ under Captain and later Commissioner of Police, Randolph Burroughs.⁷³⁰ The Flying Squad was created in 1970, initially catalyzed by the need to counter any continuing Black Power struggles, most significantly in the form of the National Union of Freedom Fighters (NUFF) that undertook guerilla tactics and actions coordinated from the forested hills surrounding

Port of Spain.⁷³¹ One historian whose work brings forth the fascinating transatlantic linkages behind the NUFF movement that formally emerged in 1972 was apt in describing the group's composition, literally as "the progeny of the PNM."⁷³² The NUFF came and went, not without some violent struggle and heavy-handed response by the police's new paramilitary outfit,⁷³³ thus the national security state remained in force, and the abuses of executive power unrestrained.

A Commission of Enquiry into the Police belatedly revealed in 1986 that there had been years of power abuse and outright police involvement in the illegal drug trade and other criminal activity.⁷³⁴ The Scott Drug Report was the outcome of the Enquiry and linked the then Commissioner of Police, Randolph Burroughs, directly to known high-profile drug dealers and other violent criminals wanted by the Police.⁷³⁵ The recurring theme was the unrestrained abuse of executive power that inevitably disrupted and corrupted any legitimate working of the Police Service, and in the end directly served to undermine State authority leading up to 1990. Having considered the colonial origins of the Police as a means to contain indigenous and enslaved peoples while serving the propertied elite, and further having connected that precedent to the continuities in suppression in the independent era, there is a lingering question as to what integrity is there to the idea that the Police exist to protect and serve the general population without partiality or discrimination.

This chapter first sought to detail the continuity of the national security state in T&T, outlining its interventions against local academics and other dissenting figures, in stride with the government's anti-communist insistence. The significance and function of T&T was contrasted with the simultaneous experience of Guyana. In the first decade of independence the national security state faced the challenges of the turbulent 1960s, utilizing a Commission of Enquiry, an industrial court with executive authority to pronounce on labour disputes, and outright physical suppression by deploying the police to break apart and suppress labour organization. A key theme was the role of political interference in the armed forces that resulted in destabilization of the society, serious enough that deep-set grievances took root and contributed to the Regiment officers being part of an attempted coup d'état. The recurring pattern was of an unchecked executive that was active and heavy-handed in its responses to worker demonstrations, and circumstances where the armed forces continued to occupy a high profile in the country's body politic. Also consistent in this period was the role of foreign powers in backing the national security state of T&T, most notably with the

presence of US and UK warships. This holds with the fact that the Coast Guard was the main local force that initially halted the Army's uprising, and its commander was British.

The dominant executive patterns which dominated as the country entered the 1970s have continued unabated, and have grown into more sophisticated forms, still with destabilizing effects. Despite known persistent corruption in the Police, there has been a recurring government insistence on the need to continue empowering the force with more weapons, despite its obvious senior level management issues. Similarly, more powers were increasingly given to the national security executive, whose integrity has also been brought into question. Joint Police-Army patrols and exercises were first established due to the crisis of 1970, and have remained a constant feature of policing in T&T, continuing to this day. Eric Williams stood for Black Power, only as this phrase was devoid of economic redress and as long as he could make it fit within the security framework of Western alignment. When put to test, Williams chose to clamp down and suppress organized dissent of the demographic that was his electoral base. The myriad impacts of that commitment to the national security state is considered in the final chapter as the focus turns to the struggle to build institutions that would cultivate new modes of social and economic organization in the Caribbean.

Chapter V, 1962-1978

The national security state and the targeting of independent thought

This chapter reviews the period from the year of independence to the year when T&T was at the peak of its 1970s oil boom, two years after the country became a Republic. Despite the replacement of a British Governor-General as the head of state in T&T by a locally born President there were no major constitutional changes to break away from the embedded Crown Colony features of executive dominance. The primary focus of this chapter is on the impact of the national security state's insistence on "anticommunism" and the consequent targeting of "subversives" on those local groups working to build institutions for independent Caribbean thought. The narrative provides further insights into this period of T&T's history, situating the various groups in their actions against the security state while also countering with the regime's response. This record situates and utilizes the letters of a US foreign correspondent resident in Trinidad during the period that provided participant-observation reports on political events, organizations, persons, and their ideas, to Washington. The network behind this correspondent is used to situate the function of those researchers and academics that set themselves to work for the national security state.

In this period the New World Group's work spread across the region and focused on building local systems of knowledge production as a means of furthering the imperative of decolonization. The *New World Quarterly* was an outlet for observation and insight into the world of the Caribbean through the ideas and creations of Caribbean people on their own terms. This section highlights the case of a few key members of this group whose story provides some particular insights into the dynamics of the national security state and its consequences for institutions of independent thought. Ultimately the chapter is a juxtaposition of these networks of resistance, against the networks of the national security state, where each sought to mobilize knowledge production for their very different means and ends. The purpose is to gain insight into how the networks of the national security state function through knowledge production mechanisms, and the endurance of this formation in T&T despite an oil boom and status as a republic. The chapter closes by situating the conditions of T&T at the peak of the oil boom, where a British High Commissioner's snapshot already holds the forewarning signs of dark horizons, and it is from there onwards, the social conditions continue the downhill trend towards 1990, and today.

The national security state against organized independent thought

In a letter addressed to Eric Williams on 26 March 1960 C.L.R. James tendered his resignation as Managing Editor of *The Nation*, the P.N.M.'s newspaper. James stated there was a chasm between the Party and its organ. This was because the General Council had publicly laid blame squarely on the management of *The Nation* for various internal and external tensions in the party as the campaign against the US base in Chaguaramas escalated.⁷³⁶ James' understanding of Williams' policies with respect to the matter was that the US must vacate Chaguaramas, and if the US did not agree to do so "legal and constitutional" steps would be taken "to make life impossible for them there."⁷³⁷ Coupled with this were also stated positions that the "Colonial Office is to be denounced as the main enemy of progress" and the Federal government in its current form was "a tool of the Colonial Office and the United Kingdom Government." These principles constituted a policy towards "genuine independence" for "[o]therwise the United States Government and the others would establish financial and moral domination over the country which would kill the spirit by which anything really new could emerge."⁷³⁸

James took the cue that reactionary forces had taken hold of the party when he was attacked openly in the P.N.M. convention and nobody came to his defence. In realizing that there was a break between stated policy and actual practice James resigned and gave this warning to Eric Williams, who at this point of close association he called Bill: "your position is not nearly as secure as you think. I have suspected it for some time but now I know. The Convention showed it as clear as day. Organize your Party, Bill, organize your party."⁷³⁹ In addressing Williams' reversals James stated that a determinative point was the visit of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Trinidad in 1960, just prior to the march on Chaguaramas and some months before the final negotiations.

During this visit the Secretary agreed to all of Williams' demands, stating that independence was ready to be granted upon formal request. Further, the British would secure Trinidad a direct negotiation position with the US apart from Federal representation. James' analysis in such a circumstance is poignant:

This agreement on everything put Williams' whole political personality in a terrible spot. He had built up his reputation and his own view of himself on the denunciation of enemies and himself as the one who would fearlessly lead the people against these centuries-old exploiters. Now there were no enemies to

abuse ... Williams was now face to face with the economic and social relations of Trinidad and Tobago.⁷⁴⁰

This circumstance was the proverbial fork in the road for Williams, as his response largely determined the direction of independent T&T. Either Williams would mount the real confrontation of organizing the party, the paper, and the economy or “give it all up.”⁷⁴¹

The break came at this point, for in James’ view the response by Williams to move toward increased executive control “was a bad sign.” James’ position was: “I might make temporary sacrifices of my politics for a party some of whose aims I thought merited support. For an individual, never. I resigned, Williams turned around, ran, and has been running ever since.”⁷⁴² C.L.R. James left Trinidad after his break with the P.N.M., and when he returned in 1965 as a cricket reporter he was immediately put under house arrest for six weeks.⁷⁴³ James’ assessment of the situation was serious, for he took it upon himself to write to Andrew Salkey at the BBC Colonial Service office in London to inform him of the danger.⁷⁴⁴ He first noted that a person active in organizing sugar workers was recently shot in an attempted hit, and “that government ministers knew about the attempt before it was made.” James’ claim went further to state, “I believe I am next on the list”, thus “I have felt it necessary to prepare you for anything” and “you should circulate this personal letter as freely as possible”.⁷⁴⁵

This vignette from C.L.R. James brings forth the national security state, active in its targeting of ‘subversion’, and arbitrary in its intervention against James’ arrival for cricket reporting. The irony is that this action put James into a confrontational mode, where he then helped form the Workers and Farmers Party with labour leader George Weeks and contested the upcoming election, though unsuccessfully.⁷⁴⁶ This highlight introduces the main theme as it does begin to set the context for this chapter. The concern is the impact of the security formations on independent thought, and this first section continues with a focus on the New World Group, noting the context and form of its challenge, and the countering security responses.

In 1958 Lloyd Best finished his graduate studies in London and was subsequently offered a position as a junior research fellow at the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of the West Indies in Mona, Jamaica.⁷⁴⁷ His arrival corresponded with Arthur Lewis taking up position as Vice-Chancellor of the University, the first Caribbean-born and black person to hold that position. The West Indian Society for the

Study of Social Issues emerged at Mona in this early period of 1960-1961, and in many respects was a precursor to the NWG.⁷⁴⁸ In this period Best also worked with William Demas on an economic planning project in Trinidad, during which time he was influenced by C.L.R. James' challenges to the increasingly executive dominated P.N.M. government and the failure of Williams to confront the core issues facing the country.⁷⁴⁹

In 1962-1963 Lloyd Best went to Guyana to work for Cheddi Jagan's P.P.P. government as an economic planning advisor paid by the United Nations.⁷⁵⁰ Best found a deeply divided Guyana, where the actual political platforms of the two parties were not drastically different as each advocated some form of socialist democracy.⁷⁵¹ The internal division had been politically provoked along Black-East Indian racial/ethnic lines, and externally with respect to alignment with foreign powers. It is in Guyana during this period that the New World Group was formed, and in 1963 the first issue of the *New World Quarterly* was published.⁷⁵² The first issue contained an article titled *Working Notes Towards the Unification of Guyana*, written by Lloyd Best and Miles Fitzpatrick, and it took the following position:

it was the new imperial position within the Hemisphere which re-opened the extra-continental dimension. The position of the U.S. as one of the two ideological poles which straddled the world by 1950 meant that the idea of social change in the New World became once more closely tied to the struggle between international imperial rivals. Whatever the positive policies of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., their positions at the top of the two poles ensured that Inter-American affairs could not remain a continental question but had to become an international question. Cuba today is only the best example of this. It was not the first (B.G. and Guatemala came before) and is unlikely to be the last. The new Papal Donation (i.e., Teheran, Yalta, Potsdam) had once more come under fire!⁷⁵³

In this statement the authors directly targeted the postwar formations of the US national security state and its anti-communist imperial posture, and linked it to the original colonial demarcations of influence. They further linked the problem of decolonization in the Caribbean directly to the Monroe Doctrine as it was carried into the Cold War tensions in the region.⁷⁵⁴ This geopolitical circumstance complicated the attempt to address the "total bankruptcy of the imperial system as a framework for national development, [and] its distorted conception of educational needs".⁷⁵⁵

The social issue was that "the nation is an imperially imposed coalition", and thus "the mess the imperialists have left demands a radical programme!"⁷⁵⁶ The task at

hand was then to achieve “political stability and a balanced Legislature” by putting forth a “radical programme” that can be “jointly agreed on.” Specifically, any such political platform had to firstly address constitutional change by acknowledging the existing “unstable power imbalance” of “the British imperial system” and its consequent “social, cultural, racial and economic” asymmetries. This platform would then need to “define the future relations of the community with the outside world in such a way as to recognize the imperial situation”.⁷⁵⁷

These “Working Notes” outlined the set of problems and the concomitant search for a framework of analysis and planning that the New World Group would engage with as it evolved over the next decade. The fact is that the group had many currents of thought running through it, and thus a varied set of opinions depending on the issue at hand. These varied currents would inevitably be part of the reason the group broke apart in the late 1960s as political tensions and the demand for action reached unprecedented highs. One consistent principle maintained by the group was its preparedness to challenge the current leadership of the newly independent Caribbean States for their failure to break from the colonial order and thus the group offered its visions for a program toward a complete change of the system. Coupled was the position that any development program tied to either of the imperial powers was unsuitable to the program of decolonization, and the attainment of social and economic independence.

In what could be a directed analysis of Williams, Best and Fitzpatrick noted that the established leadership “rationalises its bankruptcy by charging that the people do not ‘understand’; they have to be ‘educated’.”⁷⁵⁸ “Dr. Politics” was Best’s characterization of this mode of governance most iconized by “The Doctor”, Eric Williams.⁷⁵⁹ It was this the pattern of executive dominance and continuity in a hierarchical relationship between the government and the people the NWG set out to break, and its primary medium was a locally produced publication, containing Caribbean oriented political, economic, social, and cultural content designed for general readership across the region.

In October 1965 the NWG held a weekend-long seminar in Jamaica to further coordination with the Young Socialist League, the Council for Afro-Jamaican Affairs, and the Unemployed Workers’ Council. On this occasion the NWG presented itself as “an instrument of radical change” working “in the field of ideas.”⁷⁶⁰ The central idea that had to be broken was that the Caribbean should remain a periphery to Europe and North America.

This historical relationship was noted in the fact that the ruling class of the Caribbean has been “in transit” and inherently “outward looking”, and the mass of population was “imported” from all over the world, and referred to “not as people, but as capital” in an economy organized toward “imperial favour”.⁷⁶¹ The consequence was an unbroken tendency to “see the world through outside eyes” and a social context that “puts its highest premium on achievement by mimicry.”

Thus for Lloyd Best, the cry was for “independent thought”, relevant in the observation that in the Caribbean there were no previous efforts “to organise a fund of knowledge about the home environment or even about the wider world.”⁷⁶² The NWG was bold enough to rebuke the acclaimed Caribbean literary figure Derek Walcott for his suggestion that the *New World Quarterly* should conform to standards of *Encounter* magazine. The point made here was to break from the “obsession with ‘publishing abroad’”, and thus *Encounter* was dismissed as a model, along with Arthur Lewis who had recently published a “thinly veiled attack on Nkrumah in a recent *Encounter* article”.⁷⁶³ It is interesting to note that *Encounter* was first published in 1953, and became widely read by the political left, only to be exposed as a CIA front in 1967.⁷⁶⁴ It was revealed that the CIA funneled the money through the Paris-based Congress for Cultural Freedom, and *Encounter* was not the only popular ‘leftist’ publication backed by the CIA.⁷⁶⁵

In January 1966 George Beckford was on route to the Eastern Caribbean islands to undertake research for a Caribbean economic integration project but the Jamaican immigration authorities at the airport seized his passport and refused him the possibility of leaving the country. Beckford noted that he was told his name was on a “Watch List” for departing passengers, and that the officer on duty gave no explanation other than he was following orders.⁷⁶⁶ There was no official government notice given to Beckford at any point in this episode, except for a prior visit to his house by a high ranked police officer who similarly gave no explanation and stated he was only following orders. The press commented on Beckford’s recent visit to Cuba in a story on the matter, however for Beckford the underlying issue was that “citizens should concern themselves with what a legitimate government may define as subversive and what procedures such a government may adopt to fight subversives.”⁷⁶⁷ Furthermore he put emphasis on the “maxim that arbitrary action by a government should be reduced to a minimum”.⁷⁶⁸

Lloyd Best, who was previously called up by the T&T Government to appear before

the 1963 Commission of Enquiry into subversive activity wrote to Kari Levitt on the matter of the 'Beckford Affair' and once more noted that his mail was being opened and delayed. Best stated, "the Government is keeping a close watch on our place" but "we are stronger than ever".⁷⁶⁹ Levitt described the NWG's activity as a "movement to free the mind from mimicry of metropolitan styles in everything from dress, food, and hairstyles to political philosophy and economic models of development."⁷⁷⁰ Furthermore the work they undertook "was to theorize Caribbean reality in terms of Caribbean experience and historical process and to build political commitment. The objective was to provide intellectual leadership to transform Caribbean economies to become self-reliant, defining their own needs and how to meet them with their own resources."⁷⁷¹

As political tensions escalated across the globe in 1968 the NWG succumbed to the external pressure that heightened internal differences regarding tactics of political action. In general the NWG began to be critiqued for its resistance to jump to the fore of the increasingly militant mass actions of the period. This is not to say that the group was on the sidelines, for some of its key members were involved in organizing the 1968 Congress of Black Writers in Montreal, were key in the support group for the students involved in the 1969 Sir George Williams affair, and did take to the streets in 1969/1970 in Trinidad. Lloyd Best was a key figure of the NWG's insistency on "thought is action for us" that led to the criticisms.⁷⁷² Best however, did put to word the basis of his radical position:

Revolution, that is to say, fundamental change, is achieved when we also see so clearly through the regime that we can take the steps required, not to replace it with another tyranny, but to displace it with a better order ... This is not to deny that a time might well come when guns and violence may be necessary to overthrow those who have dispossessed us, in the last resort, by guns and violence. We know this very well, and our strong sympathies with the current revolt arises from precisely this understanding.⁷⁷³

The NWG provides a unique insight into engaging the dynamics involved in attempting to sustain radical organization in the Caribbean when faced by a multitude of interconnected issues and varied senses of urgency. While there were internal struggles over revolutionary principles and strategy there was a consistent external pressure applied by the security state which heightened any tensions and generally undermined the cohesiveness of the group's work plans.

The fracture in the NWG largely centered on a break between political strategies of Lloyd Best and James Millette, though it was definitely a result of more broad based tensions

over differences on Black Power militancy, the Caribbean Free Trade Agreement, the relevance of Marxism to the Caribbean post-plantation context, and the question of formally entering the electoral arena.⁷⁷⁴ Best wrote to Millette on 22 June 1968, a few months before the dissolution of the group, in an effort to redress the situation. The letter acknowledged the “critical juncture” the group faced and expressed concern for the internal differences and conflicts that were arising within the group, heightened by the external conflict with “established interests.”⁷⁷⁵ Best was certain to “appreciate the existential situation which has been transforming the character of the New World in Trinidad” and agreed on “the genuine need for political organization and directly political work.” Despite this admission he stated there was “great danger” in becoming a “platform-kind” of movement where the people are not organized and active in working to grasp the issues, the group, or the “real possibilities and limitations on change.” For Best, this “is the surest way to another P.N.M.”⁷⁷⁶

The concern of this analysis is primarily to situate the internal conflicts of the group, as varied and legitimate as they may be, within the wider context of the national security state as an active front against organized independent thought in the Caribbean. The NWG could not sustain the pressure of the political tensions of 1968, but this did not mean that the energy was lost for its various members continued to be active in their efforts. The New World journal continued until 1972 primarily through efforts of the Jamaica group, though at a significantly slower rate.⁷⁷⁷ Lloyd Best formed Tapia House movement and newspaper in 1968 and James Milete formed Moko publishers with a newspaper and the United National Independence Party in order to contest the 1971 general elections in T&T.⁷⁷⁸

Voter participation was 88% in the 1961 elections, 66% in 1966 and by 1971 had dropped to 33%.⁷⁷⁹ The 1971 election was largely boycotted as a protest against the government where public discontent after 1970 remained high. The P.N.M. won all the seats in the 1971 election and soon after announced a Commission on Constitution reform. This move sought to address the lingering discontent regarding the apparent inability to remove the P.N.M. from government, either constitutionally or otherwise. The Wooding Constitution Commission recommended a constitutional republic and but left the Westminster system intact where the “Executive remains much as it is at present”.⁷⁸⁰ This is despite its admission that the “Westminster political system has a propensity to become transformed into dictatorship” and those persons who brought forth the problem of this authoritarian tendency faced a situation where “their criticisms were brushed aside.”⁷⁸¹

The report further noted the characteristic of a “Cabinet dictatorship” dominated by “the Prime Minister himself, assisted by his inner Cabinet, the Cabinet Secretariat and *a few individuals who may not even have any formal responsibility in the system.*”⁷⁸² (emphasis added) This point is a key feature of the national security state, where non-elected ‘experts’ with ties to the government executive have direct channels of influence, and thus accountability sidelined. Furthermore, the Commission situated the success of the P.N.M. at the polls with respect to the system of “political patronage”,⁷⁸³ noted by the fact the Government “is now unquestionably the largest employer” in the country with 35% of the “total paid work force”. This system of “tremendous patronage” was widening in scope, as noted by the “expansion of government activity in industrial, commercial and financial areas, in agri-business, in public utilities, in special works.”⁷⁸⁴

The insights above indicate the continuity of the national security state and the simultaneous dispersal of organized independent thought. This context further reveals that those in the government bureaucracy were aware of the fundamental continuities of executive power from the Crown Colony system, and despite its negative consequences made no attempt to address it. Decolonization of the Crown Colony origins of the national security state in T&T was never fully undertaken despite the country achieving status of a constitutional republic.

In this analysis of the national security state versus organized independent thought it is important to situate the foreign intelligence structures operating in T&T, and this study engages some lesser known and less studied organizations that operated in the Cold War context. The uninhibited function of these ideologically bound organizations in their commitment to the Western power structures stand out in striking contrast to the actions against organized independent thought that are given further detail in the latter section.

The establishment’s intelligence networks, knowledge production servicing power

That T&T was well integrated into the intelligence networks of Britain and the US has already been demonstrated in various instances in this thesis where anti-communism was situated as the foundational concern. This formation has elsewhere been referred to as the “Western Intelligence Community”, described as, “Anglo-American-Commonwealth communities of human intelligence collectors, signals intelligence collectors, analysts,

domestic security officials and covert action specialists.”⁷⁸⁵ Here the focus is on those organizations that operationalized information – knowledge production – in service of Western governments and their respective corporate interests as these organizations targeted the various groups in Trinidad who sought to confront the State.

Most accounts of the onset of the Cold War with respect to anti-communist intelligence and propaganda operations center the US as the unquestioned forerunner with the precedent of the 1947 National Security Act and NSC 68. However, not-so-recent studies that are somewhat neglected in these discussions present the case that Britain was in fact the first off the starting block in this regard. A factor in this has been the longer period of classification enforced by Britain as compared to the US, and it has been duly noted that it is the “overclassification of the intelligence archive” that is the main obstacle in the work to map these interconnections.⁷⁸⁶ This is important to situate in the context of T&T undergoing decolonization from Britain while being situated within the “sphere of influence” of the US and its imperial posture. What this circumstance reveals is the continuity of interests in the Anglo-American bond; macro-scale continuity between British colonialism and US imperialism with its consequent impacts in T&T.

The Cultural Relations Department (CRD) was formalized in 1945 but has its roots in a unit of the Foreign Office’s British Council that was operationalized in 1943, and was understood to be “the cutting edge of Britain’s information Cold War, focused upon the twin issues of culture and organized youth and working closely with MI5 and to a lesser extent with the Secret Intelligence Services (SIS).”⁷⁸⁷ A 1948 meeting between British and US intelligence executives in London discussed the British information warfare operations, and details of the British program brought the containment policy advocate George Keenan to comment that the British were ahead of the US. The CRD specialized in the production of “grey propaganda” and creating anti-communist front organizations that worked with government departments, journalists, intellectual, cultural, social, and artistic figures, trade unions, and youth organizations.⁷⁸⁸ The CRD was operationalized in T&T during the 1960s,⁷⁸⁹ and remains an active unit of the contemporary Foreign Office.⁷⁹⁰

The Information Research Department (IRD) was a counterpart British front organization that preceded the onset of US “psychological warfare” programs, beginning in 1946 with senior Foreign Office officials such as Assistant Under-Secretary Christopher Warner in the move to commence an anti-communist propaganda campaign.⁷⁹¹ In early 1948

a policy memorandum that outlines the function of the IRD was outlined and adopted within four days by Cabinet, without discussion. Its job was to collect and disseminate information that would be used to promote the anti-communist agenda “through our Missions and Information Services abroad”.⁷⁹² The Central Office of Information supported the IRD and it had the “fullest co-operation” from the BBC Overseas Services.⁷⁹³ Its network also included Ministers, labour representatives, and various British overseas delegations and was staffed by many personnel who worked with the Secret Service. The IRD carried out covert operations alongside the military, the Chiefs of Staff, SIS, the MI6 and its Anti-Soviet Section IX.⁷⁹⁴ The US anti-communist campaign received greater allocations of resources as part of its wider commitment behind the Marshall Plan, and by 1949 the IRD followed the US lead and worked closely on information exchange with the US State Department via British Embassy offices.⁷⁹⁵

The British High Commissioner became the primary channel of information to London once T&T became independent, as noted in the number of detailed reports from the High Commission in Port of Spain. IRD was active in Trinidad in the 1960s leading up to and through the 1970 disturbances.⁷⁹⁶ Both the High Commissioner and the IRD unit in Trinidad submitted detailed reports on the “Black Power Disturbances” shortly after the events.⁷⁹⁷ These reports also correlate closely with those of a US foreign correspondent resident in T&T during this period, Frank J. McDonald, who provided even more detailed reports on the context and persons involved in the Black Power events of 1969/1970. These three sources of intelligence have been used to cite a lot of the detail in these sections on the independent period in T&T and are used to bring this section to a close.

An insight into the workings of the intelligence network the IRD maintained in Trinidad reveals what points of influence it was able to assert itself through. An example of this intelligence network is a record in 1967 where the British High Commissioner opens by thanking the Foreign Office for IRD information.⁷⁹⁸ The purpose of the note is an intelligence request from the Special Branch of the Trinidad Police and the Security Liaison Officer to the Foreign Office. The concern regarded possible impacts of recent disturbances in Hong Kong on established Chinese communities in T&T, and thus any “local links between Trinidad and that part of the world are of special interest to the Police.”⁷⁹⁹ The IRD file on Trinidad in this period details other reporting of activities, publications distributed, and supporting organizations in the network.

A key mention in the IRD file are the activities of a certain “Father Tiernan of the Catholic Centre [who] was recently instrumental in forming a small committee of leading Trinidadians who recently organized a series of 6 weekly television programmes”.⁸⁰⁰ The series would feature students from prominent secondary schools in the country and the executives of the Chamber of Commerce. The participants were briefed for discussion the topics using IRD material.⁸⁰¹ The Catholic Centre was also a major distribution point of anti-communist literature through its newspaper and by supplying books to many outlets, of note to the Central Library and the Institute of International Relations at the University of the West Indies. Also of note was mention of one of the “leading figures in the Catholic hierarchy” who “plays an important part in the Senate debates and also frequently gives public lectures.”⁸⁰² In this IRD file we see the transnational intelligence networks arrive right into the local of Trinidad, and in this last example we see Williams’ retention of the nominated component of the second house at work in the service of vested private economic interests and full swing in the anti-communist crusade.

In 1967 Williams moved to block Stokely Carmichael’s entry into Trinidad and enacted a law to “ban certain Communist literature”.⁸⁰³ The British High Commissioner reported on this event by sending his IRD point of contact in the Foreign Office a copy of the government proclamation and newspaper articles of interest. One such article was from the Trinidad Guardian of 14 October 1967 that carried a headline “Red literature ban seen as extreme”, referencing the opinion of a senior official of the Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago.⁸⁰⁴ The official found the ban “shocking in this era” of independence, and in the context of a developing country the ban was “putting us ten years backward”. He stated: “You don’t clamp down on the whole society – don’t inhibit them, but deal with those persons who are known activists.”⁸⁰⁵ The Librarian was concerned for the broader impacts on education through the medium of literature and the foreclosing of exposure to different world experiences, and saw such executive and blanket actions to stop revolution unsuitable. The High Commissioner and his IRD counterpart were concerned with any serious opposition to their anti-communist program. The most significant impact of such a ban was indeed as the librarian feared, to undermine the organized possibilities for independent thought.

The block against Stokely Carmichael was instituted when it became known that he was planning a trip to Guyana and he was set to stop over in Trinidad on the way. The IRD

reported that the first real signs of Black Power organization in Trinidad were the protests against this ban in 1967.⁸⁰⁶ In 1968 the Jamaican government decided to revoke Walter Rodney's work permit and refuse his entry into Jamaica upon his return from the Congress of Black Writers in Montreal, Canada. These events brought forth a sharp response of protest led by students and other intellectual-activists and a march that ended in physical suppression and dispersal by the police.⁸⁰⁷ In the aftermath of what became known as the 'Rodney Riots' the Jamaican government placed increased pressure and clamped down on any political activity at the university. Those professors who were overtly involved in labour organizing were targeted and some of the professors from Caribbean countries had their work permits revoked, such as C. Y. Thomas, a Guyanese scholar who was banned from Jamaica in 1969.⁸⁰⁸

Walter Rodney was put on a plane back to Montreal, and ended up returning to Tanzania to take up a post at the University of Dar es Salaam in the period following the Arusha Declaration on socialism and self-reliance.⁸⁰⁹ Clive Thomas returned to Guyana, and when he applied for a work permit to undertake a collaborative research project in Trinidad in the latter part of 1970 he was denied.⁸¹⁰ Similarly in the immediate aftermath of April 1970 Lloyd Best travelled to London, and provoked a response from the national security state. In this case the British High Commissioner relayed an urgent request from an "anxious" Eric Williams concerning Best,⁸¹¹ who was the head of the Social Science faculty at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad. The Commissioner described Lloyd Best to his Foreign Office counterpart as "a political firebrand who is leader of what is called Tapia House group, a radical and near subversive organisation. He is also a leader of the 'Non Violent Committee for Democratic Freedom'."⁸¹² The concern was to prevent any broadcast of "inflammatory material" facilitated by Best through his many contacts there, including at the BBC.

Once more the transnational intelligence networks were prepared to follow and intervene against independent thought wherever deemed necessary. This stands in stark contrast to the work of Frank J. McDonald (FJM) in the period of 1968-1971. FJM produced a total of 48 "newsletters" for the Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA) from his time in the Caribbean during this period, visiting and reporting on Anguilla, Virgin Islands, Trinidad, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada, Curacao, Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, and Cuba (in that general order).⁸¹³ Ten of these letters were written from Trinidad, most in the range of

fifteen to twenty five pages typeset with a good amount of photographs of subject places and people. The letters in Trinidad included the topics of “Dr. Politics”, “The Race Factor in Trinidad Politics”, “The Radical Alternatives”, “The February Revolution”, and “The Commonwealth Caribbean IV: Black Power”.⁸¹⁴ The content provided a generally liberal analysis of events by and for an American perspective, included many (sometimes lengthy) quotes from persons of interest, and would be categorized as a politically oriented participant-observation mode of reporting.

The interesting thing about FJM’s “newsletters” is that on most of the documents, “NOT FOR PUBLICATION”, is printed on the top right corner. In none of the reports does FJM describe any issue with security services except for in Cuba. On his second visit after a seven-month stint lecturing at the University of Havana and doing research on the Cuban Revolution he was accused of betraying the Revolution, questioned regarding his linkages to US intelligence agencies, and imprisoned for three months.⁸¹⁵ At no point does FJM report any physical abuses while in detention in Cuba (but in fact by the end he describes somewhat comfortable conditions). Shortly before his arrest FJM stated, “the prospect of writing about what I’d seen also made me anxious to be on my way”,⁸¹⁶ and elsewhere he noted he had an uncle active in the CIA and that he was also approached by the agency.⁸¹⁷ Some of FJM’s newsletters were adapted into a chapter in a 1971 book edited by Tad Szulc (who did work for the CIA in Cuba).⁸¹⁸ After the Cuba affair FJM settled in Ireland for twenty years. In the 1990s FJM owned BioMatrix, a counter-terrorism consultancy firm based out of Cambridge,⁸¹⁹ MA, and in 1997 was a select participant in a Symposium sponsored by the Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict Division of the American Defense Preparedness Association.⁸²⁰

The Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA) was founded in 1925 under the directorship of Walter S. Rogers and the backing of the Chicago plumbing magnate and Jekyll Island Club member Charles R. Crane.⁸²¹ Both Crane and Rogers had close associations with President Woodrow Wilson, and when the Federal Reserve legislation was being drawn up Rogers was instrumental in bringing key Chicago banking representation to Washington to inform the process.⁸²² The ICWA’s function was to select suitable scholars, put them through “a rigorous training program”,⁸²³ and send them to designated international areas “to investigate and report back with papers that circulated to select constituencies, including the State Department in Washington, DC.”⁸²⁴ The initial areas of

focus for the ICWA were Soviet Russia, China, and the Near East, however the program broadened to largely cover the globe, and hence FJM's reports from the Caribbean.

As early as 1933 Walter Rogers was working with the US Ambassador in Germany to get an ICWA fellow placed in the country to produce confidential reports that were to be forwarded to the State Department.⁸²⁵ John Hazzard was one of the key early ICWA members to be sent into the field, spending four years at the Moscow Juridical Institute, and upon his return to the US in 1940 became President Roosevelt's principal Russian Interpreter.⁸²⁶ In 1951 Walter Rogers founded The American Universities Field Staff as a counterpart organization to the ICWA, financially supported by twenty US universities active in International Relations.⁸²⁷ In many respects the ICWA was a forerunner of the model that was picked up by the Ford Foundation and Fulbright programs on a larger scale post WWII. Some of the ICWA's key early Russian fellows, such as John Hazard, Bruce Hopper, and Geroid T. Robinson, were key in establishing the Russian Institute at Columbia (Harriman Institute) and the Russian Research Center at Harvard (Davis Center).⁸²⁸ Geroid Robinson was the head of the Russian section of the OSS during WWII and was a working member of the Council on Foreign Relations after the war.⁸²⁹ These institutes served as Cold War think tanks contributing to US foreign policy, and had varying degrees of linkages to the CIA.⁸³⁰

The Rockefeller, Ford, and Carnegie Foundations had many organizational overlaps and staff interlinkages with the highest executive levels of government, through both Democratic and Republican administrations.⁸³¹ One example of these cross-linkages is John J. Mcloy, a former chief of the World Bank who was at one point the simultaneous head of the Ford Foundation, Chase Manhattan Bank (Rockefeller owned), and the Council on Foreign Relations while being in a position to advise Eisenhower on various matters. So it is with the case of Rowan Gaither who was instrumental in founding RAND Corporation as a non-profit organization run by the US Air Force with Ford Foundation support.⁸³² In 1953 Gaither would later become the head of Ford, and in 1957 he chaired a NSC committee to evaluate the US national security posture. The Church Committee revealed the links between the CIA, Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie Foundations,⁸³³ but even more incriminating were the exposures of plans and involvement in directly and indirectly overthrowing foreign governments, and assassination attempts on foreign leaders such as Fidel Castro and Patrice Lumumba.⁸³⁴

In this section the Anglo-American-Commonwealth "Western Intelligence

Community” has been situated in broad scope and brought directly into play in the local context of T&T as it targeted local intellectual-activists. The links between institutions of knowledge production committed to (white) Western supremacy and the US national security state are deep and widespread, and work through liberalized proxies such as the ICWA fellows who are able to move through various places and give detailed intelligence to the US establishment. This is a stark contrast to those members of the New World Group who undertook the “The Struggle for a Relevant Economics”⁸³⁵ in the Caribbean as they were repeated victims of the national security state’s interventions. This is not without significance for it is this contrast that is probably the most lasting impact of the national security state remaining in place in T&T: the undermining of institutions for understanding the world from our own perspective and submission to the ‘universalism’ of the Western doctrines of economic freedom and ‘democracy’ upheld by free market fundamentalism and an empowered intelligence-military complex. The next case in focus reveals this function where an economic statistician becomes a threat to national security, by association, and as a consequence economic planning for T&T went out the window even before the neoliberal counterrevolution.

Kari Polanyi Levitt and economic planning as a threat to national security

For Kari Polanyi Levitt, ‘development’ engages the question, “how peoples and societies can secure economic livelihood, eliminate poverty, indignity, and injustice, and protect the heritage of cultural and environmental diversity from plunder and destruction by the global reach of unconstrained capitalism.”⁸³⁶ Furthermore, “It is unnecessary to enhance [development] by adjectives like ‘human,’ ‘participatory’ or ‘sustainable’ because without these attributes there is no meaningful development.” Levitt’s first encounter with the Caribbean came as graduate student of the University of Toronto, where Professor Keirstead, at the invitation of Arthur Lewis, was spending a sabbatical at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica.⁸³⁷ In December 1960, Levitt was asked to assist Professor Keirstead in completing a research project on an inter-island shipping service commissioned by the Federal government of the West Indies. The research was done in the archive of a British Shipping Company in Port-of-Spain and published as *Inter-Territorial Freight Rates and the Federal Shipping Service* in 1963.⁸³⁸

The wider networks of *Confluences* (2005) that brought and have kept Kari Levitt closely linked to the Caribbean are fascinating and have been documented on various occasions.⁸³⁹ The focus here is the type of work Levitt undertook in the Caribbean, the repeated interventions by the national security state, and her persistence to carry forward and move around these serious setbacks. In Trinidad, she met west-Indians economists working for the Federal government and also the chief economist of Trinidad, William Demas. Later in the year, she encountered Lloyd Best, Alister McIntyre and Roy Augier on the Mona campus of UWI.⁸⁴⁰ In this early period the West Indian Society for the Study of Social Issues was the organization through which these economists began to envision the role of Caribbean economics in the decolonization movement. In 1961, Levitt attained an entry-level position to teach Economics at McGill University in Montreal, where she initiated a course on techniques of economic planning and began to facilitate Caribbean students and a Caribbean-oriented discussion group that would later become the Montreal chapter of the NWG.⁸⁴¹

In 1964, Best and Levitt, in consultation with McIntyre (then Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UWI, St. Augustine) outlined an approach to development planning in the Caribbean based on the legacy of the slave plantation. The purpose of this meeting was to address the following question: “what would be in economics matters, economics language, the representative firm in this Caribbean economy?”⁸⁴² The group “decided that it would have to be the plantation.” The problem of economic planning in the Caribbean then, would, “have to go back historically to the slave plantation which evolved with emancipation, then wage labour, which in current terms had become the subsidiary of a foreign company.”⁸⁴³ In Levitt’s recollection:

It was Lloyd's genius to perceive the manifold correspondence of the slave plantation with contemporary business practices of foreign - and also local - firms operating in the Caribbean environment. For Lloyd, the proprietors, merchants, planters, attorneys, and house and field slaves of the ‘Model of a Pure Plantation Economy’ became a language to describe the metropolitan financial and merchant capitalists, the local margin-gathering merchants, the absentee foreign owners of multinational corporations, the resident local business classes with metropolitan consumption patterns and social aspirations, the managers of overstuffed private and public enterprises (complementing salaries with generous perks of housing, car, and travel allowances), and the working population - descendants of slaves and indentured labourers. The imagery has not lost its resonance,⁸⁴⁴

In 1964 the core thesis of *The Theory of Plantation Economy* (2009) was germinated. In the same year, the Center of Developing Areas Studies at McGill invited William Demas as a Visiting Research Fellow. The lectures he gave during this period were published as *The Economics of Development in Small Countries with Special Reference to the Caribbean* (1965). George Beckford also came into this circle and began to utilize the plantation as a lens in his own analysis of Jamaica's agricultural economy, and in 1966 Lloyd Best moved to Montreal with his family for two years to further the work on the planning models. It is in this period that Montreal became a focal point of radical Black activism and thought.

Montreal has long had links to the Caribbean via its diaspora, most notably the Haitian connection but also largely supported by people from across the wider region. This high point of Caribbean political activity in Montreal led up to the Congress of Black Writers in 1968 and the Sir George Williams Affair in 1969.⁸⁴⁵ At this time however, Montreal was explicitly situated in Québec's political dynamics as tensions built up to the 1970 October Crisis when the War Measures Act was declared in response to the Front de libération du Québec's drastic actions. In 1968 the *New World Quarterly* featured an article by Kari Levitt titled *Economic Dependence and Political Disintegration: The Case of Canada*. This article achieved wide circulation via pirated reprints and attracted the interest of Macmillan Publishers in Canada, resulting in the publication of *Silent Surrender: The Multinational Corporations in Canada* in 1970. The subject matter was highly contentious. Among her supporters was Jacques Parizeau, a prominent economist, who wrote the introduction to the French translation of the book. The French translation contained a postscript, which was reproduced by prominent union leader Michel Chartrand and widely circulated in worker's circles of Montreal.

When Parizeau became Minister of finance in the first Parti Québécois government, he invited Levitt to Quebec city for the presentation of his first budget. This may have contributed to her troubles with security authorities. More specifically, Levitt stated that persistent RCMP surveillance began after Cheddi Jagan visited her home for one of the NWG meetings in this period, and described somewhat amusing and ironic beginnings of early telephone wiretap operations.⁸⁴⁶ By 1969 the commitment to completing the Plantation Economy work was such a priority that Levitt was set to move to Trinidad with her two children for a two-year contract as Acting Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research at UWI, St. Augustine.⁸⁴⁷

Alistair McIntyre as head of the Faculty had made the necessary arrangements within UWI for Kari to fill the vacant spot, and CIDA was to provide the funding. After a delayed response to the application CIDA returned a negative result with respect to funding, stating that the University had been in touch with the High Commissioner and the evaluation was that there was no demand for professors in the social sciences.⁸⁴⁸ This was counter to the position of McIntyre and others well placed in the University. A student of Kari Levitt employed by CIDA was shocked to discover that her file was flagged with an instruction “no action to be taken”.⁸⁴⁹ In this circumstance the Canadian security agencies and their links to State development organizations were the intervening force against an appointment as Acting-Chair in the Institute of Social and Economic Research, and completion of the Plantation Economy work.

Having made arrangements to leave Montreal and determined to spend time in Trinidad, Levitt then accepted, somewhat hesitantly, an offer by William Demas to work for the Civil Service of T&T in the Ministry of Planning and Development.⁸⁵⁰ The position was to head a project alongside the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Eugenio Moore, to completely reformulate T&T’s database for the Ministry and the Central Statistics Office. Her initial salary was paid via IMF technical assistance funding and Kari Levitt did not have any issues with US security services.⁸⁵¹ The task was to construct a unique multi-sectoral Trinidad and Tobago System of National Accounts.⁸⁵² The system was a database to serve for the next five-year plan, organized specifically to suit the geography and economy of T&T, and had estimates to manage integrated real and financial flows.⁸⁵³ This was a planning tool to help improve efficiency and accountability of government expenditure.

Levitt described a motivated atmosphere in this office of the Ministry where graduate students were employed from UWI, and there would often be volunteered work sessions on the weekend. During many a lunch break they would all go down to Woodford Square to listen to Geddes Granger speak as there was a general sympathy for the protests of the young and unemployed in the Black Power movement.⁸⁵⁴ Work continued for one full year in Trinidad on the system of National Accounts, and Kari then spent the next two years teaching full-time at McGill with the summer periods of 1971 and 1972 in Trinidad. In 1971 Kari Levitt had an exchange with Eric Williams where she sent him a copy of *Silent Surrender* with a note, and he replied with a copy of his latest book *From Columbus to Castro* (1970). He commented positively on Levitt’s book, and made a point of interest regarding the extended

function of her branch plant analysis where “Canada is doing to the Caribbean just what the USA is doing to Canada.”⁸⁵⁵ Williams was not unaware of the negative consequences of reliance on foreign investment at the basis of the economy.

The discontent in the country during this post-1970 period was most notably expressed by a younger generation under the banner of the National Union of Freedom Fighters (NUFF). Levitt’s circles overlapped with this group that was supported by a somewhat widespread but diffused network, and she described the core of the group as “quite literally the children of the P.N.M.”⁸⁵⁶ During a period of work on the National Accounts system in 1973 Kari Levitt happened to be spending a weekend by her friends, one of who was a doctor known to provide medical assistance to the NUFF. In the early hours of a morning, the Flying Squad of the Trinidad Police commanded by Randolph Burroughs raided the house, and according to Levitt “they didn’t really find anybody there except the national income advisor for the government” but “they took my passport.” Then she noted, “when I came into work the next day, Monday,” my co-worker Joyce Alcantara, “said you are in trouble now, they have taken your passport, they have done you a wrong, and now you have become a danger to them.”⁸⁵⁷ This incident made Kari Levitt a “persona non grata” with the government.

Shortly thereafter the government “locked up all the worksheets, they just disappeared”,⁸⁵⁸ “our interim report was declared confidential” and “long-term economic planning was abandoned.”⁸⁵⁹ The closing down of the System of National Accounts was part of wider shifts and uncertainty within the Williams government in this period. The move to consolidate control was clear in the passing of Act 5. of 1973 which established the Minister of Finance as the “Corporation Sole”, with control over the state owned enterprises and the management of their assets.⁸⁶⁰ Williams was facing discontent in the public, in the party, and increasingly the Civil Service where he would claim that he was “a victim of inactivity.”⁸⁶¹

In late 1973 Williams was at his low, and announced that he would not run for head of the party in the upcoming P.N.M. party election. As fate would have it the OPEC oil embargo and the consequent drastic price increase of oil on the international market offered an immediate new source of revenue, and Williams surprised everyone by coming forth at the party Convention to take his place, and ran ahead for the rest of his life once the massive AMOCO offshore gas discoveries were announced in early 1974. Williams is supposed to have said, infamously, “money is no problem”, but economic planning was definitely

abandoned. For Kari Levitt, “it is a very strange logic that from the time you actually have financial resources, you can abandon economic planning. If that is not an example of utter shortsightedness, I don’t know what is.”⁸⁶²

Williams announced in 1975 that he was set up to be a victim of a coup by “a small ambitious minority of civil servants”,⁸⁶³ dubbed the “technocrats’ takeover”. He then announced that the services of top Permanent Secretaries were no longer required, including Scotty Lewis, Dodderidge Alleyne, and Eugenio Moore of the Ministry of Planning and Development”.⁸⁶⁴ The Civil Service has never recovered and remains subordinate to the cadre of Ministers, and T&T’s Central Statistics Office has also been in an abyss since then. Later events would reveal the massive proportions of waste and theft of government expenditure that was commonplace during the oil boom of the 1970s.⁸⁶⁵

A glaring example of this mismanagement was the handling of the Trinidad-Tesoro joint venture that took over BP’s assets in 1969. At this point BP Trinidad had consecutive years of declining profitability, depleting oil reserves, and a lack of capital reinvestment into its facilities, driven by a low price of oil, Trinidad’s relatively high costs of production, and new prospects in the North Atlantic. The evaluation of the company’s assets were 7 million USD on the books, BP requested 14 million, and when a US firm was called to consult the final figure rose to 17.5 million USD.⁸⁶⁶ A record of the British High Commissioner at the time, noted this context of a bleak outlook for the industry that was compounded by challenges from organized labour and social discontent. With respect to the BP takeover he also noted that what had “become *an unwanted asset*, [was] being taken over, by agreement with the Government”.⁸⁶⁷ (emphasis added)

In the Trinidad-Tesoro partnership the T&T Government was the majority shareholder with 50.1% ownership of the company, but the US Corporation carried out the management and operations of the company. In the original agreement the government retained the rights to licensing in the case of bankruptcy, but in 1972 this was changed such that Tesoro would hold the licenses.⁸⁶⁸ Furthermore, the Petroleum Taxes Act of 1974 was showcased as the government’s willingness to tax foreign corporations and take its stake in the industry. The taxation changes were not insignificant, where in 1973 the government collected 0.50 USD per barrel through tax and royalties from AMOCO’s offshore drilling operations, that figure rose to 4.69 USD per barrel by the end of the year, and in 1974 this would then be doubled.⁸⁶⁹ The increase in government revenues was enormous. In 1975 the

government's 'partnership' corporation, Tesoro, began legal proceedings to challenge the T&T's 1974 tax bill. The corporation produced evidence that the former Minister of Petroleum and Energy Department gave a special accommodation, and a legal settlement was negotiated where Tesoro was to be compensated for "over-taxation".⁸⁷⁰ Shortly thereafter other companies challenged the law using this precedent and before long the overall taxation rates were equalized accordingly. Economic planning was out the window, and despite increased State ownership (which entails not only assets but also liabilities) the foreign corporations retained strategic control of the economy on profitable terms for them.

In the immediate context of having the National Accounts project shut down, Levitt was given an opportunity by the UWI St. Augustine to utilize the rest of her work permit as a visiting professor. This she did, and in that time was offered a three-year contract with the Institute of International Relations.⁸⁷¹ The goal was to finally complete the work for the plantation economy planning models, and by mid 1975 before the start of the school term Levitt had made arrangements to leave McGill, Montreal, and move to Trinidad to live. In her recollection the circumstance was that in August 1975 she participated in a conference on the New International Economic Order, in which there were many high-level persons working on international development. There, she let it be known that she had accepted a three-year contract with the Institute of International Relations.⁸⁷²

Kari Levitt arrived in Trinidad in September, for the second year of the appointment and discovered that her work permit had not been renewed. The University protested but the government stated that "after careful consideration", the work permit had not passed the Ministry of National Security. No explanations were given.⁸⁷³ A visitor's visa was quickly secured, but then revoked the day after.⁸⁷⁴ The sociologist Lloyd Braithwaite, then Principal of the UWI St. Augustine, was key in organizing the protest by the university. The Faculty of Social Sciences at St. Augustine released a statement noting the case was not singular, and the concern was for the use of work permits as an "instrument of political control" that was being used "to prevent the academic community from doing its work".⁸⁷⁵ The analysis recognized the impact of an active, ideologically dogmatic, national security state on independent thought:

Perhaps one of the most unfortunate effects of such use of work permits is to make it difficult for West Indians to work freely at the St. Augustine campus and to threaten the regional character of the university. The further effect of such harassment is to suggest that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is less

than serious about maintaining the integrity of the University as a centre of learning, research, debate and critical analysis.⁸⁷⁶

There was nothing that could be done by the university, and beyond the notice of denial by the Ministry of National Security there was a wall of silence on behalf of the T&T Government. Kari Levitt was soon forced to leave the country. A devastating interruption, nonetheless, this did not stop her work. Fortunately well-concerned friends and colleagues in her Department at McGill had delayed in forwarding her resignation papers, and thus her job and livelihood was secured.⁸⁷⁷

In the interim, Levitt had a contract in Guyana relating to economic planning, and an invitation from the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex in the U.K. By mid 1976, she was back in Montreal.⁸⁷⁸ At this time, close to ten years of work on the construction of Input-Output tables for each of the four Atlantic provinces of Canada was coming to a close at Statistics Canada. A contract for the final phase of the work was presented for signature to the Chief Statistician who had recently received a new black list of economists and other professionals not to be hired by any Canadian governmental agency. Kari's name was on the list. A senior colleague presented the Chief Statistician with a conditional resignation.⁸⁷⁹ The contract was signed. In Ottawa, Levitt was invited to lecture on the international financial system, including the history of the IMF, to senior public servants. It seems that Levitt made a good impression on somebody of importance, because shortly after this seminar she was invited to join the international executive board of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a Canadian federal Crown Corporation. After some delay, she received a phone call from the chief of the IDRC expressing his disappointment and embarrassment that Cabinet had not approved the nomination. Independent investigation by Levitt established that the nomination did not pass the national security clearance.⁸⁸⁰

Levitt's lingering question is, what does a development research center have to do with national security clearance? This is the type of concern that has driven this enquiry. In many respects the national security state interventions against Kari Levitt have been arbitrary, though directed in their consequence of interrupting her work and undermining the efforts to build strong institutions of independent thought. RCMP files from NWG meetings were linked to a CIDA red flag that resulted in revoked funding to do plantation economy work in Trinidad. A random run-in with the police's paramilitary unit in Trinidad led to a confiscated passport, a closed project, and ejection from government employment. A

comment on moving to Trinidad in a forum of Canadian officials led to a reactivation of intervention by the Ministry of National Security in Trinidad to block her work permit and visitor's permit.

The national security state functions through arbitrary actions because the empowered channels of executive decision making were committed to an ideological fundamentalism of anti-communism, heightened in the context of Black Power of that period. The routine targets of the national security state were those that actively worked for decolonization of the State and society, and attempted to build institutions of independent thought towards an alternate mode of economic organization. In one very tangible way five years of work on a database for the T&T Central Statistics Office was destroyed along with the economic planning models and the uniquely designed Trinidad and Tobago System National Accounts; declared confidential material and confiscated by the Ministry of National Security. Similarly, the plantation economy models were only published in full form as a book, in English, in 2010. Perhaps it is telling that there is something to be reflected upon when it is known that the Spanish translation was published first, a year prior, in Cuba.

Dissent contained, piecemeal reform policies appropriated to work for the establishment

Two High Commission reports in January 1970 give an assessment of conditions in T&T and the government's policies on the eve of the February Revolution and the attempted coup d'état. The British High Commissioner stated that T&T was pursuing closer ties with the US as shown by its commitment to the Organization of American States and Williams taking up position as chair of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council.⁸⁸¹ In a review of 1969 the highlights are the acquisition of BP by Trinidad-Tesoro and Williams' meeting with Nelson Rockefeller in May, an agreement with the US for financing for the Caribbean's regional air carrier, the British West Indian Airways, in June, and a Commission of Enquiry into racial discrimination in hiring practices of the private sector.⁸⁸² It is evident that Williams kept close ties to the US and did not fundamentally shift the orientation of the economy away from its commitment to the interests of foreign capital despite some moves to increase state ownership. Similarly, he did make an effective move to tackle discrimination in hiring practices, but the fundamental problems of high unemployment and inequality persisted unabated. Williams' program brought gains for some, inclusion of individual

possibilities, but not social and economic redress for the many.

The Canadian High Commissioner also reported on the situation in January 1970 and began by commenting on the “increasingly conspicuous non-appearance of vast new benefits for the negro masses in the years after Independence” and the crisis this posed for the P.N.M.⁸⁸³ The analysis was that it was the commitment to “foreign business interests” that resulted in this context where Williams’ government was now “rather remote from its working class electorate.” Persistent unemployment and underemployment were the consequence of the P.N.M.’s reliance on the petroleum industry and its derivatives as the prime movers of the economy, for these capital-intensive sectors did not have high labour needs but did have high wages that effectively distorted the rest of the economy.⁸⁸⁴ The situation was volatile due to the fact that the young demographic was the largest in the country, and it was in this group where unemployment was most pronounced. The Canadian official did note the challenges presented by Lloyd Best and James Millette, but the evaluation was “that the political climate is not yet ripe for their political ideas”.⁸⁸⁵

The bottom line concern of the IRD’s report on Black Power was radical organizations in Trinidad and the use of the 1969/1970 protests by “international Communist interests” for their propaganda purposes.⁸⁸⁶ The situation was that “extensive coverage of the events in Trinidad and Tobago reveals significant and growing Communist support for Black Power manifestations throughout the world.” The report highlighted evidence of “certain elements” planning a military force, citing the seizure of a large number of khaki uniforms and early reports from within the T&T government and sources in Britain that the agenda of April 1970 was a indeed a plan to neutralize the police, seize the public broadcast stations, overthrow the government, and declare “a revolution”.⁸⁸⁷ Of the dissident forces the IRD identified the “extreme-left wing leader” of the OWTU, George Weeks, and his close links to NJAC as manifested in the worker-backed Black Power mobilizations in the streets to be the most prominent civil challenge to the regime.

Lloyd Best and the *Tapia* newspaper were also situated, noting its platform that called for a constitutional republic based on participatory political representation, diversification of the economy, and nationalization of the industries.⁸⁸⁸ The report noted the protests against Stokely’s ban, the calls for the removal of censorship on ‘communist’ literature, the condemnations of police brutality, and demands for State control of the economy. It also commented on the New World Group – *Tapia* cross pollination, and stated they had a

“radical rather than a Black Power view.”

A month after the State of Emergency was declared it was extended for another six months.⁸⁸⁹ In reporting on this matter the British High Commissioner also commented on the recent Exchange Control Bill as a forced reaction to reports of substantial capital flight from the country. *Tapia* issued a call for a constituent assembly as a forum for the people to begin to mandate an alternative political program, however the draconian laws in place at the time greatly restricted any such efforts. *Tapia* stated, “the measures taken to restore ‘law and order’ have had the effect of clamping a lid on all the means of expression of the dispossessed classes” while the “well-to-do, on the other hand, have breathed a sigh of relief”.⁸⁹⁰ In such a circumstance the elite “evaluate governmental performance in terms of a successful holding operation, a state of vigilance against possible disturbances of the status quo, rather than in terms of the formulation and achievement of developmental goals and the building of a just society.”⁸⁹¹ Similarly the danger was that “having been saved, as we are repeatedly told, by the police”, the rhetoric of the state and its elite sought to ensure that “we will not be disposed to be critical about the role of the police” who were “extolled for their ‘loyalty’” and consequently set to be empowered.⁸⁹²

The arrests of 21 April 1970 primarily targeted NJAC and labour union leaders. The records state that 54 civilians were arrested and detained first in the Royal Gaol, and then on Nelson Island,⁸⁹³ including both the Chairman of *Tapia* and the editor of *Tapia* newspaper.⁸⁹⁴ In a High Court appearance on 12 May the leader of the OWTU, George Weekes, claimed that he had suffered “physical and mental torture” as he was being held in solitary confinement for twenty-three hours a day.⁸⁹⁵ The detainees were not all released at once, for the last five detainees were released in the middle of November, after seven months, on bail conditions as they still faced a trial of sedition charges.

Similar to the court martial and appeal for the soldiers’ case, the charges against the civilians for sedition in 1970 did not substantiate to convictions and sentencing. The punishment national security state is often in the process, noted by the detainment of labour and Black Power leaders for up to seven months before release. In many respects the police and prison system served as an immediate means of containment by detention, to physically block people from action and organizing, but the courts have been less than effective as a means of due process. The discontent did not subside and new groups such as the New Beginnings Movement emerged, as well as NUFF with its guerilla-type actions, to which the

Police increasingly responded with outright, often lethal, violence.

The empowered police was not the only mechanism that Williams relied upon to endure the challenges of 1970. What the government and its supporters promoted were the changes made in the economy, said to be representative of Williams' nationalist commitment, toward increased state participation.⁸⁹⁶ The Trinidad-Tesoro partnership was the flagship project of this claim, and its end result revealed that the foreign corporation retained control and profit while T&T was liable. Further in this pattern was the use of the gains from the oil boom of the 1970s to develop further downstream sectors, which soon boasted a world-class array of petrochemical industries.⁸⁹⁷ This petrochemical sector became the new flagship, and was referred to as 'diversification', a title with no substance for it was very plain to see that these industries directly depended on the parent oil and gas extraction and refining processes.

Petrochemical industries are capital intensive and present minimal employment opportunities, thus wage distortions persisted, and ultimately the economy still depended on foreign firms both on the import and export sides of the country's primary industries.⁸⁹⁸ The local economy experienced significant growth of GDP in the second half of the 1970s, primarily noted in an infrastructure boom and in the expansion of service and consumable industries. A significant component of the government's program in this period was the instituted use of subsidies to underwrite entire aspects of the economy, not for growth and development of new and interlinked industries, but primarily subsidies that served direct services of consumption. One of the key subsidies was fuel, allocated \$99 million USD between 1973-1978, used to catalyze quick growth of the local transport network. In the same period food subsidies received \$175 million USD, however most of it was used to buy imported food.⁸⁹⁹

Tapia's first public meeting was held on 19 March 1970 open to the public and was titled "Black Power and National Reconstruction: Proposals Following the February Revolution".⁹⁰⁰ Lloyd Best was active in his program of social-political organizing across the Caribbean in the decade of the 1960s, and by 1970 was in Trinidad with his organization and its outlet, as one of the most consistent platforms of critique focused on the P.N.M. regime. The "February Revolution" was his term, and his discourse was sharp and widespread across the society. Williams' post April 1970 national address was titled "National Reconstruction", given on 30 June 1970, after the streets had subsided and both the soldiers and Black Power

protestors in their respective confinements. Williams showcased his State acquisitions of industry and a bank, and promised to build more schools and houses, and as would become the recurring unfulfilled theme, diversification of the economy.⁹⁰¹

Eric Williams was confronted in the Senate in 1975 regarding his claims of having made important State acquisitions, yet in the Trinidad-Tesoro 'partnership' it was the US corporation that retained the upper hand. Similarly it was noted that there was little substance to the fanfare about the National Commercial Bank established by the government, because it was "run like a foreign corporation, in terms of its lending policies."⁹⁰² Similarly the Foreign Commonwealth Office took note of an incident where the "Trinidad and Tobago Government revealed the uncompromising nature of its attitude towards the University of the West Indies (UWI) last week".⁹⁰³ The case was a request from the University that had gone to Cabinet for the use of "certain radio frequencies for the reception and transmission of television programmes between the campuses at Mona, Cave Hill and St. Augustine, with a view to teaching and research." The request was denied because the Cabinet said it had the right to be involved from the initial process and it "disagreed with the procedures adopted in this 'important and far-reaching matter'".⁹⁰⁴

A Diplomatic Report from the British High Commissioner to the Secretary of State in 1977 gives insight into the conditions in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, a year after it got that status. The prominent feature of the report was the oil and gas boom, where "there is little sign of the bonanza ending or of the stresses and strains it creates yet being so severe as to be a serious threat to Trinidad's stability."⁹⁰⁵ Despite this overview it was noted that unemployment was "virtually at the same level as before, and among young people it is almost certainly higher". From the Commissioner's perspective, it was "hardly expected" that there would be even distribution of the high oil prices, but "one of the more worrying changes of the past three years is the widening of the gap between rich and poor, and the growth of a typical 'consumer society'".⁹⁰⁶

The other trend of note for the Commissioner was the stagnation of the Civil Service where the issue was "now compounded by growing corruption because of the greater temptations of an affluent society".⁹⁰⁷ At the time of writing he noted that there was extensive local press coverage on a report on corruption in the Magistrates' court. Eric Williams commissioned the enquiry and the report was submitted in 1973 but had only just come to light, "after most of the copies have mysteriously disappeared from Government

Offices.”⁹⁰⁸ 1978 was the year of the peak of T&T’s oil production, and a year later the British High Commissioner’s report was titled “Wealth and Worry”. His assessment was that “the country is deeply divided class against class, race against race, and the whole place is going down the drain, while everyone fears to speak up.”⁹⁰⁹ The concluding analysis is that the national security state endured and the primary victims are independent thought and those organizing the effort to build institutions for an alternate mode of social and economic organization.

The national security state in T&T maintained its continuity through a constitution that ensured the executive of government functioned with a high degree of discretion and a low degree of accountability. This arrangement also maintained the direct channels for the influence of special interests in government programming, and thus the economy also retained its patterns of strategic control by foreign interests alongside weak protections for workers. The oil boom immediately exposed the persistent high degrees of inequality in the High Commissioner’s observation. Eric Williams’ political career was saved by the onset of the oil boom after having the close call that was the Black Power uprisings and attempted coup d’état of 1970, on which occasion he was saved by his alignment with the imperial powers. In material form the decolonization process was suspended by the onset and penetration of imperialism. Eric Williams could not reconcile that reality.

Williams’ P.N.M. regime in the first decade of T&T’s independence was active in its anti-communist program and this chapter detailed Williams’ break with C.L.R. James over the party’s regression into alignment with US interests. The NWG was also an important concern noting the imperative of their ideas in this context, and the circumstances where Lloyd Best, George Beckford, and Kari Levitt were among the members of the groups’ network that were targeted by the national security state. The strain put on the group by such interventions was situated alongside tensions regarding the different political emphases between the various members as factors in bringing the fractured outcome. This was counterpoised with the widespread support the intelligence and knowledge production network of the national security state received, seemingly uninhibited. Kari Polanyi Levitt’s contributions to economic planning and the building of institutions of independent thought were also situated, again noting the persistent interruptions she had to deal with.

The oil boom came as economic planning went out the window in T&T and Williams further consolidated his control over various aspects of the State machinery. The outcome

was that despite his major acquisitions of assets in the economy the government remained subordinate to the dictates of foreign capital interests. As quickly as the profits of the oil boom arrived they would disappear in the early 1980s, and the high degrees of unemployment and stark inequalities would once more make their effects sorely felt. The national security state remained intact, upholding the fundamental conditions of organization of the economy and society according to the outlines of its Crown Colony origins. In this case individualized freedoms were given to those who could get ahead (legitimately or illegitimately, legally or illegally) and the measure of success was the display of ownership of luxury material goods (unproductive liabilities). In a perfect recipe for disaster, aspirations were materially high and reality would bring a serious low. In many respects that was the pattern for 1970, and for 1990. In light of the historical detail considered here, an analysis of the problems of 1990 and thereafter necessitate the consideration of the un-reconciled deep-set problems in the society with a germ of a longer arc.

Conclusion

This thesis argued that a national security state existed in Crown Colony rule in T&T, and remained fundamentally in place despite the postwar progression to full internal self-government in 1956, independence in 1961, and republic status 1976. The strategic importance of Trinidad was secured in the early 20th Century with the emergence of its oil industry as a vital source of supply for the British Empire. The oil industry in T&T posted large profits in the late 1930s while worker conditions were poor and unprotected, and the 1937 labour riots set a heightened security tone with British military intervention. This security concern took a new form under the US occupation in WWII, and life in T&T was harsh due to the record high submarine attacks that targeted strategic supply lines of oil and bauxite. The US bases continued after the war ended, and its influence was also ensured through its corporations, and organizations such as the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission (AACC).

Eric Williams worked for the AACC for twelve years, and as a consultant for the OSS in relation to setting up the bases in Caribbean between 1942-1943. These organizational commitments indicate that at the start of his career Williams was not in any way prepared to break from colonial and imperial influence. The British Colonial Office was instrumental in using executive decree to establish Williams' P.N.M. as a majority government with power centralized in the executive. The substance of Williams' campaign against the Chaguaramas Naval base in the late 1950s amounted to a demand for increased aid from the US. Eric Williams' vision of the constitution did not fundamentally differ from the oil and sugar lobbies as he retained their channels for "special interests" and was effective in consolidating power in a largely nominated executive of government. The Crown Colony principles remained intact under the T&T independence constitution of 1962.

During the first decade of independence, the prerogative of national security rested on anti-communism and the targeting of any 'subversive' activities, in direct continuity with the patterns established under British rule. The government utilized the security services to enforce its ideological commitment through surveillance, literature bans, blocks on persons travel, physical suppression, arrest, detention, and death. The police was the consistent force to broke down mobilizations of the population, despite having a record of high-level mismanagement and political interference. In 1970 the National Joint Action Committee was

at the forefront of the Black Power movement that openly challenged the P.N.M. government. After months of mobilizations the protests had escalated to a point where cross union organization threatened to shut down the country. Williams enacted a State of Emergency, and when the Regiment activated a failed attempt at a coup d'état Williams' response was to call for US assistance, and was supported with imported weapons and ammunition, and five US naval vessels offshore. Ten years after Eric Williams led a march against the US base in Chaguaramas he called on the US Government to back his regime. The Coast Guard and the Police Service were the primary local forces that subdued the unrest, for the coup attempt quickly was contained and the social unrest was confined to looting and a few fires. The government's executive actions to empower an ex-commander as head negotiator resulted in the accused soldiers being released. The discontent and disturbances persisted only to be continually contained by an increasingly empowered, and corrupted, police force.

The New World Group emerged in this period of the 1960s and as its members carried out their work they were consistently interrupted by the national security state. Lloyd Best was set against Williams and had to endure the consequences. The same pattern is present with the case of Kari Polanyi Levitt, who was blocked from jobs at the University via funding and visa cuts. A random intervention by the 'Flying Squad' operations unit of the police force resulted in a confiscated passport and the shutting down of the project of the System of National Accounts she was coordinating. These repeated interventions were set in contrast to the workings of foreign intelligence analysts operating in Trinidad, as well as the active British anti-communist propaganda unit, the Information Research Department. Anti-communism remained the ideological underpinning of the national security state in T&T, but this was primarily enacted through a targeting of 'subversives', and thus any organized dissent deemed a concern was targeted. This was a consistent function before and after independence, and the achievement of republic status in 1976.

Republic status brought a symbolic change to the head of the State no longer being a British appointed Governor-General (as is the case with contemporary Canada), but instead a locally determined President. Despite the symbolic move, the constitution remained true to its Crown Colony origins of executive dominance. This difference in appearance and reality was also a feature of Williams' actions in 'taking control' of the economy as the nationalist leader he claimed to be. This analysis showed that Williams left the core operational function

of the economy to foreign corporations, when he did acquire major assets it was not at a period when they were in high demand, and the terms of operation of the new enterprises put the T&T Government on weak footing with respect to foreign counterparts. The economy continued to primarily rely on its petroleum sectors and the expansion of refining processes was sold as 'diversification', where in fact the industry continued to rely on terms set by foreign players who controlled both the input and output of T&T's petroleum economy. Although the windfall from the 1970s boom was significant, little was done to transform the economy and thus inequality and discontent persisted.

Consistent throughout the period 1947-1978 was the function of internal security that targeted any organization of people that sought fundamental economic redress from the system of stark inequalities and consolidated political power. The underlying function of the intelligence networks was to keep track of, and be ready to intervene against, any targeted persons/groups that were most often accused of being anti-communist or subversive. This intervention was sometimes outright and blunt in moments of peak tension, but it also took more prolonged and mundane, yet impactful forms. The consequent effect of the fundamental insistence of anti-communism was the collapsing of all modes and forms of dissent that sought to principally challenge the basis of the State and the economy. The New World Group (NWG) was a network of radical economists that were directly impacted by the national security state in this period, where attempts to produce literature were undermined along with the efforts to build institutions of independent thought. A primary contribution of the NWG was to emphasize importance of historical insight in the analysis of conditions, and that has been taken seriously in this study of the national security state in T&T. Although the work was hindered, and has largely fallen out of attention in the neoliberal era, the contributions of the NWG's members endure across networks that are not on the front page today, but the relevance of the groups ideas and efforts may begin to take a new meaning as the world of 2018 approaches the turbulence of the late 1960s.

That historical reference is made not to suggest that things are the same, for this time around the people are so much more exposed and the volatility surely amplified. The collapsing of dissent into 'anti-communist' and 'subversive' that functioned in the historical period studied takes a different form today, with the same result. An example of this was given in the introduction with the discourse surrounding 'homegrown violent extremism', and is also directly evident in the function of the 2018 Anti-Terrorism and Anti-Gang

legislation. The Anti-Gang Bill significantly broadens the definition of a gang and what it means to be a gang member, enforces even heavier punishments for gang-related crimes, empowers the Police to arrest anyone suspected of being a gang member or search any place where a gang member is suspected to be, all without a warrant, and with the power to detain persons for 72 hours (or longer).⁹¹⁰ The patterns of the national security state persist and are increasingly empowered. As the discontent builds up to new heights the questioning of fundamental assumptions and taken for granted mythologies is picked by renewed currents of activity. This historical analysis has presented a fundamental problem to some of the taken for granted ideas surrounding the contexts and causes of the issues that are addressed through the medium of national security today.

This thesis has argued that the national security state primarily served to uphold the function of the State as a mechanism that serves private/corporate interests while it actively expands its institutions to suppress and divide the population. The continued patterns of executive dominated government were situated at the root cause of many of the disruptions and upheavals the country endured. The consequences of the unbroken national security state were the persistent inequalities and social cleavages in the society, and thus it is because this formation was never decolonized that the country faces the dire conditions it does today. Decolonization has been suspended in T&T, and the privatized, consumerist trends have accelerated the corruption of the State. National security is given top budget priority and everyone cries out to the government to address the escalating murder rate and widespread violence in the society, yet there seems to be little questioning if national security can address these issues at all.

The broken logic prevalent today is apparent in the case of the illegal gun trade in T&T, which consequently affects the fact that around 80% of murders are committed with a firearm.⁹¹¹ At a Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on National Security hearing and subsequent media briefing in July 2017 it was revealed, via Strategic Services Agency intelligence, that there was an illegal gun trade operating in T&T with an value of over \$100 million TTD (15 million USD) annually.⁹¹² There were no questions in the Chairman's mind that these issues were connected to the "Protective Services" where he noted there was "lethargy, corruption, and complicity" to be dealt with across the board.⁹¹³ The overall recommendations of the Joint Select Committee directed attention to strengthening border security, while the Strategic Services Agency also revealed that most of this illegal gun trade

was operating through legal ports in containers and not through small smuggling boats as is the common misconception.⁹¹⁴ This intelligence does not deter the government's emphasis on interception requirements for the Coast Guard. The lingering question however regarded the admission that 40% of the containers at the ports were not being scanned, the criteria for scanning did not follow any scientific procedure but relied on personnel discretion where "Captains of industry" were given clearance, and that the scanners were actually off for a long period because of "radiation" concerns.⁹¹⁵ The problem is not rooted in national security systems or appropriate hardware, but more so the breakdown is fundamentally occurring at the executive level and its responses only serve to add further volatility to the system.

The historical analysis of this thesis situated the long historical precedent that the problems of executive imbalance and abuses of power have in T&T, and argued that these patterns will not begin to change until the constitution begins to move toward separated powers and distributed responsibility across the intuitions of elected representation accompanied by a civil service that functions with autonomy. That requires planning, and economic planning must once more be institutionalized and supported by the Universities and other institutions of independent thought. A goal of this thesis is to profoundly impact the way people understand the 'national security' problems faced by T&T today, and the entirely misplaced emphasis on national security itself. The national security state was built to undermine emancipation and to target worker organization. It was modeled into anti-communist mechanism post WWII and became a means to suppress and co-opt Caribbean decolonization movements. The ultimate victim of the national security state, as it transitioned from the war on communism to the war on drugs and terror, is autonomous organizing in the Caribbean and institutions of independent thought. The destruction of those institutions that sought to bolster Caribbean societies against the unrestrained influence and penetration of imperial powers by the national security state has resulted in a case where there was little to stabilize the society once the rise neoliberal imperialism upsurged in the 1990s.

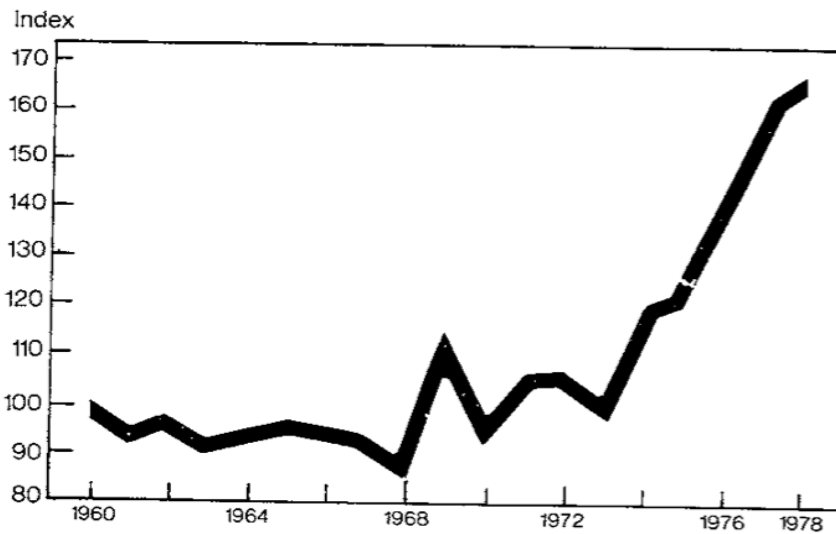
The most appropriate analysis that comes out of the New World Group's inspiration and work is that of Dennis Pantin in his formulation of the Rentier State, economy and society at the basis of the cleavages which brought about the conditions of 27 July 1990. Pantin notes the JaM's militant actions and taking the parliament hostage as the prime

highlight, but for him the most telling aspect was the “widespread lack of sympathy for, if not wished demise of the Government hostages.”⁹¹⁶ The persistent “extremely unsympathetic attitudes towards the seizure” are manifestations of “more subterranean currents which have a long run in the society”, and Pantin’s analysis is that 27 July 1990 was “a political and not a security crises.”⁹¹⁷ The basis of this crisis then was that the Rentier State, economy and society remained principally in place in T&T, where a “Rentier Economy may be defined simply as one which services primarily out of the incomes accruing from the exploitation of natural resources by foreign firms which either own the natural resource based activities, or control the technology used and markets in which the output is sold. “Open Petroleum Economies”, such as T&T, “are Rentier Economies par excellence.”⁹¹⁸

The consequences of the Rentier Economy is that it is “dominated by parasitic, non-productive elites”,⁹¹⁹ and in the case of T&T this was established “under conditions of colonialism, [where] the colonial elites were in charge of the Rents. Adult suffrage and political independence reduced but did not eliminate that control.”⁹²⁰ For Pantin, the most important factors in the continuation of the system is the non-transparent party system that is directly beholden to financiers, the constitution that ensures a Prime Ministerial dictatorship with minimal restraints from parliament, and a media dominated by state-owned and corporate “conglomerates’ that are aligned with the current system of syphoning profits from state rents.”⁹²¹ A principal means by which the “Rentier elite maintains itself in power is through the virtual absence of popular economic or political education”,⁹²² replaced instead by “the growing dominance of free market theology” promoted by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, headquartered in Washington.⁹²³ This thesis has shown how the national security state undermined those institutions of independent thought that sought to challenge the government for its unwillingness to transform the economy away from its Crown Colony constitution and Rentier Economy structure.

Figure 1

Trinidad: Quantity Index of Food Imports



Source: Christine Bolling, "Trinidad and Tobago: Factors Affecting its Capacity to Import Food," International Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Foreign Agricultural Economic Report*, No. 178, January 1983, 2,

<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/147198/files/faer178.pdf>

The unbroken pattern of this formation is in large part why T&T imports around 85% of its food today,⁹²⁴ why the economy is so downturned with the low price of oil in past years,⁹²⁵ and why there is a broken record of proclamations regarding diversification.⁹²⁶ In contemporary T&T those who live among the street hustle refer to money as 'food'. The trend line from 1960-1978, Figure 1 above, gives a picture of Eric Williams' program of decolonization when applied to the outcome of his political career as taken by a measure of a popular neoliberal term, 'food security'. Self-reliance in terms of food production should be a core value of a notion of national security that has integrity in its commitment to the wellbeing of the population on the land of the nation, and separation from ideological absolutism. The reliance on food imports is a norm for the globalization agenda, and thus food security within that rhetoric is an oxymoron. The lack of integrity behind the institutions that have peddled and enforced this doctrine is becoming undeniable.⁹²⁷ Similarly, the hollow basis of the neoliberal dogma is being awkwardly backpedaled by its proponents in the face of their abysmal record.⁹²⁸ The questions remains, are there institutions of independent thought in T&T today that are prepared to begin confronting

and planning for a world where the dominant ideology which governed the society begins to disintegrate?

In the realm of national security where it is a fact that T&T is a proxy/dependency of the US when it comes to policy and power, is there any preparedness to confront and plan for a future where the US has already acknowledged fundamental shifts necessary to secure itself in its self-declared “Post-Primacy World”.⁹²⁹ This does not mean a withdrawal of the US by any means, but more likely an imperial beast that is backed into a corner, volatile and unpredictable, with sights on Trinidad’s neighbor six miles away.⁹³⁰ These are serious questions for national security, and all evidence suggests that the status quo is totally unprepared to confront the scale of the challenges. Geographically, Trinidad is piece of South America. That is becoming increasingly so demographically on a daily basis in 2018,⁹³¹ and will undoubtedly follow this trend politically in the future. The question will remain as to along what basis will the State, economy, and society will be organized? Will the opportunity present itself for the space to begin a process of fundamental reorganization? Until then national security will remain an inward cycle of violence in T&T, and even though the elite are still recording high profits they are worried because an island imposes natural borders, and it is not a big place.⁹³² Will the “Scared Cows” remain?

Eric Williams established himself before the population of T&T most symbolically in the celebrated ‘University of the Woodford Square’. This phrase is a solid fact of T&T’s history, just as is Christopher Columbus, who is rightly castigated today as a genocidal explorer that set the tone for the 500 years of colonization, pillaging, and slavery that followed. In 2018 there is a movement in Trinidad, as there is across North America, to remove statues of colonial era figures that represent slavery and genocide. The Columbus statue in Port of Spain is a target, and in no way is the position here to suggest that it should be kept up, but more so, to ask if that commitment will it follow through to the ‘University of the Woodford Square’? Is Eric Williams a “Sacred Cow”? Taking that history has weight; a lot of T&T’s future confrontations and decisions may be altered if this reality is embraced. Ralph Woodford was Trinidad’s longest-serving Governor under the Crown Colony system and was a staunch opponent to emancipation. Eric Williams’ was opposed to the symbolisms of Crown Colony government, but relied heavily on its principles once he established himself as head of the government. This pattern of executive government lasts to this day, and thus the question is, will the energy directed at the statue be directed to the

constitution? Symbols are a concern, are quite often deceiving, but what remains a tangible danger is the substance of the matter.

Eric Williams' presented lectures in the 'University of Woodford Square', long orations that greatly impressed the crowds. As Lloyd Best wittingly exposed in his statements, and as was visibly demonstrated in the Black Power movement against Williams in the late 1960s, the people had not understood Williams and what he stood for in the first place. This is materially so, for this thesis has considered those speeches where he outlines his firm commitment to a system of nominated government and executive control, with an economy oriented toward foreign interests. The power relationship between the head of the government and the people never changed, and this is symbolically true in Eric Williams' Woodford Square lectures. A simple observation from Paulo Freire, an intellectual who was targeted by his own Brazilian national security state, highlights the power relationship in a teacher-student role, and argues for the fundamental need for a "dialogic" process of exchange between the two, and thus he reveals the structure Williams embodied. Williams was seemingly unquestioned, "The Doctor", and that legacy of consolidated and unquestioned power is what T&T most acutely suffers with today. Eric Williams did not create it, but he surely bolstered it, and it is all the more difficult to reconcile, as he was a black anti-colonial historian.

There is an alternate vision, highlighted here through Walter Rodney's *groundings with my brothers* (1968). The symbolism of a process of groundings as compared to 'University' lectures is most significant, and in T&T the National Joint Action Committee did attempt such a move in socially renaming Woodford Square the "People's Parliament". Walter Rodney's *groundings* took place in Jamaica when he was first a University student and later a professor, and these exchanges were not in a classroom but in and amongst the poor and downtrodden in the Kingston. At first Rodney was not celebrated, but a lasting relationship of exchange was formed, and in 1968 when the Jamaican government decided to ban his re-entry into Jamaica there were mass protests and riots ensued in certain sections. Rodney's exile was not futile for he returned to Tanzania at the height of anti-colonial socialist influence, and was celebrated in the University of Dar es Salaam. Rodney's commitment was to the Caribbean however, and Guyana most notably, and this unwavering dedication to a grounded revolutionary-intellectual struggle brought him head on with the CIA-backed Forbes Burnham government, that eventually assassinated him in June 1980. This is a cold

reminder of the directed attacks on independent thought by the national security state, and the struggle one faces when power is confronted in a serious manner. Ideas never die, and Walter Rodney lives on in many forms today; a fire in the mind and heart of the youth of tonight and tomorrow. A fire that is ready to burn down the system that is Babylon, the system that is *hanging us by a different tree*. The imperative of decolonization endures on the *capture land*, and the struggle is far from over. *Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery... for until the color of a man's skin is no more significant than the color of his eyes, there is war.*

Notes

Chapter I

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Chapter IV

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