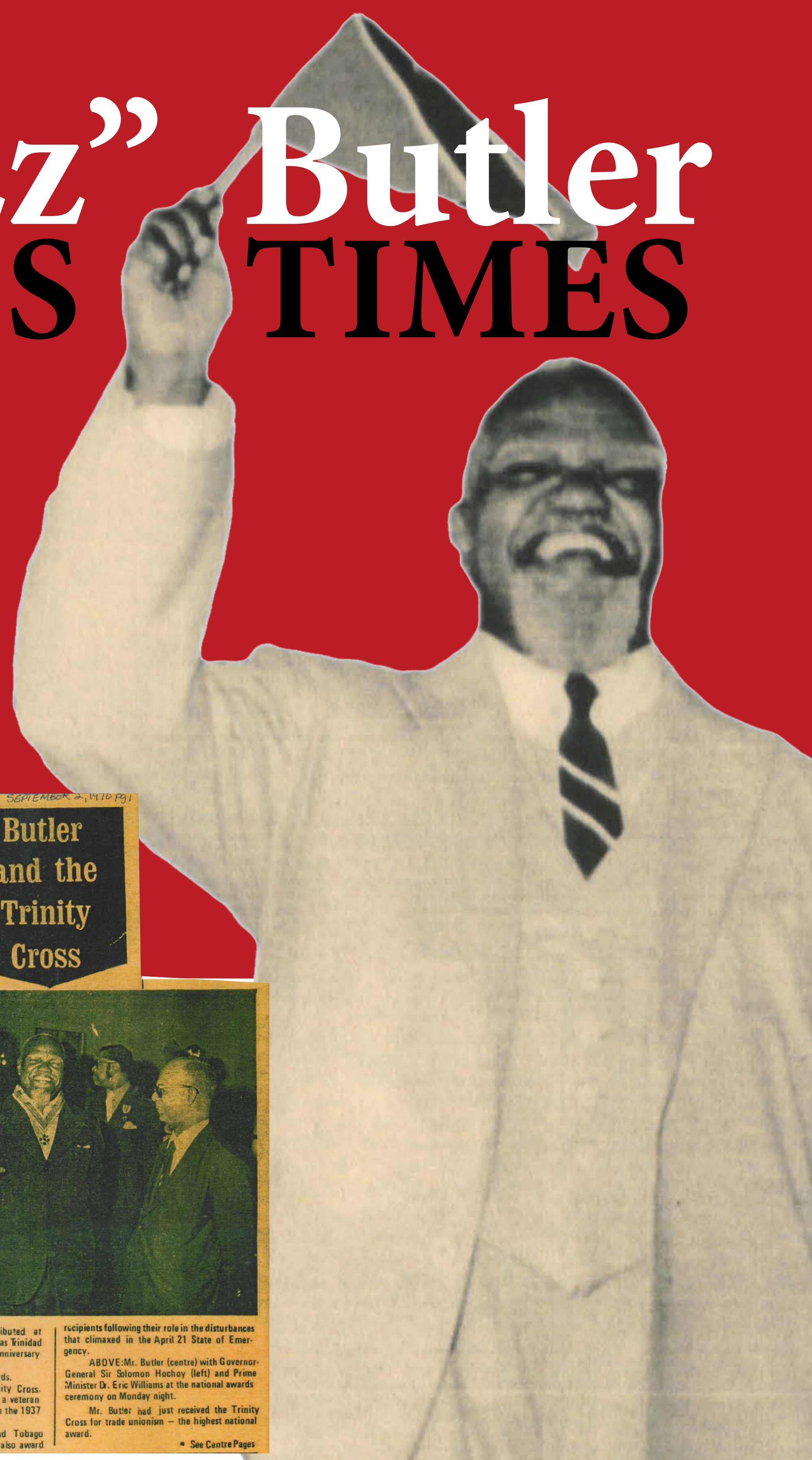


Tubal Uriah "Buzz" Butler

THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

Tubal Uriah Butler has been immortalized as the founder of the trade union movement in Trinidad and Tobago. His contribution is recognized each year with the observance of the national holiday of Labour Day on June 19th.

While working people were agitating and mobilizing for better wages and working conditions since 1919, following the return of soldiers from the West India Regiment, it was the Labour Riots of 1937, led by Uriah Butler, that was the catalyst for the much needed change in working conditions. This exhibition highlights the unfolding of events during the 1937 Labour Riots and the role of Uriah Butler.



EXPRESS, SEPTEMBER 2, 1949, P.1

Butler and the Trinity Cross



BUTLER GETS HERO'S FUNERAL

Tesoro schol in memory of Butler

TRINIDAD/TESORO Petroleum Company Limited has decided to award a special scholarship — to be known as the Butler Scholarship — in geology or petroleum engineering, in memory of the late Tubal Uriah Buzz Butler. The scholarship, details of which will be released later, will be tenable either locally or abroad. Only children of the company's employees will be eligible.

Announcement of the scholarship was made by the company yesterday, coinciding with the burial of Mr. Butler at Fyzabad.

The Tesoro announcement: The death of Mr. Tubal Uriah Butler, T.C., is an irreparable loss, not only to Trinidad and Tobago, his adopted homeland, but the labour movement in the entire Caribbean, where his name has been on the lips of the working-class people for 40 long years.

If today the labour movement can make its voice heard in the highest councils of the country, it is because of the selfless efforts of the well-known "Chief Servant," whose ideas and predictions, four decades ago, were considered too revolutionary but are today regarded as the Bible of trade unionism in Trinidad and Tobago.

It is to be regretted that this great patriarch did not live long enough to see the full

Butler schol

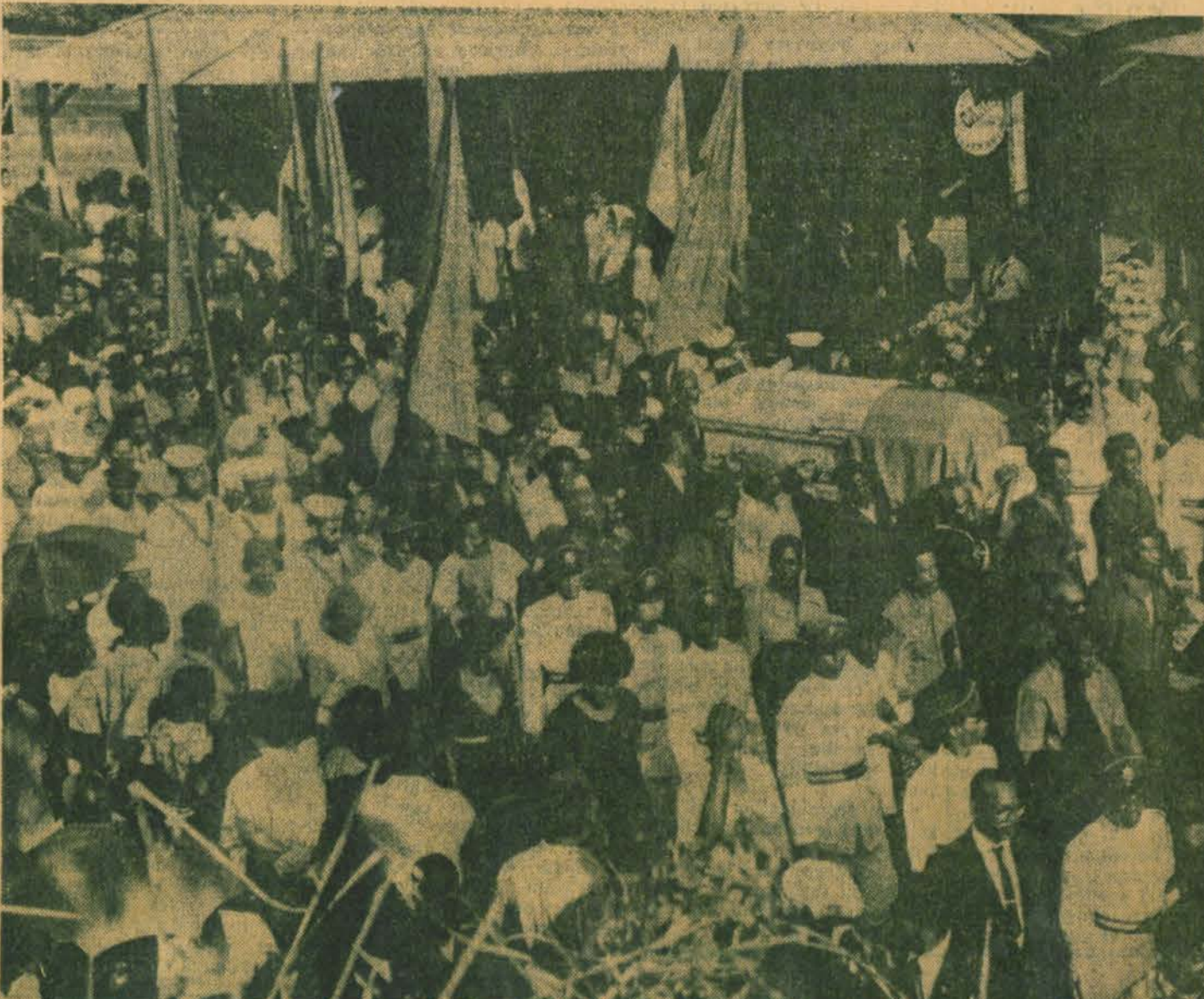
FROM PAGE 1

realization of his most cherished dream — the marriage of capital and labour. Perhaps, Trinidad and Tobago will, in the course of time, shape a unique relationship between management and employees, calculated to remove the suspicion and misunderstanding which still exist in many areas and which may be responsible for the hindrance to greater productivity, and consequently to the realisation of a higher quality of life for all citizens.

Mr. Butler's passing should be regarded not as the end of a great labour leader, but rather as the beginning of a new era of understanding in the industrial relations field in Trinidad and Tobago, which the "Chief Servant" made his battlefield on behalf of all workers.

The Chairman, Members of the Board, the Managers, staff and employees of Trinidad Tesoro, join with the rest of the nation in expressing their deep sorrow at the loss of this great man.

In honour of his memory the company has decided to award a special scholarship — the Butler Scholarship — in geology or petroleum engineering, tenable either locally or abroad. Further details of this scholarship, for which only children of employees will be eligible, will be released later.



BUTLER'S LAST RIDE: The body of veteran labour leader Tubal Uriah Butler being taken for burial at the Fyzabad cemetery yesterday afternoon. Comprising the escort are soldiers, coast-guardsmen and policemen.

President and PM send representatives

STAFF REPORTER

VETERAN labour leader Tubal Uriah "Buzz" Butler was buried yesterday afternoon at Fyzabad. It was a hero's funeral.

There was not a section of the community that did not turn out to pay final tribute to the Trinity Cross holder. President Ellis Clarke was represented by his A.D.C., Major Ming Johnson of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment. Representing Prime Minister Dr. Eric Williams was Senator John Donaldson, Minister of External Affairs.

There were representatives from political parties, trade unions and religious groups, particularly the Baptists, who had been constantly at his side in the days before and after his imprisonment following the 1937 labour disturbances.

The gathering included parliamentarians past and present, workers of every category, men who were with Mr. Butler when he started as a public figure in 1937, and students who said that without Mr. Butler this country would not have been enjoying free secondary education.

Left stranded

Many were unable to reach Fyzabad in time because of transport difficulties.

Others were left stranded at the corner of Lord Street and Montrazo Street, San Fernando, in a vain bid to get transportation.

Appeals by the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union to the Public Transport Service Corporation for more buses failed because the Corporation had many buses on the route already, and could not put any additional vehicles.

Baptist Ministers headed by O.W.U. General Secretary Lionel



NATIONAL AWARDS were distributed at Governor-General's house on Monday as Trinidad and Tobago celebrated its eighth anniversary of independence.

Sixty persons received the awards. The highest award, the Trinity Cross, went to Tubal Uriah "Buzz" Butler, a veteran trade unionist, who was a key figure in the 1937 social disturbances in Trinidad.

Members of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment and the Police Service were also awarded.

recipients following their role in the disturbances that climaxed in the April 21 State of Emergency.

ABOVE: Mr. Butler (centre) with Governor-General Sir Solomon Hochoy (left) and Prime Minister Dr. Eric Williams at the national awards ceremony on Monday night.

Mr. Butler had just received the Trinity Cross for trade unionism — the highest national award.

— See Centre Pages

What's Butler's place in history?

(Sunday Guardian Staff Writer)

TUBAL Uriah Buzz Butler was buried on Thursday at Fyzabad, scene of the 1937 events that made him famous to some, infamous to others but which undoubtedly started the waves for social and economic reform of work in this country.

The enigma that was Butler followed him in death last week, with the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union calling for a state funeral and the Government responding with a "military escort" and a cheque for expenses.

Despite the award of the Trinity Cross—the nation's highest honour—despite the official recognition in June 19, (anniversary of the riots) as Labour Day, Butler did not quite make it for the last honour the State could bestow. But that seemed the pattern of his life and his funeral was arranged by fellow trade unionists.

What place in our history does a man like Butler hold? What will future generations think of this man?



BUTLER (right) WAVES to a capacity crowd before addressing a meeting of workers at NUGFW hall on Labour Day, June 21, 1972.

MAN HUNT

In 1937, a sympathetic British Governor found him sincere "though given to histrionics" — a man, extravagant in his views and in his ways of expressing them.

Shortly after that he was the central figure in a man hunt with a price of \$500 on his head and later a Commission of Enquiry referred to him as a fanatical Negro.

To a journalist, writing in the "Trinidad Chronicle" in 1956, "Butler was the oddest figure in Trinidad's political waxworks"— a villain to some, a martyr to others, a fraud to many and Butlerism a quaint conjuring piece for sociologists and a handy ship for a few professional stowaways.

But by 1972, the rebel

had become a hero with a gratitude and panache from the Government and the nation's highest honour around his neck for outstanding and distinguished service in the field of trade unionism.

It is as a labour leader that he made his great mark, and it is as such that he will be remembered, even though he was a politician and his Butler Home Rule Party came within a Governor's breath of forming the Government here.

That occurred in 1950 following the general elections when the Butlerites as they were known, won six of the 18 seats in the Legislative Council. Three other parties won two seats each and there were six Independents elected.

Instead of calling the Butlerites to form the nucleus of the Government, the Colonial Governor, Sir Hubert Rance formed a Government of Independents, and the Butlerites were out in the cold, called as it were but not chosen.

FRUSTRATION

Butler's ways were different. He spoke in Biblical language, which some, who knew him well, considered he did quite deliberately. His listeners, they reasoned, were familiar with no other book of literature than the Bible, and the language of the Bible was something they understood.

He held meetings in Woodford Square and marched to Government House accompanied by palm waving, hymn singing, followers.

In 1972, when the Government officially recognized the events of 1937 as historical for the labour movement, Mr. Butler, in an interview, recalled the conditions that existed in the officials and sugar estates in those days.

"A man worked for 12 hours a day and was paid six cents an hour", he said. "When workers complained that got one cent more. There was victimisation,

blackballing, the infamous Red Book with the names of all those who were not to be given jobs."

Butler, as someone once wrote, was the stuff of which agitators are made and few agitators could have found richer pastures than those which Butler encountered in the south in 1921.

The discovery of oil had turned the area into a booming township, sizzling with vice and squalor, restless with frustration born of deprivations.

There were no facilities for workers such as housing, and sanitation, and the wages which were paid could not provide the bare necessities of food. Sickness, disease, malnutrition stalked the area.

THE BEGINNING

Into this, Butler came from Grenada in 1921. His plan was to join a brother who was working there, get himself a job, save some money and get to the United States. What made him change his mind and decide to stay here will never be known. But he became involved with the grievances of the workers, and began to take up their causes. More and more came to him, and he began to hold meetings.

It was an issue over removal of some workers' houses for exploration purposes that sparked off the flame which ignited not only the south of Trinidad but the whole island and the rest of the West Indies too.

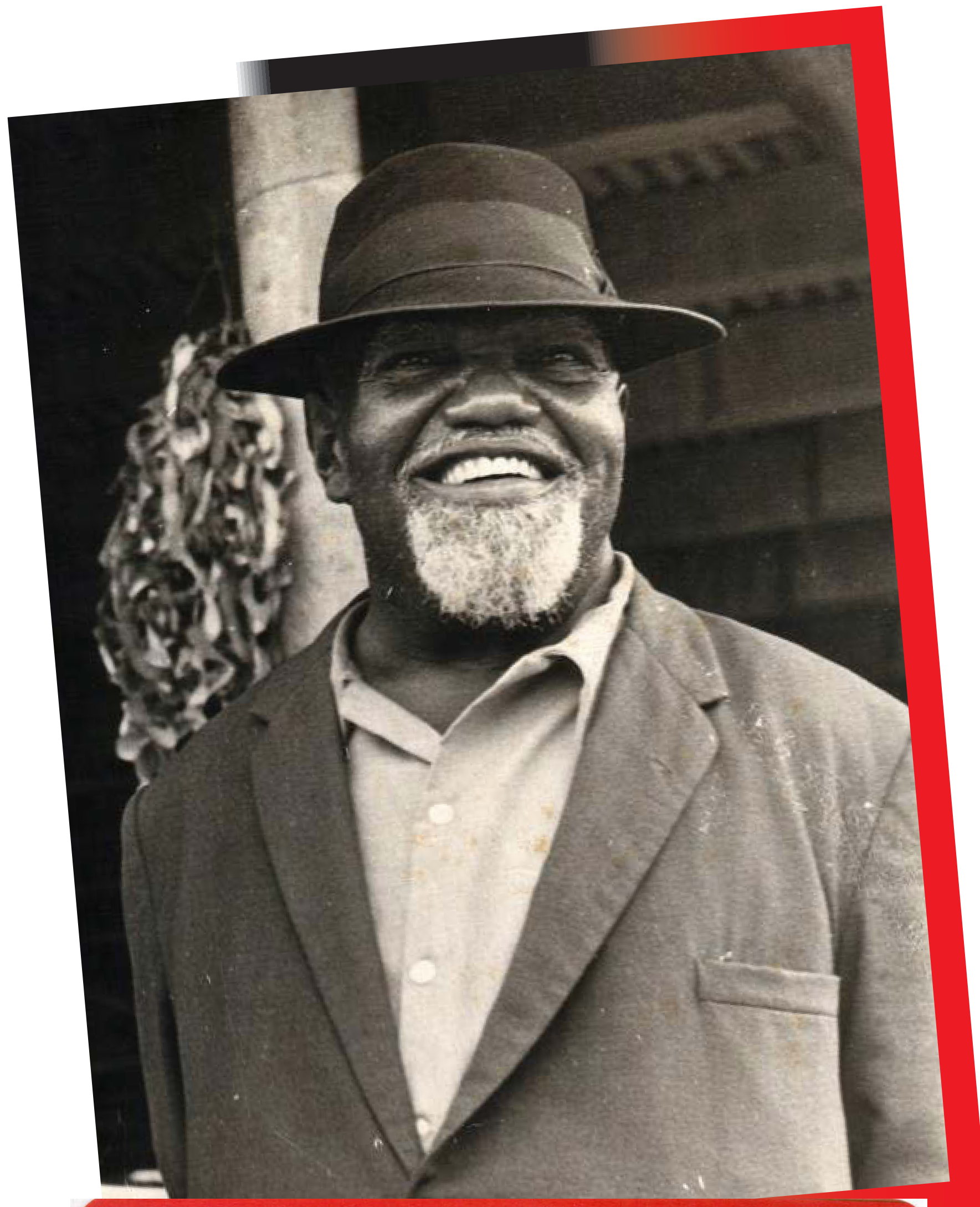
The Moyne Commission of Enquiry appointed afterwards deplored the conditions under which workers laboured and added that it would be unreasonable to expect anything but discontent in such surroundings.



BIOGRAPHY

Tubal Uriah “Buzz” Butler

1897-1977



Born

Tubal Uriah Butler was born on January 21st 1897 in Bluggo Cottage, Georgetown, Grenada.

Education

Butler attended St. George's Anglican School in Grenada which had a high reputation. Butler's father was a sexton at St. George's Anglican which gave Butler this opportunity.

War Service

At age 17 he volunteered in the first contingent of British West India Regiment and then served in the First World War in Egypt and Palestine.

Following his return from the war, he formed the Grenada Representative Government Movement and the Grenada Union of Returned Soldiers.

Butler's Move to Trinidad

1921 – Butler moved to Trinidad attracted by the flourishing oil industry. He worked as a pipe-fitter at the Roodal Oil fields. In 1929, he sustained an injury in the oil fields which left him with a permanent limp.

1922-1931 - Butler became actively involved in the Moravian Baptist Church and by 1931 he became the Church's chief pastor.

Emergence as working class leader

1935 – Butler joined Captain Arthur Andrew Cipriani's Trinidad Labour Party (TLP) (formerly called the Trinidad Workingmen's Association -TWA) and in March led a hunger march from the Apex oilbelt to Port of Spain for higher wages and improved working conditions. This marked the beginning of Butler's emergence as a working class leader. In 1936 Butler left the TLP and formed his own party.

1937 – He organized a sit down strike which proved to be the catalyst for future labour movements. The turning point of the oilfield workers' riot began when police attempted to arrest Butler while addressing a meeting on the evening of June 19th. Oilfield workers clashed with police officials which resulted in a bloody battle. Fourteen (14) people were killed, fifty nine (59) wounded and hundreds arrested. Among the casualties and injuries were several police officers notably Sub Inspector William S. Bradburn who was shot and Corporal Charlie King who was beaten and burnt. On September 9th Butler surrendered. He was tried and freed on the charges of sedition but was jailed for two (2) years for inciting riot.

1939 – In May 1939 he was released from jail but in November Butler was arrested and detained as a security risk under the defense regulations during World War II. He spent six (6) years in detention on Nelson Island and was not released until the war was over in 1945. On his release from jail, Butler intensified his efforts for home rule and social justice.

1946 – Butler called a general strike.

1947 – Followers of Butler gathered in Port of Spain and stormed the Red House and as a result Butler was expelled from the Oilfield

Workers Trade Union (OWTU).

Political Career

1936 – Butler formed his own party, The British Empire Workers and Citizens Home Rule Party (BEWCHP).

1950 –The Butler Party won a seat to represent St. Patrick West in the Legislative Council.

1950 – 1961 – Butler served in the Legislative Council.

1958 – He ran for Federal Elections and was defeated by Hussain Shah.

1961 – He ran for General Elections and contested the La Brea seat.

Achievements

1970 – Butler received Trinidad and Tobago's highest award 'The Trinity Cross' for his contribution as a labour leader and reputation as a fighter for the people. He was regarded as the hero of the people.

1972 – June 19th, the anniversary of the Oilfield Workers' riots of 1937, was declared an annual holiday by Act 19 of 1972 and is celebrated as Labour Day.

1988 – The Princess Margaret Highway was renamed 'The Uriah Butler Highway' in his honour.

Death of a Hero

1977 – Butler died on Sunday 20th February 1977. He was given a State Funeral and buried on February 24th at Fyzabad.

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National Library and Information System Authority website, "Biographies A-C", 12 June 2012. <http://www2.nalis.gov.tt>

Trinidad Guardian. "Oilfield strikers clash with Police." June 18th, 1937. P. 1

Trinidad Guardian "Butler dies." February 21st 1977. P. 9.

TRINIDAD GUARDIAN 1950: 1950 ELECTIONS

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

(Figures in brackets in first column indicate number of candidates fielded by the party.)

PARTY	ELECTED	MAJORITY	SEATS
Political Progress Group (2)	A. T. GOMES E. L. DUVAL	2,193 388	Port-of-Spain N St. George W.
Caribbean Socialist Party (13)	V. BRYAN A. F. T. JAMES	3,836 1,500	Eastern Counties Tobago
Butler Home Rule Party (17)	C. MAHARAJ P. McLEAN A. SINANAN T. U. B. BUTLER S. MAHARAJ* M. SINANAN	4,522 211 138 5,094 3,384	St. Joseph Victoria N. Victoria S. St. Patrick W. Ortoire-Mayaro Caroni S.
Trinidad Labour Party (12)	A. JAMES R. QUEVEDO	1,998 2,083	Port-of-Spain E. Laventille
Trades Union Council (6)	None Returned		
Independents (91)	N. W. TANG B. S. MAHARAJ C. G. NETTO E. A. JOSEPH AJODHASINGH RANJIT KUMAR	235 1,883 1,219 2,475 1,408 2,582	Port-of-Spain S. Tunapuna St. George E. San Fernando St. Patrick E. Caroni N.

*No final returns but issue not in doubt.

164 CONSTITUTION—Continued.

165 CONSTITUTION—Continued.

Nominated Member:
Hon. Leonard Courtney Hannays, K.O., 21st October, 1950.
First appointed, 10th July 1946.

Elected Members:
Hon. Albert Gomes, 20th October, 1950.
Minister for Labour, Industry and Commerce.
First appointed, 10th July 1946.
Hon. Roy Joseph, O.B.E., 20th October, 1950.
Minister for Education and Social Service.
First appointed, 10th July 1946.
Hon. Victor Bryan, 20th October, 1950.
Minister of Agriculture and Lands.
Hon. Norman Tang, 20th October, 1950.
Minister for Health and Local Government.
Hon. Ajodhasingh, 20th October, 1950.
Minister for Communications and Works.
Governor's Secretary and Clerk to the Executive Council:
Joseph O'Connor, M.B.E.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Speaker: JOHN LEWIS HENRY WILLIAM SAVORY, K.C., appointed.
Deputy Speaker:
The Hon. Sir Gerald R. Wight, appointed, 20th October, 1950.
First appointed, 31st May, 1948.

Nominated Members:
The Hon. Leonard Courtney Hannays, K.C., 6th October, 1950.
First appointed, 15th July, 1946.
The Hon. Harold Ernest Robinson, 6th October, 1950.
First appointed, 15th July, 1946.
The Hon. Henry Arthur Bennett, M.B.E., 6th October, 1950.
First appointed, 3rd January, 1949.
The Hon. Sir Gerald Robert Wight, 6th October, 1950.
Elected member from 26th June, 1941 to 14th June, 1946.

Elected Members:
The Hon. Roy Joseph, O.B.E., (San Fernando), 18th Sept. 1950. First elected, 6th June, 1941.
The Hon. Albert Gomes, (Port-of-Spain North), 18th Sept. 1950. First elected, 9th July, 1945.
The Hon. Victor Bryan, (Eastern Counties), 18th September, 1950. First elected, 19th July, 1946.
The Hon. Alfonso P. T. James, (Tobago), 18th September, 1950. First elected, 10th July, 1946.

Executive Council:
Ministers: \$6,720 per annum
Others: 4,800 do.

Legislative Council:
Speaker: \$5,760 do.
Deputy Speaker: 200 do.
Member: 3,840 do.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS, 1950.

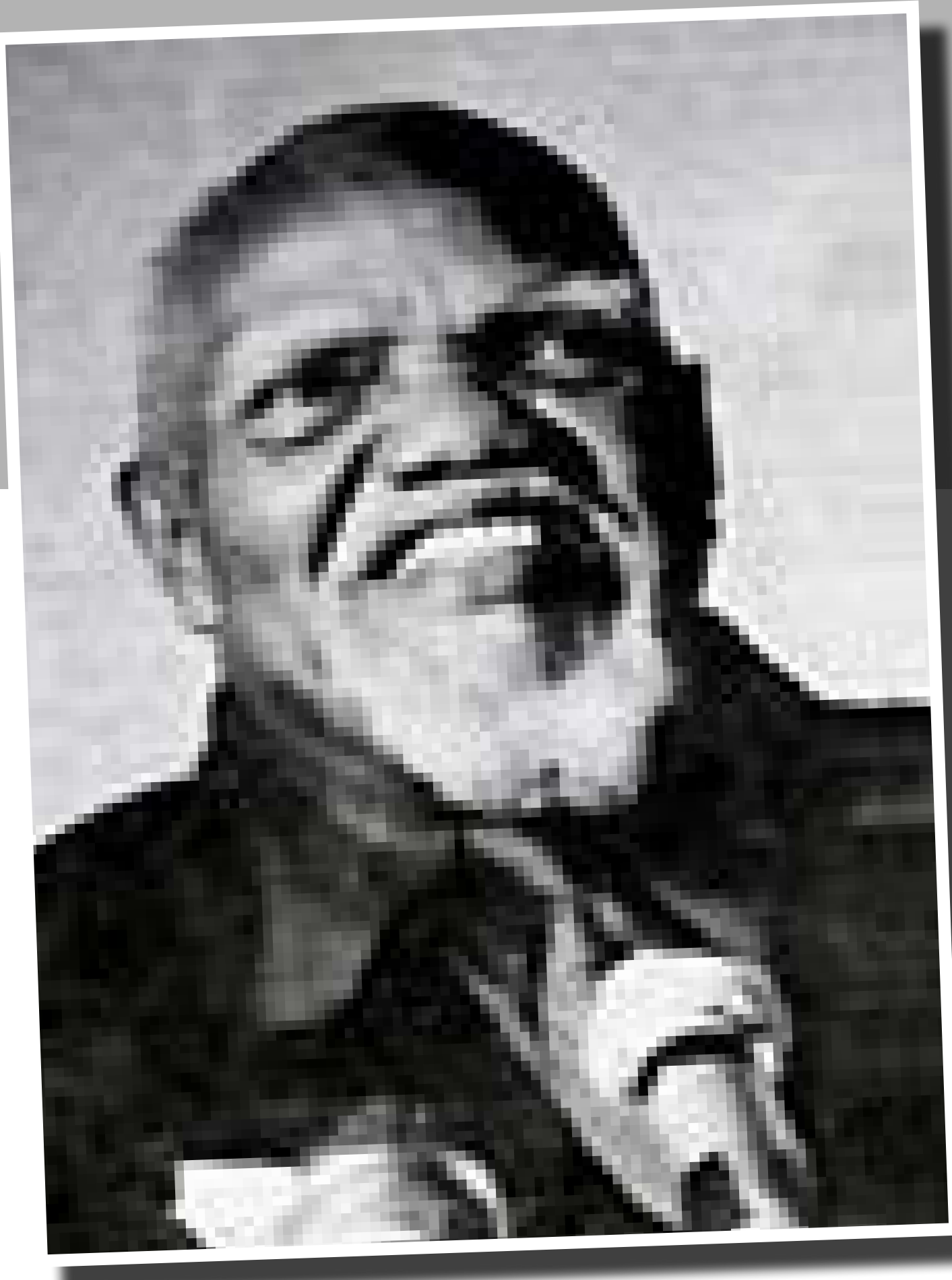
Parties Contesting The Election.

Party	Candidates	Elected	Votes Cast
Independent	91	6	41,838
Butler Party	18	8	94,075
Caribbean Socialist Party	12	6	24,446
Trinidad Labour Party	12	1	14,992
Trades Union Council	6	0	9,225
Political Progress Group	2	2	6,507

*In addition to salary as member of Council.

CALL TO ACTION

Butler emerged as a labour leader after he led the 1935 strike at the Apex Oilfields. His efforts to agitate for higher wages and improved living and working conditions amidst the rising cost of living, intensified after he formed his own party – the British Empire Workers and Citizens Home Rule Party in 1936.



COPY.
 Fyzabad Junction
 Fyzabad
 26. 1. 36.
 The Manager,
 Apex Oilfields Ltd.
 Fyzabad.
 Sir,- I am directed by my Committee to put the following facts & figures before you for your information with a view of securing the respect & consideration they undoubtedly deserve - a respect & consideration based on the broad principles of Truth and Justice, Equality and the Rights of Man. Part No 1
 Sheweth:
 That there is already a 20 - 25% increase in the selling prices of Articles of food & clothing etc in Trinidad -
 (2) That the Wages of your employees - for many years criminally low & inadequate to secure a change for the better in the conditions under which they lead their existence - due in no small measure to the increased prices of food & clothing etc, have become altogether worthless and intolerable.
 (3) That we of the British Empire Workers and Citizens Home Rule Party demand, on a Mandate from a number of your employees, that increases of from 20 - 100% be immediately made in the wages of all your employees to meet the new situation which threatens to wreck existing low working-class economic standards.
 (4) That the Workers are becoming more & more uneasy, discontented & disaffected and view with feelings of grave concern (a) the indiscriminate "checking", "laying-off" and "black-listing" of fellow workers by Employers in their Trinidad.

MASS MEETING OF CITIZENS.
 At *my corner*
 ON *aug 22nd Tonight*
 7 PM UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
THE BRITISH EMPIRE WORKERS & CITIZENS HOME RULE PARTY.
 My dear Fellow Workers & Citizens—Greetings! This is an invitation which the Central Executive Committee of the above Party dutifully extend to one and all to attend the above-mentioned Meeting where the aims and Aspirations of the New Home Rule Party will be discussed and addresses delivered by certain Home Rulers and Fellow-Citizens of Trinidad. We confidently appeal to you to make every effort to attend and to broadcast the Meeting to ensure a Monster attendance. Already thousands are agreed that the Planks of this new political organization as published in the *Gazette* and the *People* are worthy of the Support of every Man and Woman in whose hearts abideth love of God, Freedom and Justice etc. Already hundreds of loyal liberty-loving Britons in whose veins flow generations of incomparably Ancient Ethiopian Warrior blood have accepted the Fascist—Imperialist—Capitalist challenge to War and have sworn to fight under black leadership and under the Old Flag and in the name of the British Constitution for "Black Shirt" and Capitalist—Imperialist defeat and extermination. There is room in the Ranks of the Masses for you! The life and liberties of Anti-Fascist all over the World are threatened with extermination by powerful forces and interests. British Ethiopians and all coloured folks in Trinidad are set aside for slow but sure extermination! The call of the Hour to us coloured folks is therefore to Unite, to present a United Workers and Citizens Front in the fight forced upon us by our relentless foes: Fascism and British Unconstitutionality.
JOIN THE Home Rule Party TO-DAY!
 THE FIGHT IS ON!
 WE SHALL SHOCK THE ENEMY!
 VICTORY OR DEATH WILL BE OURS!
 FRATELLY YOURS
 For & on Behalf of the C.E.C.
 T. URIAH B. BUTLER

WORKER'S SONG.
 Arise ye toilers of all nations
 Condemned to misery and pain
 To Hell with humbleness and patience
 Give deadly battle to the foe
 Wipe out the rule of wealthy classes
 Arise and smash your thralldom chains
 Let power be wielded by the Masses
 Let those who labour hold the rein
 CHORUS:
 Proletarian rally for the final big fight
 Internationally all toiling folks unite
 II
 No God no King no Politician
 Shall win for you a better day
 So let us drop the old tradition
 Forge weapons for the coming fray
 Roll up your sleeves ye working fellows
 Put fire beneath the melting pot
 Set up the forge and blow the bellows
 Let's strike the Iron whilst its hot
 CHORUS:
 This earth with all its bounteous treasures
 By right belong to those who toil
 No parasites of wealth or leisure
 Shall claim possession of the soil
 We hail the mighty tempest raging
 The flash of lightning through the gloom
 For us the dawn of life passing
 For them the knell of awful doom.
 CHORUS:

WORKERS OF TRINIDAD Attention Please!
 THE hour has come to show your might and power to get things for yourselves. Our British Taskmasters have proudly and cruelly turned down our Prayers, our petitions for more pay and British conditions of life and labour in the Oil Industry of the Colony.
 These men and bosses have challenged us to prove our right to life and happiness, British freedom and equality of opportunity by existence with themselves.
 Sons of freedom as we are, we bravely accept the challenge. And in accepting same, we have decided on a general sit-down Strike of Oil Workers of the Colony to win more pay and more equal all-round conditions of Life and Labour in the Colony's Oil Industry particularly. Our orders to you are to sit right down on your jobs on — and after letting the bosses know that you are under orders to cease work and to have no discussion whatever with them; hold yourselves in readiness to defend your rights—your jobs—against all comers.
 You must maintain an attitude of stern defiance against any efforts to have you leave your jobs.
 Crush every effort of irresponsible elements inside our ranks to act in an unworthy or un-British manner.
 Stand firm Workingmen! We who have sworn to lead you on to victory or die in the attempt, order you to prepare if necessary to shed your loyal Black British Blood so that Black British Trinidad might enjoy the principles of British Freedom and Justice on equal terms with all others in our Trinidad. The fight is on, and Working-class Trinidad expects you to do your duty manfully, bravely and well. Yes, Trinidad expects every man in the Battle Lines to resolve on British Liberty or Death. Thus shall we shock the enemy! Thus shall we prove to them before the face of all nations, peoples and tongues, our right to Life and Happiness, British Freedom and Equality of Opportunity for assistance with themselves in our loyal British Country—La Belle Trinidad.
 Fraternally yours,
 T. URIAH B. BUTLER,
 Supreme Chief Servant,
 British Empire Workers and Citizens' Home Rule Party of Trinidad,
 10.6.37.

(b) The innovation of swelling the already swollen ranks of the half-starving unemployed workers of the Colony by "laying-off" dark-skinned but efficient rigmen who are hungry & without resource to make room for so-called "whites" who are members of a class or economic groups in our Trinidad Community whose control of Society extends over a period of reaching back to "Slave-days", and who have never known hunger & legitimate economic wants; "whites" whose experience of rig-work is nil and dependent to a large extent on the sole black man is that particular crew of rigmen.
 (c) The demand of the Petroleum Association of Trinidad that all Oil Workers shall seek & secure a Service Book issued by them as a pre-requisite for employment in the Oilfields of Trinidad -
 (d) The all-too-well-known and pat-unbritishness of Company doctors and other 'heads' and 'Su-heads' of departments (a) of them black) in crushing Justice and Truth to earth in their deal with employed and unemployed workers of the Colony. And (e) the determination of Employers of labour to still further reduce the regular number of men to form a full crew in the drilling, production, and fitting departments of the Oil Industry in Trinidad without increased wages to the workers forming the Crew and without "bonuses" as formerly given on occasions to certain 'crews' by Oilfields Employers.
 (5) That the workers are tired making individual complaints and petitions to employers with respect to wages, conditions of labour etc. without receiving satisfaction, and are determined at long last to act together through their political organization to better their economic and general conditions.

LABOUR PROBLEM IN THE SOUTH
 MINOR labour troubles are reported from South Trinidad where, it is said, a number of men including gangs of P.W.D. and oilfield labourers have gone on strike during the past week. Meetings are being held in various towns daily and a number of circulars signed by one T. Uriah Butler, who styles himself Supreme Chief Servant of British Empire Workers and Citizens Home Rule Party, have been circulated among some oilfield employees calling on them to stage a "sit down" strike on Tuesday.
 It is not expected that many labourers will comply with his circular.
 TRINIDAD GUARDIAN, JUNE 19, 1937 PAGE 2

3965 101146 *39656* *Fyzabad Junction*
 20th June 1937
 This is an appeal to Your Excellency the Governor
 Your Excellency our days of hunger and starvation has become so soar that it have forced us to call upon no more God but death to help us in this bitter struggle for food. Though hungry we are we would like to die even so brutally by the hands of our own people with rifles and bennets, but we have sworn and heartfully mean to stick out even unto death with bennets if that is what the Governor and the capitalist means to give us instead of food for our hard labour. We therefore beg your Excellency to consult the oil proprietors to give unto us a fair and square deal for our hard labour, or death. We are prepared. Now your Excellency we know that this matter can be settled through your instrumentally either by giving your instructions for more money or give instruction to kill the poor hungry black people with rifles and bennets. We therefore call upon your Excellency to prove himself British broadmindedly, as we have appealed to your British integrity We beg you to allow us to remain loyal to our King and country your obedient servant
 Oil Workers

(6) That the leaders of the British Empire Workers and Citizens Home Rule Party of Trinidad - known and unknown to you - are night and day busily engaged in perfecting plans for forcing the hands of Government and Employers in Trinidad to deal justly and fairly at all times with the Workers of the Colony. And, for Our Country's sake, We invite you to join us in expressing the hope that these Workers shall no longer than is necessary be denied common justice & fair play on occasions, by Government & Employers in their Country.
 In conclusion I am to refer you to the "Port of Spain Gazette" of August 1st 1936 and January 15th 1937 (page 13) and "The People" of August 8th 1936 and January 2nd and 23rd 1937 for more light on the Aims and object of this letter to you, and the hopes & Aspirations of the Workers of the Colony as expressed by the Leaders of The British Empire Workers and Citizens Home Rule Party of Trinidad.
 I am Sir,
 Your obedient Servant,
 T. Uriah B. Butler,
 for & on behalf
 C. E. C.
 B. E. W. & C. E. H. R. P.
 Address:
 T. U. B. Butler,
 Gen Secretary
 B.E.W. & C.E.H.R.P.
 Fyzabad Junction
 Fyzabad



STRIKE ACTION

19TH JUNE 1937

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LATEST STRIKE SITUATION

THREE KILLED, SEVERAL INJURED

Evening News Correspondent

Point Fortin, Monday, noon.

Two men and a 14-year-old boy were killed and several others injured when a squad of police under Captain E. T. Essex fired on a mob which attacked them with stones, sticks and bottles.

The known dead are: Lemox Ferdinand, 35, Refinery foreman, and Emmanuel S. Clair, 14, Drum shell employee.

The known wounded are: Arthur Wright 26, mechanic, (shot in arm), Alfonso Simentte, 40, riggerman (shot in neck), Albert Chance, 28, painter (shot in chest).

Violence began after a strike in the United British Oilfields camp this morning.

A mob gathered near the road and gathered near it. Inspector Essex, with a squad of men to remove the strike and while they were going to the mob began throwing stones and bottles at them. The mob was warned but they refused and the police fired two times. The mob then threw stones and bottles and several were injured.

The situation is now quiet but not safe.

Deaf Mute Controls Traffic

A Port-of-Spain deaf mute is reported on today, when it was found to control traffic at the corner of Queen and Frederick Streets this morning.

For some time he signalled the cars on, and held them up as he thought fit, until a police official intervened.

There was a scarcity of police on traffic duty owing to the oil strike.

FLASHES FROM STRIKE AREAS

San Fernando, 5.30 a.m. Roadside gates from La Brea Sugar Estate are reported here to have been open.

San Fernando, 6.30 a.m. Striking Wharf employees have also gone on strike as well as the 125 per cent. increase in wages. They say they were offered 25 per cent. more but they refused.

San Fernando, 10 a.m. Striking Refinery workers told the "Evening News" that they were offered two cents an hour more but they refused it.

Pointe-a-Pierre, 9.25 a.m. Electric, steam and gas energy are completely cut off. Cools are changing on the shops and outside are being used to cook food with wood and kerosene and oil. Others are now getting the roofs of strikers' homes. More acts of violence are reported. Excitement continues.

San Fernando, 10.30 a.m. All work on the Port Lake was suspended this morning on order of the executive Striking oilfield workers from Kern and other causes. No violence is reported.

San Fernando, 10.30 a.m. P.W.D. transport work in the strike areas of St. Patrick has been held up by strikers.

Labourers working in San Fernando have also gone on strike.

Pointe-a-Pierre, 12 noon. A cool wind is blowing and strikers are being urged to return to work as early as possible. The strike is likely to have a good effect on the whole situation and I am satisfied that the more responsible and subordinated workers will return to their jobs, feeling assured that their difficulties would be fairly and reasonably adjusted, without much further delay. I am equally satisfied that such class of workers has no hand whatsoever in the present unrest, and is doing his best to keep out of trouble. The strikers and lightermen involved in the City strike, are in no way connected with the T.P.D. strike.

Regards,
Arthur A. Cipriani.

WHERE ARE THEY?

The Detective Department would like to get in touch with Charles and Sarah Staxius who once lived at Chiquenas.

LEASEHOLDS MEN MARCH ON SAN FERNANDO

Evening News Correspondent

Pointe-a-Pierre.

ONE THOUSAND workmen of Trinidad Leaseholds Refinery who went on strike this morning have gone to San Fernando and are marching through the streets, singing, dancing and closing down work.

They went through Macarty Street, closed down work on the new market, ordered the Ford Service Station closed and are now going to other streets.

Only minor strikes so far have been reported and the scenes are more reminiscent of general than a strike.

The strike began in the Duba Cracking Plant this morning and soon spread throughout the camp. Some clerks were ordered by the strikers to stop work and the rest were told by their employer to go home.

Minor engagements only have been reported, one official having been injured in the street and another seized and detained when attempting to level a rifle.

Mr. Tarsball, it is reported, and set on end today when the telephone exchange and a large road were paralysed.

John T. Ward, a former newspaper reporter, was chased by a large mob when he commented on the strike.

All office mail and many documents have been taken to the railway station for safekeeping. A lot of goods have been taken to the filling station, and transport vehicles are at a standstill.

Official Statement

An official statement, released by the Colonial Secretary's Office in a morning edition that advantage be taken of the growing unrest and rising cost of living on the island by a man named Butler, who is a member of the Labour Party, is reported to have been obtained by the police at a meeting, and as the paper was advertising an open air meeting, and the police attempted to make a move, rioting broke out.

MINOR ENGAGEMENTS

Representative of the different interviewed the Hon. H. C. W. Johnston who offered to increase the wages of the lowest paid by two cents an hour, from seven shillings to nine shillings, but the men refused to accept this.

Mr. Johnston then offered to further consider their demands and the men had saying they would return tomorrow.

The strikers have gathered outside the field and for a time stones were thrown. Only minor damage, so far, has been reported, however.

Both of the strikers' names and took charge of the plant. They are still maintaining guard. The workers then marched.

FUNERAL NOTICE

Friends are asked to attend the funeral of Inspector W. B. Staxius, which will take place at 2.30 p.m. this afternoon from St. George's to the Military Barracks at 4.30 p.m.

LATE NEWS

San Fernando, 1.30 a.m. Two victims of a clash between strikers and employees at the Ford Service Station have been brought to hospital. The injured are ARTHUR WRIGHT, mechanic, 26, and ALFONSO SIMENTTE, riggerman, 40, shot in neck and shoulder.

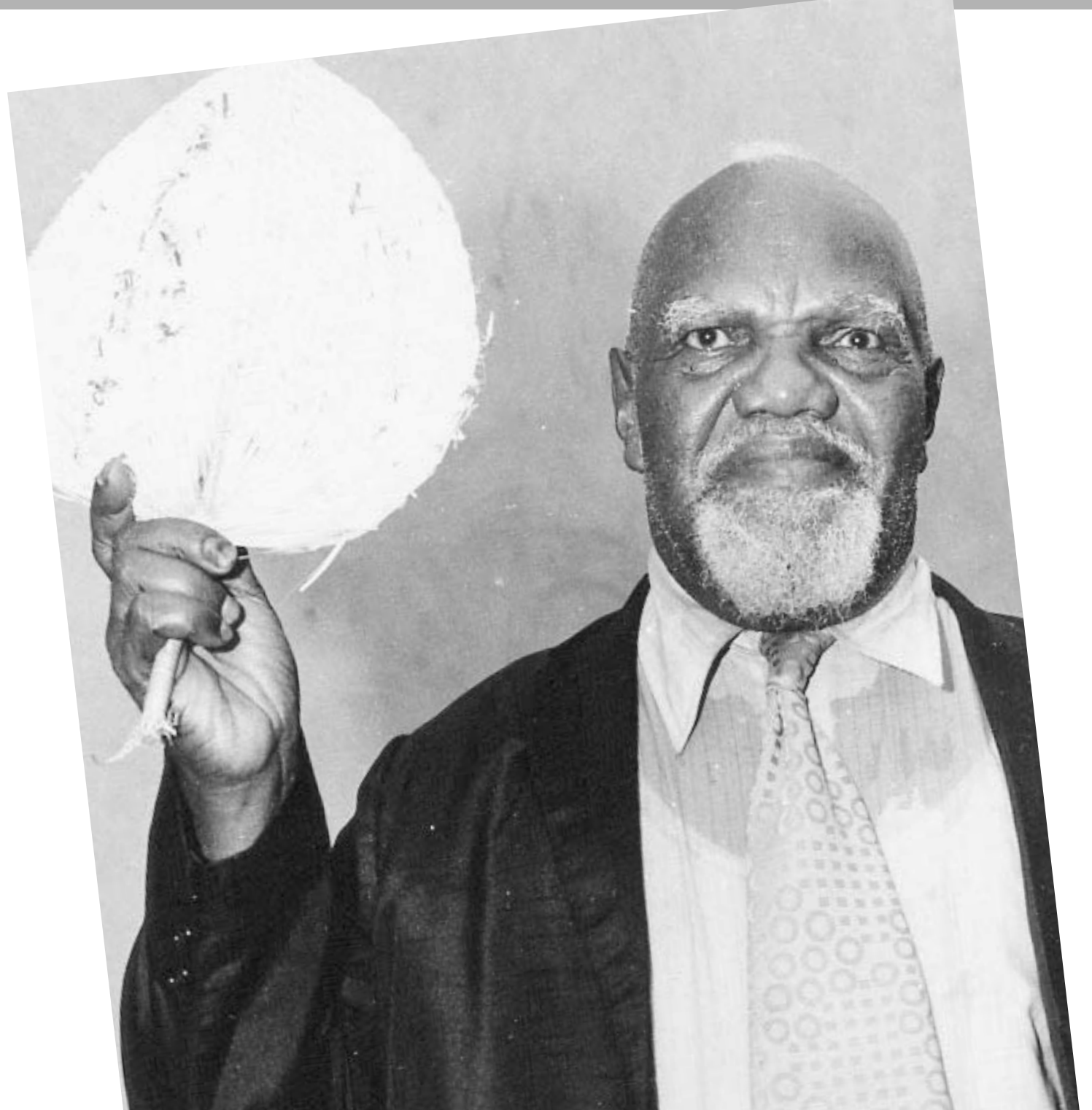
San Fernando, 1.30 a.m. Large crowds are present in the streets here while the oil workers strike on all outside in the area continues. No closing has taken place, however.

San Fernando, 1.30 a.m. P.W.D. transport work in the strike areas of St. Patrick has been held up by strikers.

Labourers working in San Fernando have also gone on strike.

Pointe-a-Pierre, 12 noon. A cool wind is blowing and strikers are being urged to return to work as early as possible. The strike is likely to have a good effect on the whole situation and I am satisfied that the more responsible and subordinated workers will return to their jobs, feeling assured that their difficulties would be fairly and reasonably adjusted, without much further delay. I am equally satisfied that such class of workers has no hand whatsoever in the present unrest, and is doing his best to keep out of trouble. The strikers and lightermen involved in the City strike, are in no way connected with the T.P.D. strike.

Regards,
Arthur A. Cipriani.



From 1936-1937, Butler mobilized workers and held public meetings throughout the oilbelt. In May 1937 he was arrested and charged with inciting riots and with sedition following his speech made to workers in Fyzabad. He was summoned to appear on 17 June but failed to appear. On 19 June, police tried to arrest him while addressing workers in Fyzabad but his followers resisted his arrest.

Sunday Guardian

SUNDAY EDITION OF THE "TRINIDAD GUARDIAN"

No. 5,992, 20th Year. Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, British West Indies. June 20, 1937. Price: TWO PENCE.

FLAT TINS ANCHOVIES IN OIL "STRAIGHT BILLETTS" ROLLED, WITH CAPERS, "OLIVES STUFFED WITH ANCHOVIES" 2oz. Tins 1/6. Canning & Co. Ltd.

OILFIELD STRIKERS CLASH WITH POLICE

A PROCLAMATION

The following proclamation was issued by the Governor yesterday—

By His Excellency Sir Arthur George Murchison Fletcher, K.C.M.G. (C.B.E., Governor and Commander-in-Chief) and over the Colony of Trinidad and Tobago.

Issued under the provisions of the Summary Conviction Offences Ordinance, Chapter 25, relating to PEACE PRESERVATION

WHEREAS by Section 7 of the Summary Conviction Offences Ordinance, it is enacted as follows:—

The Governor may, by proclamation, prohibit during periods specified respectively in the proclamation all or any of the following things in any street, highway, or public place: Any procession, and any assemblage or collection of persons armed with sticks or other weapons of offence and numbering ten or more. Any such proclamation may extend to the whole colony or to some specified parts or parts thereof, and may at any time be revoked.

And whereas it is expedient in the interest of good order and for the preservation of the peace that the powers conferred on the Governor by the said Ordinance should be exercised in the manner hereinafter appearing.

Now therefore, I, ARTHUR GEORGE MURCHISON FLETCHER, Governor and Commander-in-Chief, do hereby prohibit, for a period of one month from the publication of this Proclamation all assemblages or collections of persons armed with sticks or other weapons of offence and numbering ten or more, and all processions other than those of a religious character or incidental to a religious ceremony, in the streets, highways and public places in the following specified parts of the Colony, to-wit:—

Within the Counties of Victoria and St. Patrick.

And I do hereby further enjoin all persons to refrain from taking part in any such assemblages or collection of persons or procession from committing any breach of the peace.

Witness under my Hand and the Seal of the Colony at Government Buildings, in the City of Port-of-Spain, in the Island of Trinidad this 19th day of June, 1937.

By His Excellency's Command,
H. NANKIVELL, Acting Colonial Secretary.

Sub-Inspector Shot Dead

BLOODY BATTLE LAST NIGHT

Strike Late News

Oropouche, 10.45 p.m. Inspector Charles King is dead. He was shot to death by an oilfield mob during the fighting and is being interred with military honours.

It is understood, but not officially admitted, that the police have received instructions to fire on the mob if they do not disperse. The fact has not been read yet.

San Fernando 11.00 p.m. A mob of strikers from out stations has been called in and despatched to Fyzabad.

Oropouche, 11.35 p.m. The author was shot in the leg. He was bayoneted during the fighting in Fyzabad tonight. Inspector Charles King was shot to death. The author was shot at work trying to get telephone wires.

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MOVE TO END STRIKE

Six-Point Suggestion

IN a letter to the "Evening News" Captain the Hon. H. C. W. Johnston, the President-General of the Trinidad Labour Party, submits a six-point basis for improvement of workers' conditions.

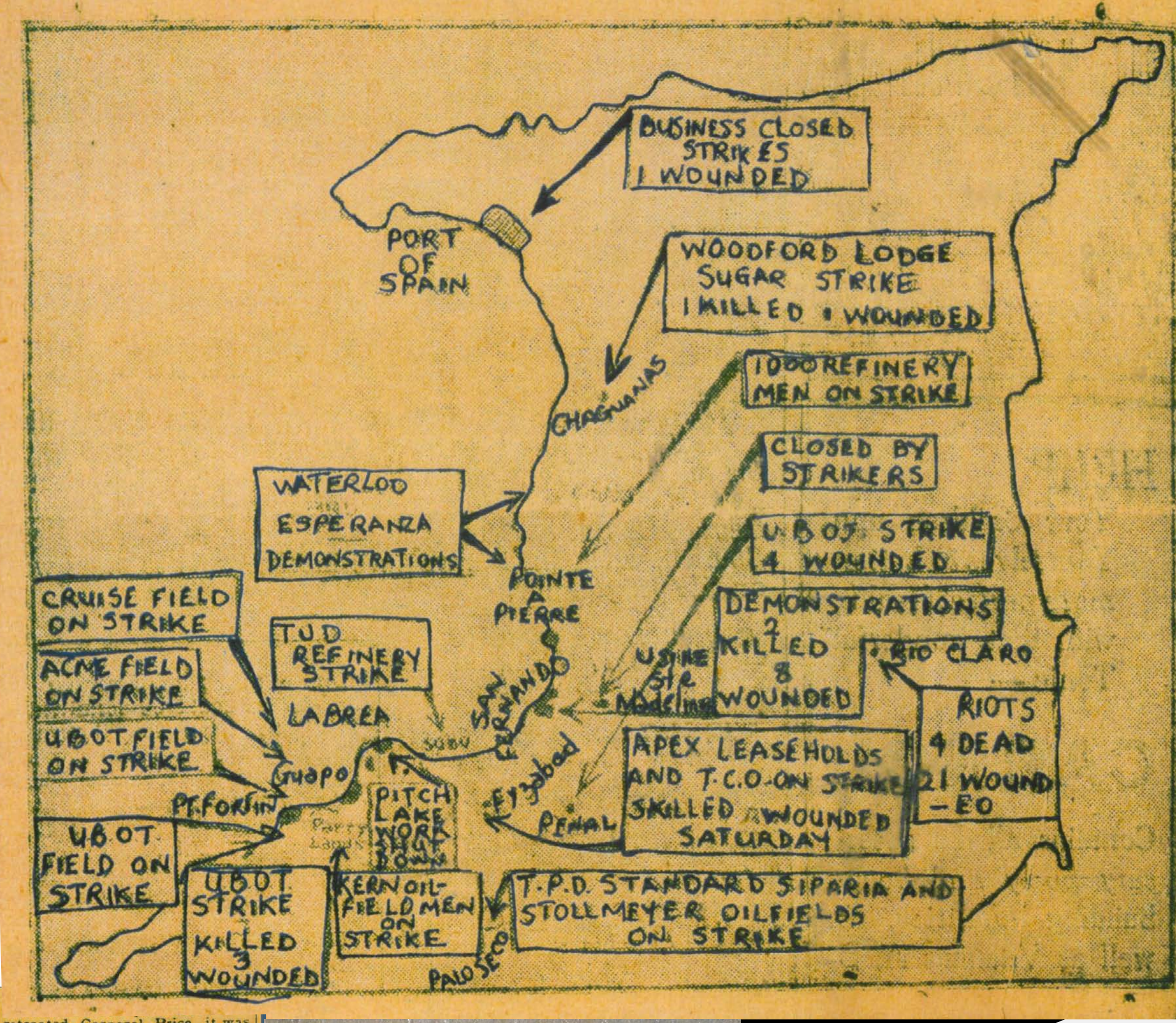
The letter reads:

The Trinidad Labour Party submits the following conditions as a basis for discussion and feel that in the event of their being acceptable to workers, the Party will be willing to enter into negotiation with employers with a view of bringing the unfortunate situation of workers to a satisfactory issue:

- (1) Increase of wages in every channel of employment by 25 per cent. Oilfield employment by 33 per cent.
- (2) Basis to be on an 8-hour day.
- (3) Overtime from 6 p.m. to midnight TIME and a half. Midnight to 6 a.m. Double.
- (4) Two weeks' holiday with pay annually.
- (5) National Insurance and/or Provident Fund to cover all permanent employees.
- (6) Introduction of peaceful picketing in Trade Union Law.

Arthur A. Cipriani.

THE STRIKE AT A GLANCE



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Eye-witnesses Account Of Fyzabad Disturbance.

The True Story: How It Began.

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Supt-Sergeant Belfon, and Corporal Price went up to the scene and displayed an aggressive intention. At this stage Belfon went towards Butler to arrest him. The latter made no resistance, but asked: "Is this a proper time to arrest the people's representative?" The crowd shouted: "No!" and began a surging around Belfon, who fired several shots in the air. Inspectors Power and Liddell also followed suit. The crowd then held Butler and Price and said: "You cannot go because we don't understand the warrant, and we are not going to let you continue to fire shots in the air which is a menace to our lives." Inspectors Power and Liddell, displaying great presence of mind, rushed into the air and back away from the crowd which at this stage was thoroughly incensed and hurling missiles. In the melee Inspector Power was struck.

It was about this time that Detective Corporal "Charlie" King, who was not with the other members of the Constabulary, rushed into the angry mob and, taking hold of Butler, began dragging him away. Several blows were dealt the Detective Corporal, who escaped into a shop and hid himself between two bags of flour. Butler was followed by a small group, mostly women, and he was hit on the head. He jumped through a window and rolled down to a nearby fence, where he lay apparently unconscious or dead. While there a petrol was thrown on him, and his body ignited.

While this was taking place, there was a clash about this time between the crowd and

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TOLL OF THE STRIKE

Location	Dead	Wounded
Fyzabad	3	4
Penal	3	4
Point Fortin	3	3
San Fernando	2	8
Port-of-Spain	1	1
Rio Claro	4	21
Woodford Lodge	1	3
Total	17	44



CONSEQUENCES



Growth of trade unionism

- Working class consciousness intensified.
- The 1937 Labour Riots led to the growth of a modern trade union movement along British lines. By the end of 1938, there were ten trade unions in Trinidad, more than in any other West Indian colony. They were:
 - All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factory Workers' Trade Union
 - All Trinidad Transport and General Workers' Trade Union
 - Amalgamated Building and Woodworkers' Union
 - Federated Workers' Trade Union
 - Oilfield Workers Trade Union (OWTU)
 - Printers' Industrial Trade Union
 - Public Works and Public Service Workers' Union
 - Railway Workers' Trade Union
 - Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union

Labour legislation improvements

- In 1938 the Trade Disputes Ordinance was enacted. This law provided machinery for settlement of disputes after collective bargaining had broken down.
- In 1939, the Government amended the 1932 Ordinance to legalize peaceful picketing and give unions immunity from actions for damages arising out of strikes.

Initiation of development and welfare projects in British colonies

• Forster Commission Report

1937 - A Royal Commission of Inquiry appointed to enquire into the cause of the disturbances recommended among other matters the formation of a Labour Department and the establishment of an Industrial Court.

• Moyne Commission recommendations - basis for development

1938-1939 - The West India Royal Commission headed by Lord Moyne investigated conditions in the colonies as labour disturbances had broken out elsewhere in the West Indies. Its recommendations influenced British policy after 1939 with improvements in health services, housing, and social services, with limited constitutional change and support for trade union development.

Sources:

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Ryan, Selwyn. *Race and Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago: a study of decolonization in a multiracial society*, University of Toronto Press, Canada, 1972.

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CALYPSOES AND THE 1937 RIOTS

The 1937 Labour Riots and its aftermath became the subject of several calypsoes in the thirties. The tradition of censoring calypsoes was severe after the 1937 and would continue in the years that followed.

Atilla the Hun (born Raymond Quevedo 1892-1962), one of the greatest calypsonians of all times, composed eleven calypsos on the political events in the 1937-1939 period. He was admired for both his eloquence and keen observation of detail. Attila was the first calypsonian to hold elected public office; he was elected to the Port of Spain City Council in 1946.

- The Strike
- Mr. Nakivell's Speech
- The Commissioners' Report
- The Governor's Resignation
- Where was Butler:
- The Oilfields' Tribunal
- Sir Hubert Young
- What a Vote
- Adrian Rienzi
- Trade Unionism
- The Five Year Plan

Among other calypsoes sung about the riots were:

Strike in Trinidad and Sediton Law - King Radio

Sir Murchison Fletcher - Lion

We Mourn the Loss of Sir Murchison Fletcher - Executor

Fatal Accident of Mr. Nankivell - Executor

King Radio – **Sediton Law**

“If a man want to be versed in politics
He have to be plucky with the lot of tricks
He has got to use a little diplomacy
Mix up with commonsense and psychology”

Atilla the Hun - **The Strike**

“The strikes and riots, tho’ I wasn’t there
Was a most regrettable affair
I’ll now entertain you with a song
But I don’t know who is right or who is wrong...”

...All I know is that the wages too low
And tribulation the workers have to undergo
And we know – we all know the times are bad
We want better conditions in Trinidad.”

Tiger –

Advice to West Indians

“I am advising every worker as a West Indian
To be careful and join a labour union
It’s the only way you can achieve your right
And to stop the oppressive hands of might
And allow your progressive march to be an
inspiration
To the rising generation.”

Atilla the Hun –

The Commissioner’s Report

examines the report of the Forster Commission.

“A peculiar thing about the commission
And their ninety-two pages of dissertation
Is that there is no talk of exploitation
Of the worker or his condition
Read through the pages and there is no mention
Of Capitalistic oppression
Which leads me to entertain the thought
And wonder if it is a one-sided report.”

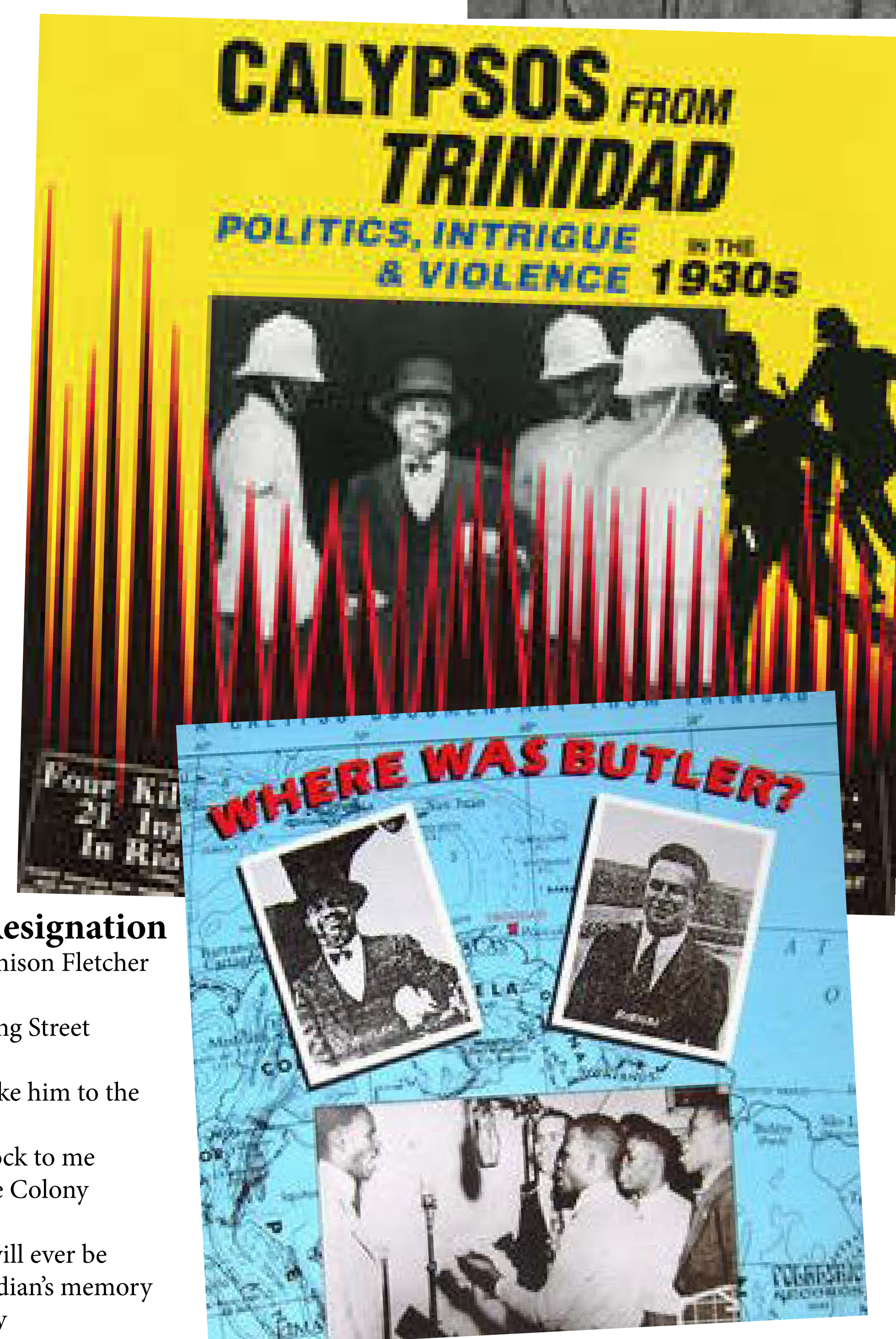
Atilla the Hun –

Mr. Nankivell’s Speech

A song in honour of Nakivell, Acting Colonial Secretary under Governor Fletcher at the time of the riots.

“He spoke feelingly and strikingly
Logically and conscientiously
His diction was perfect, elocution great,
To describe his speech words are inadequate
He said: “They who plant the cane and dig the oil
And develop the estates with their sweat and toil
While employers are living luxuriously
They should not be dying in misery.”

.....His speech created a great sensation
And was welcomed by the population.
There’s a rumour he will be recalled
For by the Commissioners he has been blackballed
But even if he be a million miles across the sea
Beloved in our hearst he will be
For the entire multitude
Offers him their undying gratitude.”



Atilla the Hun –

The Governor’s Resignation

“In my opinion Sir Murchison Fletcher
Was our ablest Governor
We only wish the Downing Street
authorities
Would send more men like him to the
West Indies
His resignation was a shock to me
Regretted throughout the Colony

Sir Murchison Fletcher will ever be
Beloved in every Trinidadian’s memory
For he proved in sincerity
His interest in the welfare of this Colony
We must foster local industry, said he,
And augment the island’s prosperity
It is no wonder it is with regret and pain
We learn he ain’t coming back again.”

Source: Rohlehr, Gordon. Calypso & Society in
Pre-Independence Trinidad, HEM Printers Ltd. Trinidad 1990.

Images <http://record-fiend.blogspot.com/2009/06/calypsos-from-trinidad-politics.html>

