HISTORY OF COLONIAL RADIO SERIES

Radio Wars

IN COLONIAL TRINIDAD,
1939 - 1945

BOOK 2

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Radio Wars in Colonial Trinidad, 1939-1945, Book 2

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COVER INFORMATION

Front cover:

The cover reflects the broadcasting rivalry between British and American radio stations set against the background of World War Two. At the top left is a photo of the broadcasting staff of the Radio Division of the joint Anglo-American Caribbean Commission (AACC). In the background of the photo is a young Eric Williams (around 33 years), a broadcaster for the AACC's *West Indian Radio Newspaper* programme. The photo is a declassified photo from the U.S. National Archives, Maryland, USA. Location: RG 43 Box 20, Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, 1940-1946.

At the top right is a photo showing an antenna atop the BBC's Broadcasting House in London. The BBC broadcasted the popular *Calling the West Indies* programme. The photo is from depositphotos.com.

At the bottom left is a photo of an Allied convoy (having left the Caribbean) and crossing the Atlantic during World War II. The photo is from goodfreephotos.com.

Back cover:

The photo shows two U.S. troops walking up the steps at the St. Clair Cantonment of the Trinidad Base Command in Port-of-Spain (circa 1943) during the U.S. occupation of several key areas in the colony. The photo is from CriticalPast.com

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to

my parents,

CARLOS and CUEPEE
ESCALANTE

BOOKS

by

Richard M. Escalante

HISTORY OF COLONIAL RADIO Series

- Radio Days in Colonial Trinidad, 1929 - 1939, Book 1
- Radio Wars in Colonial Trinidad, 1939 - 1945, Book 2
- Radio Stations in Colonial Trinidad, 1945 - 1962, Book 3

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 4 -The Influence of American Radio Stations

PART 5: A Joint British-American Programme

PART 6: Radio in Society

PART 7: Game Changer: A New Focus

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

PREFACE

A little over two years has passed since I wrote *Radio Days in Colonial Trinidad*, the first book in the History of Colonial Radio Series. This book, '*Radio Wars in Colonial Trinidad, 1939-1945*', is the second installment of the series. It continues the story of colonial radio in Trinidad and follows its development during the Second World War.

Much of the content for this second book came from my M.Phil. research thesis back in 2015. This thesis dealt with the development of radio and broadcasting policy in colonial Trinidad. Since then, I have sourced new books and additional research material from various foreign archives. This book results from these updates as it relates to the period 1939-1945.

Contrary to Trinidad's popular history during the Second World War, the American presence in the colony was not just about '*Americans troops behaving badly*.' Such beliefs were epitomized in the Mighty Sparrow's calypso, *Jean and Dinah*, or The Andrew Sisters' song*, Rum and Coca Cola*. Nor was it merely about *'working for the Yankee dollar*' as many local books portrayed it. True, the Americans employed locals to help build naval and army bases that were to defend the colony and protect Allied shipping from the U-boat threat in the Caribbean. But there were far more dimensions to the American presence than commonly expressed.

One such dimension was the use of the U.S. Armed Forces radio station. Apart from its programmes to build the morale of U.S. troops stationed on the island, there were unintended consequences to these broadcasts. Such broadcasts had a dramatic influence on the local populace, much to the consternation of the local British authorities.

It is this juxtaposition of *cooperation* between the British and the Americans to fight the Nazi threat and their *rivalry* to control of the

airwaves in the colony that occupied my focus. I therefore sought to expand the limited knowledge about such 'radio wars' between these Allies. Further, I looked at how each state actor (the local colonial government, the Colonial Office, the BBC, the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, and the U.S. military) used various strategies to influence listeners in Trinidadian society.

I was fortunate enough to visit the U.S. National Achieves at College Park, Maryland, USA, in January 2015 (during *Winter Storm Thor*). These archives contained a wealth of information relevant to the American presence in the Caribbean. Although I visited the Archives at short notice (I was attending a *Privacy Professionals Conference* in Washington), my sincere thanks go to the staff who facilitated my requests for key archival material. They were quite helpful and very professional.

Several colleagues read portions of the draft and made useful suggestions where necessary. I am grateful for their valued insight and comments. I am also indebted to the dedicated staff of the West Indiana and Special Collections Division of the Alma Jordan Library at the University of the West Indies in St. Augustine. They provided me with access to their archival material and assisted me in locating key source materials.

Finally, to you, the reader of this book. I hope you will find the same interest and appreciation for this period of Trinidad's colonial radio history, as you did in the previous book.

Richard M. Escalante
Lopinot, Trinidad
May 2020

INTRODUCTION

Communication and politics often go hand in hand. This is no more the case as during wartime. Communication, of course, can be biased, especially during times of war. In such situations, the politics of war gives rise to biased communications, or what can loosely be termed propaganda. But propaganda is only part of the wider political and military communication strategies during such periods of war.

Propaganda is communicated through various media. However, it was the medium of radio that truly emphasized propaganda's reach during World War II. Here, most, not all, propaganda efforts in wartime are directed by governments toward its domestic population. However, in Britain's case, such state propaganda would have reached not only its home population but also millions of its subjects scattered throughout its colonies around the world.

State propaganda also served as a counteroffensive to German propaganda broadcasts against the British Empire. In fact, German broadcasts had repeatedly proclaimed a

> "venal Britain living in luxury on the wealth collected from 66,000,000 poverty-stricken native serfs."[1]

State propaganda was therefore deemed necessary to make Britain's subjects believe that it was Germany that had inflicted an injustice (whether real or fictitious).

Further, it lent credence to the claim that Britain's cause for the war was just. Indeed, it was through the radio medium that King George VI implored his subjects to take up the mantle of war when he mentioned,

> "It is to this high purpose that I now call my people at home and my peoples across the seas, who will make our cause their own."

His radio broadcast resonated with his subjects abroad, and who heeded the call to arms. Eventually, specialized programming was designed and targeted at specific regions throughout the Empire to help win support for the war.

Apart from propaganda, radio broadcasts were fundamental to the morale of the allied troops of Britain (and her Empire) and America. The importance of such radio broadcasts was also echoed in the *Destroyer-for-Bases Agreement* between Britain and the United States. Once this Agreement was in effect, the Americans lost no time in establishing their own Armed Forces Radio Network, Radio WVDI, in the Trinidad colony.[2]

Suffice to say, the Colonial Office soon objected to the use of the local airwaves by the Americans. It would seem that this U.S. radio station captivated a broad Trinidadian audience and reinforced the already-accepted, fast-paced style of American radio programming by the residents. American-styled music, entertainment, and sports now competed with the bland format of programming from the British Broadcasting Corporation. The subsequent tensions and compromises in the Trinidad colony between these two broadcasting formats from two foreign allies were a reflection of the overall Anglo-American alliance.

This book develops the history of the radio wars between the BBC and the U.S. radio programmes aimed at the colony. In section **one**, I discuss Trinidadian attitudes at the outbreak of war. These attitudes reflect the listening preferences of the colonial residents. This section further reflects on the colonial dissatisfaction toward the war expressed in several quarters of Trinidad society. The **second** section looks at the BBC's new face and how the BBC used this "re-branding" to sell the war to the colonies through their initial wartime

programmes. In section **three**, I give particular attention to the content of radio programming specifically targeted to the West Indian audience and the issues involving in broadcasting to the Colonies.

Section **four** discusses the influence of competing foreign radio stations on the residents and the arrival and influence of U.S. troops in the colony. Commensurate with this presence are the broadcasts of the American Forces Network in Trinidad and their effect on the island's residents.

Section **five** introduces a joint British-American programme for the West Indies and the issues revolving around its broadcasts. Exploring the influence of radio in society during wartime is the focus of section **six**. Here, I look at the listener audience and the air time of the rival stations. Local broadcasting piracy of this programme is also mentioned. Finally, section **seven** concludes with the beginning of the end of the war in 1944 and the release of the Moyne Report. Also mentioned are the attempts by the local authorities to curtail the activities of 'rival station' and end the radio war in their favour.

ENDNOTES

1.Rosaleen Smyth, "Britain's African Colonies and British Propaganda during the Second World War," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 14 (1985): 67.

2.As a result of the 1940 Destroyers-for-Bases Agreement between Britain and America.

PROLOGUE

Ever since Diego Serrao broadcasted the 1935 Test Cricket Series in the West Indies, Trinidadians looked forward to increased access to broadcasts on sports and entertainment. Now, as 1939 opened, even more Trinidadians began purchasing radio receivers for home entertainment and news of conditions in Europe and other parts of the world. The BBC executives would have welcomed this increase in the sales of radio receivers. Further, recent world surveys had shown that their *Empire Service* programme to the colonies had already reached maturity by the beginning of 1939. As far as the BBC officials believed, hundreds of persons and households across the Trinidad colony tuned-in to the *Empire Service* programme.

Unfortunately, this was not the reality.

Further, like the BBC, the bureaucrats in the Colonial Office were no different. They also took a broader view of the situation. Given the growing political awareness in the colonies of the British Empire, they quickly realized that radio broadcasting was fast becoming a controlling influence on the colonial population. Officials, therefore, advised the BBC that regular daily broadcasts of the *Empire Service* programme should be designed to strengthen the 'bonds of the empire' among the civilian population in the colonies. By creating an 'imagined community' through listening to broadcasts that repeatedly emphasized British culture and ideas, the Colonial Office envisioned the residents as sharing and developing a sense of belonging to the '*Mother country*.' Such belonging would engender allegiance to the Crown and aid in reshaping the personal perceptions of the colonial residents.

Once again, this was not the reality.

PART 1

TRINIDADIAN ATTITUDES AT THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

ONE

LISTENING PREFERENCES

It had long been the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) tradition to elevate the conversion between London and the colonies rather than to pander to popular taste. Harold Graves, Jnr., Director of the Princeton Listening Center, and an official at the U.S. Office of Strategic Services, aptly summed up this view when he mentioned that,

> *"... a parade of distinguished authorities passed before the microphones of the Overseas Service. Oxford University professors discussed the niceties of international law and the significance of economic warfare. Retired army officers spoke about the Buddhist priesthood and the marriage customs of Nepalese royalty. Various aspects of British life were discussed by Members of Parliament and other spokesmen who were experts in the fields, but dull speakers."*[1]

Unfortunately, this was not the conversation that the residents in the British West Indian colonies, more so the Trinidad colony, wanted to hear from the BBC.

The truth of the matter was that Trinidadians preferred listening to U.S. radio broadcasts rather than the *Empire Service* programmes. Ever since the late 1920s, amateur radio enthusiasts in Trinidad had discovered that signal spill-over from the U.S. mainland radio stations allowed them to receive American programming. Almost a decade later, many of the island's residents with radios continued to access even more exciting and varied American programming.

Further, when it came to radio programming, music, in particular, comprised the key feature - over 50% - of a station's programming. According to Sterling and Kittross,

> "A March 1938 survey of programming by the FCC [Federal Commission of Communications] showed that 53% was devoted to music, 11% to talks and dialogues, 9% to drama, 9% to variety, 9% to news ..., 5% to religion and devotion, 2% to special events, and 2% to miscellaneous."[2]

With such variety, Trinidadians preferred the U.S. programming more for musical entertainment than for the rather dry *Empire Services* entertainment programmes.

Furthermore, from these stations, residents were exposed to significant issues in America and throughout the world. Trinidadians thus became increasingly dependent on U.S. radio programming for information and entertainment.

This discovery was as much to the chagrin of the BBC as it was to the Colonial Office officials. It was also the reality the British had to face. And it occurred because of three key factors: the geographical position of the colony, technology lag, and the nature of radio programming.

First, shortwave radio broadcasts tended to skip across the Earth's ionosphere (Figure 1). As such, they were capable of traveling very long distances. As these signals do not 'recognize' country borders, listeners could receive radio signals from radio stations in another country. This condition is known as *signal spill-over*. Because of the geographical proximity of the Caribbean islands to the United States mainland, spill-over radio signals presented a unique opportunity for the Caribbean listeners to tune-in to U.S. radio stations.

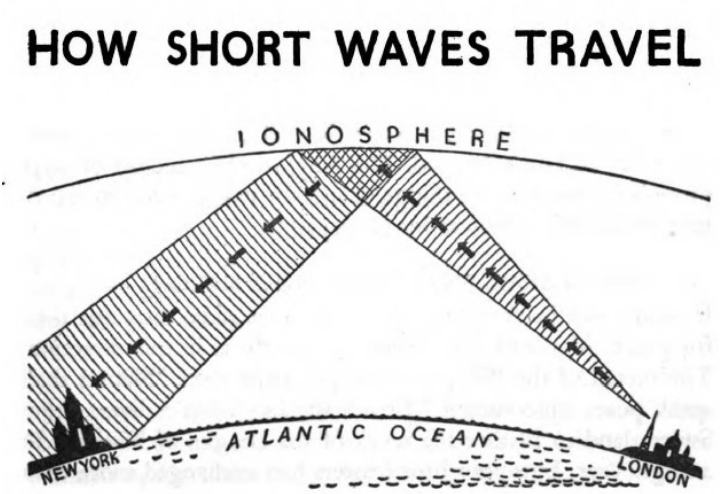


Figure 1: How Short Waves Travel
Source: *War on the Short Wave* by Harold Graves, Jnr.

Second, although America made rapid strides in radio technology and developing a radio media industry, Britain did not. Instead, Britain focused on a different technology approach to radio broadcasting that proved futile: long-wave technology. It would be almost a decade before Britain switched to shortwave technology and established a reliable broadcasting service to reach the West Indian colonies.[3] Thus, before September 1939, Britain engaged in playing catch-up to narrow the technology lag between them and Americans.

Further, during this prewar period, BBC programming explicitly tailored to the Caribbean was woefully inadequate, unlike that offered to Britain's civilian population. Apart from special occasions such as cricket Test Matches, no attempt had been made by the BBC to serve the West Indian listeners adequately. The situation was further compounded by a lack of facilities in the West Indies, such as transmitters, as compared to the other parts of the Empire, mostly the Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland, South Africa, Ireland, and British India.

The third factor, the nature of U.S. radio programming, contrasted with that offered by the British Broadcasting Corporation. Because of the signal spill-over from the U.S. mainland, Trinidad residents were able to tune-in to American broadcasts. American radio stations broadcasted a variety of programmes daily to an ever receptive American audience. Many stations aired twenty-four hours a day to keep American citizens engaged.[4] These programmes were designed to entertain and provide news updates and included popular music, classical music, sporting events, talk shows, newscasts, weather reports, and political commentary, among other genres.

Furthermore, when it came to news broadcasts, the U.S. news was viewed as impartial, as opposed to that of the BBC Empire Service. The awareness of this situation was not lost on the residents. In the months leading up to the European War (as it was then called), Arthur Calder-Marshall, the English novelist and a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, visited Trinidad; he was on a tour of the West Indies. While sojourning in the colony, he noted the following observation,

> "*I found, furthermore, that no one had a high opinion of the English news bulletins; ... the actual new items were slight, uninformative, and one-sided. When they wanted to hear news, they tuned-in to the United States, because they knew that though even here the news would be one-sided, it would not have been edited in the interest of British Imperialism.*"[5]

Calder-Marshall was correct in his assessment of this deliberate approach to the news. Similar to the American public's distaste for propaganda, the Trinidadian public did not take kindly to imperial-slanted broadcasts, given their experience with British propaganda news during the Great War.

ENDNOTES

1.Harold N. Graves, Jr.,*War on the Short Wave*, New York: Foreign Policy Association, May 1941, 54.

2.Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned: A History of American Programming*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002, 3rd ed, p.180.

3. Richard Escalante, *Radio Days in Colonial Trinidad, 1929-1939, Book 1* , Arouca: Kairi Publishing House, 2017. The book goes into more detail on this technological lag.

4.Over ninety percent of American families owning a radio during the war.

5.Arthur Calder Marshall, *Glory Dead*, London: Michael Joseph Ltd, 1939, 249.

TWO

THE KING'S SPEECH

At the Polish Border, Germany
September 1, 1939
4.45 a.m.

It was a cold Friday morning on September 1, 1939, when German troops pushed aside the border crossing between Germany and Poland and entered Poland. With no warning or declaration of war, Germany had invaded Poland.

10 Downing Street,
London, England
Sunday, September 3, 1939

At 9.00 a.m. on an unusually wet Sunday morning - just two days after Germany invaded Poland - the British government issued an ultimatum to Germany. The message was clear: *unless German troops were withdrawn immediately from Poland, a state of war would exist between their two countries*. A deadline of 11.00 a.m. was given. It was now a waiting game.

The BBC, however, was not fazed. It had been secretly preparing for war for years. Now, an off-site team was assigned to the Prime Minister's office at 10 Downing Street to establish a live feed to the BBC's Broadcasting House.[1]

At 11.00 a.m., when there was no reply before the ultimatum expired, Britain's Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain strode across to the microphone in the Cabinet Room. The BBC engineer ensured that everything was ready and signaled the announcer to introduce the Prime Minister,

> "by reading the two short sentences typed on a piece of paper in front of him, what the BBC had labeled 'Announcement B'"[2]

Announcement B stated: "*This is London. You will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister*." Shortly thereafter, at 11.15 a.m., the Prime Minister, in carefully measured tones, announced to the British people that England was now at war with Germany.

DID YOU KNOW . . . ?
You can hear the recording of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's statement as it was announced to Britons, and His Majesty's subjects in colonies throughout the Empire, at **https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/100-voices/ww2/country-at-war** . Worldwide, other persons with shortwave radio sets also tuned-in to the broadcast. It would be remembered as marking the start of the Second World War.

Buckingham Palace,
London, England
Sunday, September 3, 1939

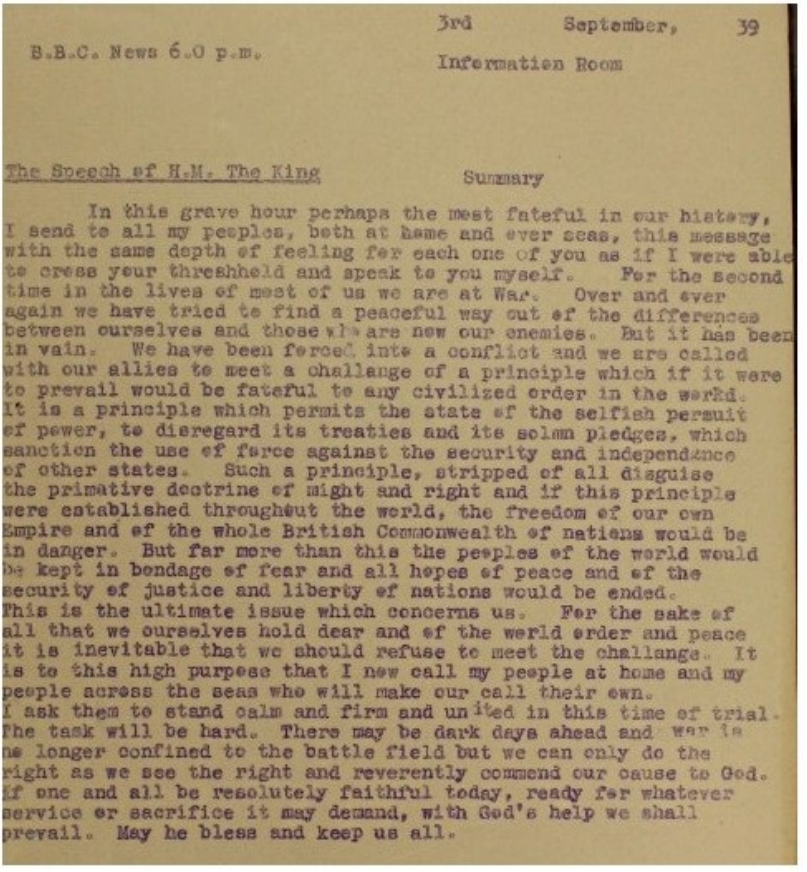
Less than nine hours later, at 6.00 p.m. (1.00 p.m. Trinidad time), King George VI addressed all British Empire subjects through the BBC's Empire Service (Figure 2). In his first speech since assuming the throne in 1936, the King informed his subjects about the declaration of war and the need to rally around the Empire. He mentioned that,

> *"In this grave hour, perhaps the most fateful in our history, for the second time in the lives of most of us, we are at war. Over and over again, we have tried to find a peaceful way out of the differences between ourselves and those who are now our enemies. But it has*

been in vain. The task will be hard. There may be dark days ahead, and war is no longer confined to the battlefield."[3]

Those in the Trinidad colony who owned shortwave receiver sets also listened to the King's Speech.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



3rd September, 39

B.B.C. News 6.0 p.m.

Information Room

The Speech of H.M. The King Summary

In this grave hour perhaps the most fateful in our history, I send to all my peoples, both at home and over seas, this message with the same depth of feeling for each one of you as if I were able to cross your threshhold and speak to you myself. For the second time in the lives of most of us we are at War. Over and over again we have tried to find a peaceful way out of the differences between ourselves and those who are now our enemies. But it has been in vain. We have been forced into a conflict and we are called with our allies to meet a challange of a principle which if it were to prevail would be fateful to any civilized order in the world. It is a principle which permits the state of the selfish pursuit of power, to disregard its treaties and its solmn pledges, which sanction the use of force against the security and independence of other states. Such a principle, stripped of all disguise the primative doctrine of might and right and if this principle were established throughout the world, the freedom of our own Empire and of the whole British Commonwealth of nations would be in danger. But far more than this the peoples of the world would be kept in bondage of fear and all hopes of peace and of the security of justice and liberty of nations would be ended. This is the ultimate issue which concerns us. For the sake of all that we ourselves hold dear and of the world order and peace it is inevitable that we should refuse to meet the challange. It is to this high purpose that I now call my people at home and my people across the seas who will make our call their own. I ask them to stand calm and firm and united in this time of trial. The task will be hard. There may be dark days ahead and war is no longer confined to the battle field but we can only do the right as we see the right and reverently commend our cause to God. If one and all be resolutely faithful today, ready for whatever service or sacrifice it may demand, with God's help we shall prevail. May he bless and keep us all.

Figure 2: The King's Speech on September 3, 1939
Source: https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/The-Kings-Speech

Transcribed Text of the Original Document.

In this grave hour, perhaps the most fateful in our history, I send to every household of my peoples, both at home and overseas, this message, spoken with the same depth of feeling for each one of you as if I were able to cross your threshold and speak to you myself.

For the second time in the lives of most of us we are at war.

Over and over again we have tried to find a peaceful way out of the differences between ourselves and those who are now our enemies. But it has been in vain. We have been forced into a conflict. For we are called, with our allies, to meet the challenge of a principle which, if it were to prevail, would be fatal to any civilized order in the world.

It is the principle which permits a state, in the selfish pursuit of power, to disregard its treaties and its solemn pledges; which sanctions the use of force, or threat of force, against the sovereignty and independence of other states.

Such a principle, stripped of all disguise, is surely the mere primitive doctrine that "might is right"; and if this principle were established throughout the world, the freedom of our own country and of the whole of the British Commonwealth of Nations would be in danger. But far more than this -- the peoples of the world would be kept in the bondage of fear, and all hopes of settled peace and of the security of justice and liberty among nations would be ended.

This is the ultimate issue which confronts us. For the sake of all that we ourselves hold dear, and of the world order and peace, it is unthinkable that we should refuse to meet the challenge.

It is to this high purpose that I now call my people at home and my peoples across the seas, who will make our cause their own. I ask them to stand calm and firm and united in this time of trial. The task will be hard. There may be dark days ahead, and war can no longer be confined to the battlefield.

But we can only do the right as we see the right, and reverently commit our cause to God.

If one and all we keep resolutely faithful to it, ready for whatever service or sacrifice it may demand, then, with God's help, we shall prevail.

May He bless and keep us all.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

The movie "*The King's Speech*" – starring Colin Firth and Geoffrey Rush – is a 2010 historical drama film. It portrays the inspiring story of the future King George VI, who overcame his speech impediment (stammering), with the assistance of Lionel Logue, an Australian speech and language therapist, to make his first wartime radio broadcast following Britain's declaration of war on Germany in 1939.

Just two days later, on Tuesday, September 5, the *Trinidad Guardian* (on page 7) published the full text of King's Speech under the headline captioned "*The King Talks To His People*." See Figure 3. The newspaper reported that the King spoke "in grave and measured tones" and called on his people at home and "across the seas" to make Britain's cause their own. He made an "appeal to stand calm and firm" in the light of the outbreak of war.[4] Also featured on the same page of the *Trinidad Guardian* was the heading "*Chamberlain Announces War against Germany*" informing Trinidadians of Britain's entry into a war against Germany.

TRINIDAD GUARDIAN, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1939.

THE KING TALKS TO HIS PEOPLE

Appeal To Stand Calm And Firm

LONDON, Sunday.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING BROADCAST A MESSAGE TO THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT 1 P.M. (TRINIDAD TIME) ON SUNDAY, A FEW HOURS AFTER BRITAIN HAD DECLARED WAR ON GERMANY.

Speaking in grave and measured tones His Majesty emphasized that "we have been forced into a conflict for we are called with our Allies to meet a challenge of a principle which, if it were to prevail, would be fatal to any civilised order in the world."

Chamberlain Announces War Against Germany

LONDON, Monday.

MR. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, the Prime Minister, told a waiting world yesterday morning that in spite of all his efforts to win the peace of Europe, Britain had decided to declare war against Germany.

This followed the British ultimatum to Hitler stating that unless Britain heard from him by 11 a.m. (Sunday) that he was prepared at once to withdraw his troops from

...ended between Germany and Great Britain. Hitler never replied to this final warning.

Following is the full text of Mr. Chamberlain's historic speech: "I am speaking to you from

Figure 3: The King Talks to His People.
Source: *Trinidad Guardian* September 5, 1939, page 7.

ENDNOTES

1.BBC Archives. “This country is at war.” https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/100-voices/ww2/country-at-war

2.Ibid.

3."*The King Talks To His People*," *Trinidad Guardian*, Sep. 5, 1939.

4.Ibid.

THREE

COLONIAL DISSATISFACTION TOWARD THE WAR

No sooner had war broken out in September 1939 than all subjects of the British Empire were expected to take part and support the war effort. Following the *King's Speech*, it is reasonable to suggest that the idea of Empire, as presented through the BBC's *Empire Service*, would have produced a patriotic effect. As historian Michael Anthony mentions, the Trinidad Legislative Council "voted $1,000,000 to help the war effort."[1] The Council also declared its willingness "to do and suffer all required of them."[2] Such was the loyalty of Trinidadians that the British Ministry of Information mentioned it in a public announcement (Figure 4).

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

TRINIDAD LOYALTY ANNOUNCED

London, Tuesday. - The Ministry of Information today announced a message from the Governor of Trinidad advising that the Legislative Council of the colony had declared its willingness "to do and suffer all required of them."

Members of the Council spoke for the loyalty of the Trinidad Labour Party, the Trade Union Movement, and the East Indian community. - (Canadian Press)

Figure 4: "Trinidad Loyalty Announced," *Trinidad Guardian*, September 13, 1939, 4.

Anthony further reveals that "thousands [of Trinidadians] came forward to offer themselves for service."[3] However, they experienced some resistance from the British War Office to the forming of a West

Indian regiment. Nonetheless, the local authorities eventually established an Air Training Scheme to provide basic training for young men who volunteered to become pilots. Phillip Louis Ulric Cross represented one such person. Cross enrolled as a recruit in the Air Training Scheme at Piarco, and

> "took high place in both the practical and theoretical examinations."[4]

He then departed for England in 1941 to enlist in the R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve and to further his training.

But despite this resistance from the War Office, many able-bodied Trinidadians, like Cross, secured the necessary funds for a one-way voyage to Britain. Once there, they enlisted in the British Army, Royal Air Force, the Merchant Navy, and other military sections. Overall, throughout the war, nearly 10,000 West Indians traveled to Britain to join the army.[5]

But despite the outward patriotism, there existed some level of dissatisfaction expressed by several groups in the local society toward the war itself. During the early months of the war, persons belonging to these groups - the labour movement, the nationalist movement, and the merchant class - held the notion that the war was "Britain's war" and not theirs. Like some Trinidadians and other West Indians, they did not initially appreciate the seriousness of the crisis. Hostilities were too distant to convince them that they were engaged in a war involving all world nations. Further, they felt pressured by the new British wartime policies and practices in the colony.

As the remaining weeks and months of 1939 dragged on, the merchants began to express anti-colonial sentiments. The conflict in Europe had led to general shortages of foodstuffs and other products in the colonies. In Trinidad, such shortages troubled many merchants as the colonial government imposed restrictions on imports upon

them. For these merchants, the downturn in cargo, particularly foodstuff, and the subsequent trade restrictions affected their ability to conduct business among the local inhabitants.

DID YOU KNOW ...?
During the 1930s and 1940s, the foreign exchange rate was £1 = TT$4.80.

Many merchants lodge complaints with the local authorities opposing the disruption to their business activities. Despite being adversely affected by wartime austerity and the possibility of an invasion, merchants seemed more unconcerned for their physical safety than for their businesses.

The trade union movement formed another group that applied pressure on the local colonial government via political and union activities. Several persons in this movement, including veterans of the Great War, were deemed agitators by the colonial government. Many of these key agitators belonged to the black and colored middle class, and the Creole working class.[6] They represented an emergent and articulate class of educated Trinidadians.

However, in a strategic move to counter these trade union agitators, the local government decided to use the war as an excuse to pressure the union into agreeing not to strike for the duration of the war. They also took measures to suppress political and union activities associated with the labour movement.[7]

The nationalist movement was yet another group that sought to discourage Trinidadians from supporting Britain's war effort. As in the trade union movement, many of its members were veterans of the Great War (1914-18) who drew on their wartime experiences to help organize the movement's political activities and demands for self-determination. Many of these returning servicemen of the British

West Indian Regiment (BWIR)[8] harbored unpleasant memories of their tour of duty during this war. Having contributed to Britain's war efforts, they felt a sense of entitlement, as did other colonial subjects throughout the Empire. As noted in the Encyclopaedia of Human Rights, the nationalist demands were

> "not simply as political concessions from colonial powers but as rights - meaning entitlements."[9]

Through the nationalist movement, several of these veterans helped to discourage those Trinidadians who may have considered supporting Britain's war effort. For them, this was Britain's war, not theirs.

However, not all members of the nationalist group considered themselves war veterans. Other local members who were writers used their literary skills (whether in Trinidad or London) to reach the populace. C.L.R. James was one such nationalist (although of a Marxist bent). In his 1932 book, '*The Life of Captain Cipriani*,' he awoke his readers to the ills of the Crown Colony Government in the West Indies.[10] James argued that there existed a need for self-government to eradicate what he called the '*diseased elements*' in society who perpetuated a political system based on autocracy and patronage.

Calypsonians also supported the nationalist and trade union movements through their calypsoes. Just a year before the declaration of war, they sang many popular yet controversial calypsoes. These included Atilla the Hun's rendition of "*The Banning of Records*" and Growling Tiger's performance of "*Try and Join a Labor Union*." These calypsoes were both released in 1938.

In Atilla's case, he composed "*The Banning of Records*" when several of his records were censored.[11] This calypso was itself banned by the colonial authorities. Later that year, Growling Tiger won the first major Calypso King competition with his calypso "*Try and Join a Labor Union*." These popular calypsoes served to remind those who

had forgotten the past, and the folly of showing a willingness to forgive and forget. They served as a barometer of the pulse of the people in the colony.

Given the level of dissatisfaction in the colony, managing British colonial policy became a delicate issue, more so with the earlier Labour Riots of 1937. Moreover, when the Moyne Commission arrived in the West Indies in early 1939 to assess the region's social and economic conditions, it sought to determine whether the colonies were likely to break away.[12]

The remaining four months of 1939 saw many Trinidadians following news of the war through three media sources. These sources included radio broadcasts, newspapers, and newsreels; the latter preceded the movie at local cinemas. These were all avenues of information for an information-hungry public.

(Un)fortunately, there was not much news of the war to report during these last few months of 1939 and continuing to May 10, 1940, except that of a few minor clashes by reconnaissance patrols of opposing military forces.

DID YOU KNOW ...?
Nazi Germany had been at war with Great Britain and France since September 3, 1939. But until May 10, 1940, there was little fighting or activity along the Western Front. The period became known as the "*Phoney War*."

ENDNOTES

1.Michael Anthony, *Port-of-Spain in a World at War 1939-1945: The Making of Port-of-Spain Volume* 2,2nd ed. Port-of-Spain: Paria Publishing Company, 2008, 2.

2.”Trinidad Loyalty Announced,” *Trinidad Guardian*, September 13, 1939, 4.

3.Anthony, *Port-of-Spain in a World at War 1939-1945*, 2.

4.”Trinidad Airman Wins D.F.C. Award,” *Trinidad Guardian,* July 27, 1944.

5.”Soldiers of the Caribbean: Britain's forgotten war heroes”, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-32703753

6.These "agitators" included T. Uriah Butler, Adrian Cola Rienzi, and Quentin O"Connor who were all trade union leaders.

7.Bridget Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad 1783 - 1962*, Champs Fleurs: Terra Verde Resource Centre, 2009, 189.

8.The British West Indies Regiment (BWI Regiment) was made up of men from: British Guiana - A Company; Trinidad - B Company; Trinidad and St Vincent - C Company; Grenada and Barbados - D Company.

9.David P. Forsythe, ed. *Encyclopedia of Human Rights Volume 1*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 365.

10.The book was later reprised the following year (1933) in Britain as *‘The Case for West Indian Self-Government’*.

11.This was the Seditious Publications Ordinance of 1920.

12.Anthony, *The Making of Port-of-Spain*, 281.

PART 2

"SELLING WAR": THE NEW FACE OF THE BBC

FOUR

THE BBC AND WAR-TIME PROPAGANDA

The outbreak of the war in Europe provided Britain with an almost ideal context within which she could strengthen her authority and legitimize her presence in the colonies. The use of propaganda was now viewed as a means of mass control over public opinion. To realize this objective, the British government established the Ministry of Information (MoI) on September 4, 1939, the day after Britain declared war on Germany. This Ministry was designed to combine the experience gained during the Great War with new communications technology.

The Ministry was responsible for all the publicity and propaganda during the war. In particular, the Empire Publicity Division of the Ministry `officially guided' all war propaganda in the British colonies. Such propaganda involved the use of the BBC's Empire Service. Although officials in the MoI's Division were well-informed about the indirect propaganda associated with the BBC's Empire Service, they (naturally) now favored a more direct approach. As such, one of the key objectives of the Ministry' Empire Publicity Division involved the use of the BBC to enhance the use of war propaganda. Such propaganda would mobilize Britain's subjects throughout the Empire and persuade them to support British war efforts.[1]

DID YOU KNOW ...?
At its peak in 1933, the British Empire covered some 12.2 million square miles -- 23.85 percent of the earth's land surface -- with a population of nearly 502 million, almost a quarter of the world population.[2]

This directive was not new. As early as 1935, the Committee of Imperial Defence had decided that

> "in the event of war, the Government would assume '*effective control of broadcasting and the BBC*'. A wartime Ministry of Information would have the right to censor all output in the interests of national security, and the Government would have the right to direct the BBC in all matters related to the war effort."[3]

That such a strict censoring process should be enforced was not per the BBC's policy of objectivity and responsible journalism, much less its freedom to broadcast its content.[4]

Interestingly, in his book, *War on the Shortwave*, Harold Graves, Director of the Princeton Listening Center, observed that,

> "*An American radio commentator has suggested that broadcasting be considered as the "fourth front" of the war - a new field of conflict in addition to the economic, the diplomatic, and the military struggles which make up modern war.*"[5]

But Graves questions this view by noting,

> *"Actually, propaganda has nearly always accompanied war, and it is propaganda that is the real fourth front. But radio has extended this battlefield over distances never before possible, and has made the present conflict the wordiest was in history."*[6]

Notwithstanding the above, two key misconceptions about propaganda need to be clarified as they sometimes usually arise. As identified by media historian Nicholas Cull, the first misconception relates to

> "the widely-held belief that propaganda implies nothing more than the art of persuasion, which serves only to change attitudes and ideas."[7](qtd in Briggs, 1965: 656–7).

Admittedly, this is undoubtedly one of its aims - as in persuading Britain's subjects to support the war effort - but it is usually a limited and subordinate one.

Yet, as Cull observes in his examination of the media and propaganda, propaganda is usually concerned with "sharpening and focusing existing trends and beliefs."[8] Here, we see that the BBC used its broadcast monopoly to pursue a cultural policy of enlightenment in the British colonies.

The second misconception is the belief that propaganda consists only of lies and falsehood. But, as Cull notes, propaganda operates on several levels of truth - from the outright lie to the half-truth to the truth taken out of context.[9] In this context, Cull cites the example of British officials in the Ministry of Information during World War 11 who expressed this view as

> "the whole truth, nothing but the truth - and as near as possible to the truth!"[10]

The BBC, on the other hand, adopted a somewhat different approach with its overseas broadcasts. In 1938, then-Home Service News Editor, R.T. Clark, best expressed this policy when he stated,

> "*the only way to strengthen the morale of the people whose morale is worth strengthening is to tell them the truth and nothing but the truth, even if the truth is horrible.*"[11]

But this broadcasting function should not be isolated from the monitoring activity established at the outbreak of war. Monitoring itself was not a new BBC activity. In broadcasting terms, it meant `to check the technical quality or programme content of a wireless transmission.' In fact, since it began operations, the BBC possessed a special receiving station not only for quality checking

> "but also for receiving and sending, or simultaneously rebroadcasting, programmes from overseas which it was impossible to obtain by line or cable."[12]

In wartime, however, the BBC Monitoring Service undertook more than just the recording of historic broadcasts. According to E. A. Harding, Chief Editor of the monitoring service, it was

> *"established by the BBC, at the request and charge of the Ministry of Information, as a branch of intelligence indispensable to modern war."*[13]

As such, there was now an increased demand by the ministry

> "for a continuous watch to be kept on radio news bulletins and broadcasts from neutral as well as enemy countries."[14]

Consequently, the BBC proceeded to hire persons fluent in various languages. Stationed at the BBC's 'Tower of Babel,'[15] they listened and transcribed the broadcasts from various foreign radio stations composed by radio news editors and propagandists.

ENDNOTES

1.National Archives, "The Art of War," http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/theartofwar/inf3.htm.

2.Charles Lutton, "The 'Atlantic Charter' Smokescreen: History as a Press Release," Journal of Historical Review 5, nos. 2, 3, 4 (1984), http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v05/v05p203_Lutton.html.

3.History of the BBC. https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/100-voices/ww2/bore-war

4.Ibid.

5.Harold N. Graves, Jr.,*War on the Short Wave*, New York: Foreign Policy Association, May 1941, 7

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7.Cull, Nicholas, David Culbert, and David Welch. *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the present*. California: ABCCLIO, 2003. Quote from Briggs, Vol 2: The Golden Age of Wireless, 1965.

8.Ibid.

9.Ibid.

10.Ibid.

11.History of the BBC. https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/100-voices/ww2/bore-war

12.Ibid.

13.BBC Yearbook 1940, *Listening Post 1939*, 84.

14.Ibid, 85.

15.Ibid.

FIVE

THE BBC'S NEW OUTLOOK

I

RE-BRANDING THE BBC

"*I heard it on the BBC ... I know it must be true*."
/George Orwell, 1944
English novelist/ journalist

Although listeners' rates increased, especially in the early months of the war, audiences throughout Britain's colonies had a negative perception of the BBC's Empire Service broadcasts. For example, in Trinidad, as Calder-Marshall mentioned earlier, many residents felt that the news from the BBC was "edited in the interest of British Imperialism."[1] The BBC thus faced an issue of credibility and, with it, credible neutrality.

Arising from such perceptions, the Ministry of Information suggested the BBC adopt a new culture and a fresh outlook regarding the Empire Service and its other broadcasting services beyond Europe.[2] This proposed new image supported the notion of a credible news service that would contrast with Germany's totalitarian approach to propaganda. In adopting a new outlook, the BBC sought to reinvent itself by altering the Empire Service's name and its ancillary services.

But perhaps there existed a stronger reason to adopt a new face. We can discover this reason in the BBC's attempts to counter the broadcasting claims by hostile states of the "harsh realities of British decline."[3] Such broadcast transmissions were targeted to areas where Britain possessed colonies and countries that stood as allies with Britain. The BBC therefore sought to create the image of a powerful Britain and

> "to construct a view of world politics that served its colonial interests."[4]

This new image would likewise provide Britain with an almost ideal context within which she could strengthen her authority and legitimize her presence in the colonies.

I should point out that, in Public Relations Theory, one approach for an organization to remove traces or connections to adverse events is to effect a name change. This process is termed "re-branding." It sought to define the company by what it now represented, and not what it stood for previously. The Empire Service would be modified to make it, virtually, a World Service.[5]

In November 1939, the BBC's Empire Service and a "certain number of bulletins in the major European languages" were re-branded as the BBC Overseas Service.[6] This new name was viewed as accurately reflecting the BBC's mission of international broadcasting to all countries (including its colonies) and in different languages. In this context, the primary aim of the Overseas Service was

> "to provide frequent news bulletins and talks of vital topical interest, with the widest possible area of reception."[7]

Daily news bulletins were compiled from agencies, such as Reuters. These would be repeatedly re-broadcast to potential audiences across the Empire.

Following the re-branding exercise, the number of daily news bulletins broadcast in English increased to fourteen. By December 1939, these news bulletins had reached the respectable figure of fifty-one bulletins a day throughout the Empire.[8] The accompanying excerpt (Figure 5) from the Radio Guide of the *Trinidad Guardian* highlighted the news bulletins in January 1940. The newspaper also

published the news schedule for the transmission in the Spanish and Portuguese languages.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

RADIO GUIDE

DAVENTRY

ENTERTAINMENT

TALKS & DISCUSSIONS

NEWS

6.45 a.m.- News Summary
7.30 a.m.- Full News Bulletin
9.15 a.m.- News Summary
12.00 noon- Full News Bulletin
4.50 p.m.- News Summary
5.45 p.m.- Full News Bulletin
7.30 p.m.- News Summary
8.30 p.m.- Full News Bulletin
10.45 p.m.- News Summary
12.00 mid.- Full News Bulletin

SPANISH FEATURES:
10.00 a.m.- News in Spanish
9.45 p.m.- Talk or programmes in Spanish
10.00 p.m.- News in Spanish

PORTUGUESE FEATURES:
8.00 p.m.- News in Spanish
8.15 p.m.- Talk or programmes in Portuguese

U.S.A. Shortwave Programmes

[Author's Note: Here, a plethora of U.S. radio stations with programmes between 5.00 p.m. and 12 midnight followed.]

Figure 5: News Excerpt from "Radio Guide," *Trinidad Guardian*, January 3, 1940

Thus, through a growing network of transmission and reception, the BBC became a vital source of information for the colonies' residents.

Interestingly enough, records at the BBC Archives revealed that even Hitler's high command tuned-in to the BBC, so misleading did they find their own (German) news broadcasts! Further, German citizens were banned from listening to the BBC on pain of death or incarceration.[9]

By early 1940, the BBC Overseas Service modified its structure for yet the second time. Now, Empire Services broadcasts were distributed geographically over four broadcasting zones of the world. These were identified as,

Pacific	Eastern
African	North American.[10]

As illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 6 overleaf), the BBC's short-wave signals were transmitted to the different broadcasting zones worldwide. Seen here, there were numerous instances of overlap (or signal spill-over) when residents in one zone would hear programmes transmitted to another zone.[11] For example, persons in the United States could listen to these programmes simply because it was 'next door' to Canada.

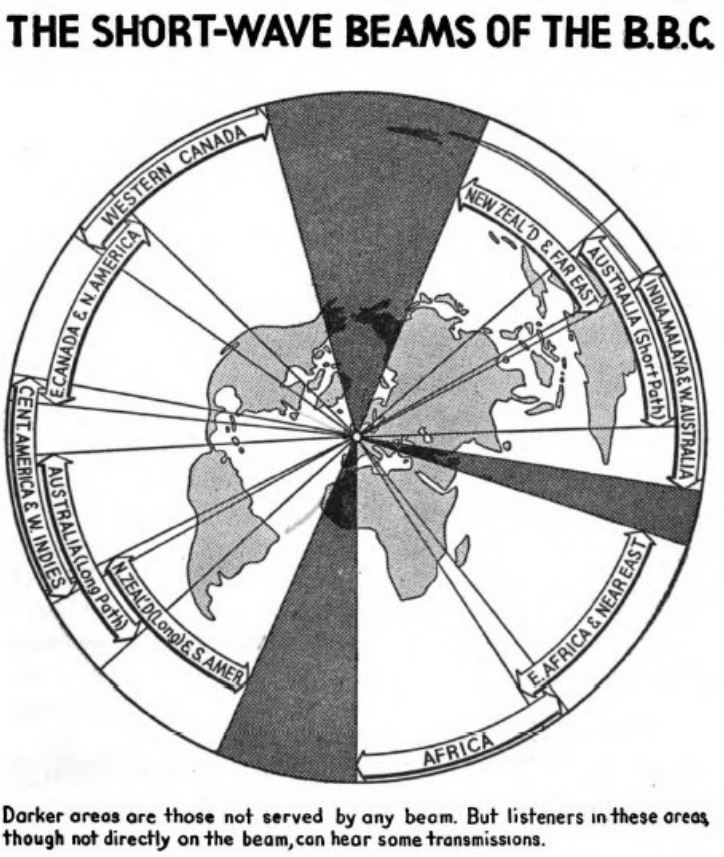

Figure 6: Shortwave Beams of the BBC
Source: *War on the Shortwave* by Harold Graves, Jnr.

II

THE PRICE OF CREDIBILITY

"Credibility in the mind of the actual audience
is the *sine qua non* of news. All else is
propaganda or entertainment."
Anthony Smith, British sociologist

The re-branding exercise and the eventual reorganizing of the BBC Overseas Service helped to enhance the BBC's credible neutrality. Along with the increased broadcast of news bulletins, the re-branding repositioned the BBC as an *alternative source* of credible news for a broad range of audiences around the world. For BBC executives,

> "the Corporation's reputation as an objective truth-telling organization was invaluable in gaining for Britain the trust of audiences, and much-needed allies abroad.''[12]

From the listener's point of view, the BBC provided them with "an *alternative programme* service" to that adopted by other governments aligned to Germany.[13]

But this proposed reputation for credibility as a news service came at a price. As mentioned above, one of the Ministry's principal functions was to take

> "full day-to-day editorial control of the BBC service of news and propaganda."[14]

By so doing, the Ministry of Information sought to ensure that broadcasts from the BBC Overseas Service to the colonies served Britain's colonial interests.

As foreseen, this apparent 'high-handed' approach by the Ministry of Information to openly control the BBC's operations and the contents of its broadcasts did not sit well with the BBC.[15] Given the BBC's adherence to independence from direct government control, several conflicts subsequently arose between the BBC and the Ministry. Writing in the BBC 1941 Yearbook, Harold Nicolson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Information, noted that

> "The British public, I am glad to feel, have a healthy dislike of all forms of governmental propaganda. It may be for this reason that the Ministry of Information (which is our equivalent of the vast

> propaganda agencies maintained at enormous cost by the totalitarian States) is the most unpopular department in the whole British Commonwealth of Nations."[16]

Eventually, by July 1941, with the appointment of a new Minister of Information (Brendan Bracken), confrontation gave way to cooperation. As the months passed, many of the functions previously handled by the Ministry reverted to the re-branded BBC. Now, much of the censorship process

> "evolved to senior and mid-level BBC staff, some of whom were seconded to the Ministry of Information: in practice, the BBC was often left to censor itself."[17]

Here, censorship meant ensuring that the BBC did not broadcast information likely to be of military value to the enemy. By adhering to this condition, the BBC now had full sway of its programme content to a large extent.

ENDNOTES

1.Arthur Calder Marshall, *Glory Dead*, London: Michael Joseph Ltd, 1939, 249.

2.Jerome S. Berg, *Broadcasting on the Short Waves, 1945 to Today*, North Carolina: McFarland Publishers, 2012, 10.

3.Philo Wasburn, *Broadcasting Propaganda: International Radio Broadcasting and the Construction of Political Reality*, California: Praeger Publishers, 1992, 11.

4.Ibid.

5.Conor Wilkinson, "*A Necessary Evil? Propaganda, Censorship, and Class in Britain's Ministry of Information, 1939 - 1941*," Liberated Arts: a journal for undergraduate research 1, Issue 1

(2015): 9.

6.The Overseas Service was financed from a government grant-in-aid (from the Foreign Office budget) and not from the domestic licence fee in Britain. By 1941, the Overseas Service was known administratively as the External Services of the BBC.

7.BBC Yearbook 1940, *London Calls the World*, 49.

8.Ibid, 47.

9.Ibid, 51, *"... those who, in search of the truth, are prepared to risk the penalties imposed by the Nazi Government on listening to foreign stations*."

10.BBC Yearbook 1941, *The Empire Service*, 35.

11.Harold N. Graves, Jr.,*War on the Short Wave*, New York: Foreign Policy Association, May 1941, 51.

12.Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 158.

13.BBC Year Book 1942, *Survey of the Year's Work in Broadcasting: Overseas Networks*, 10.

14.Conor Wilkinson, "*A Necessary Evil?*," 9.

15.Wasburn, *Broadcasting Propaganda*, 12.

16.BBC 1941 Yearbook, *Propaganda*, 27.

17.History of the BBC.
https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/100-voices/ww2/bore-war

SIX

THE BBC GOES TO WAR

In 1940, the Colonial Office - the body responsible for overall colonial policy - created its own Public Relations Branch (PRB). Like the Ministry of Information, one of the PRB's key objectives called for the suppressing of German war propaganda targeted at British colonies and neutral countries. The PRB also screened all propaganda material from the Ministry of Information (MoI) before it was released. Nonetheless, the MoI provided the finance and production infrastructure for operating the Public Relations Branch.

Both these propaganda agencies knew that Nazi Germany used radio as an essential propaganda medium. Edward Chester writes that,

> *"[In] just a few short months after the outbreak of World War II, German propagandists were transmitting close to 11 hours of programming a day, with the majority of the transmissions in English as well."*[1]

Many of these German broadcasts (transmitted in both Spanish and English) also targeted Latin American listeners. This is because several countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela, had significant numbers of German citizens who resided there. Further, many of them pledged loyalty to the Nazi regime and were capable of carrying out hostile acts.[2] But even among the local population of these countries, there existed a great deal of admiration for fascism. Indeed, many leaders of these Latin American countries fancied themselves in the mold of the Italian dictator, Mussolini.

Countering German propaganda broadcasts therefore became even more of an urgent issue following the completion of the report by the Moyne Commission (called the "Moyne Report") in 1940. This

report focused on the depressed economic and social conditions prevailing in the West Indies. These conditions had contributed to the spate of violent disturbances between 1933 and 1939. The Commission, nonetheless, criticize the colonial authorities for their role in this situation. However, the British government decided to suppress the Report.[3] Their rationale stemmed from the fact that these developments would have served as enemy propaganda during the war.

With Germany's focus on eroding the pro-British attitude in the West Indian colonies, the British Ministry of Information launched the Empire Publicity Campaign. This campaign proved to be one of the first carefully orchestrated war propaganda programmes in early 1940. It served as a counteroffensive to German propaganda broadcasts. These programmes also ensured that "when the British really needed to lie, it was likely to be believed."[4]

Further, it came as no surprise that the BBC Overseas Service invested heavily in broadcast programmes against such propaganda. Like the Empire Publicity Campaign, these programmes were designed to counter the criticisms of British imperialism and an oppressive Empire, being broadcast by both German and Italian radio stations. All overseas broadcasts now sought to persuade the inhabitants of the colonies to remain loyal to the King and continue to be confident of an Allied victory.

Yet in the West Indian colonies, most people were unaware that these BBC radio broadcasts all served a master propaganda plan. After all, they were all orchestrated by the Ministry of Information. But for a colonial populace seeking accurate information on the war, the credibility of the BBC News proved to be of key importance.

ENDNOTES

1.Edward Chester, *Radio, Television, and American Politics*. Sheed and Ward: New York, 1969, p. 342.

2.Humphrey Metzgena and John Graham, *Caribbean Wars Untold: A Salute to the British West Indies*, Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2007, 162.

3.it was not released until July 1945, after World War II ended.

4.Nicholas Cull, David Culbert, and David Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the present*, (California: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 38.

PART 3:

BRITISH BROADCASTING TO THE COLONIES

SEVEN

SOURCING A WIRELESS TRANSMITTER

I

THE MOYNE REPORT

The outbreak of war had established that radio was now the most successful medium to combine entertainment, news, propaganda, and advertisement. Mindful of this, BBC executives decided to strategically develop local broadcasting in the Caribbean region. They now approached the British government with a proposition. This bold idea involved establishing a network of Caribbean broadcasting stations across the West Indian colonies.

The government did not need convincing. Although they had suppressed the Moyne Report, colonial administrators had already decided to implement a few of the Commission's recommendations. One such recommendation was "the establishment of a wireless transmitter or transmitters in the Caribbean area."[1]

In preparing the report, the Commissioners thought that any question about the number and output of station transmitters involved a tradeoff between technical and economic considerations. Technically, more transmitters at a station would provide an effective service all over the West Indian colonies. Economically, there was a higher cost attached to having more transmitters. Such costs

> "would clearly be beyond the resources of the Governments of many of these Colonies to contribute their share of the capital expenditure."[2]

The report also noted that for

> "a single transmitter with an output of 10 kilowatts," the capital cost would be "of the order of £25,000."

On the other hand, for

> "at least three short wave transmitters with an output of about 20 kilowatts," the cost would rise to over £100,000."[3]

Apart from these considerations, there were social concerns. The report indicated that Empire services should be supplemented

> "by a local service which could be better suited to the particular needs of the West Indies than is possible in the case of programmes distributed from London."[4]

According to the report, such a service would facilitate the local colonial authorities in making their views and policies known among the populace. This was considered as being "so valuable a measure of social reform."[5]

In addition, a local service would be viewed as providing educational broadcasts and

> "meeting in part ... the admitted need of the older people for more and better opportunities for recreation."[6]

It was even suggested that should the local colonial authorities be unable to provide the necessary amplifiers and loudspeakers,

> “the cost might well be defrayed by a grant from the Colonial Development Fund."[7]

The BBC officials supported these recommendations from the Moyne Report.

II

THE TRINIDAD CONFERENCE

In May 1941, the BBC executives reiterated the strategic idea of a network of Caribbean broadcasting stations. This time, they presented their proposal at a conference held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, under the auspices of the Colonial Development and Welfare Organization. The organization's head, Sir Frank Stockdale, chaired the conference.[8] Although the proposal had merit, Sir Stockdale rejected by because there was no avenue to fund such a network.[9]

Despite this setback, BBC officials continued to lobby for the West Indian network, both in Britain and in the colonies. They expressed the hope that "the British financial situation would change for the better and funding would become available."[10]

Shortly after the conference, on May 16, 1941, the Trinidad Governor - Sir Hubert Young - wasted no time in bringing about a local but scaled version of this network. He entered into an agreement with Radio Distribution (Trinidad) Ltd. to establish a broadcasting station in the Trinidad colony. Radio Distribution was the local subsidiary of Rediffusion Overseas Ltd., a London-based technology company. Supposedly the station was intended to serve as a means to counteract subversive propaganda being spread in various parts of the colony.[11] The proposed station was to be

> "operated and maintained on a strictly non- commercial basis by the Company acting on behalf of the Government."[12]

Later, in his address to the Legislative Council, the Governor noted that Radio Distribution (Trinidad) Ltd. would provide the capital investment, estimated at some £6,000, which the Government would

> "repay in four equal annual installments in addition to interest at 5 percent per annum on the Company's capital outlay ... [with] operational expenses met by the government."[13]

What is particularly interesting about the Governor's address is his statement about the company's license. He stated that the license would be in effect during the war period and one year thereafter. Furthermore, on expiration, the company would be given the first refusal of any further broadcasting license or rights that the Government may be prepared to grant. This license would be on the condition that its previous service was satisfactory.

Additionally, the Government proposed that it would use the station for 1½ hours a day. Its programmes would take the form of news, talks, school programmes, and relays from the BBC programmes.[14]

Yet, despite these proposals and assurances, the radio station was not erected. Because of currency restrictions and other wartime difficulties in procuring supplies, the company could not obtain a transmitter during the war. As the Attorney-General for the Trinidad colony pointed out,

> *"The Company made every possible endeavour to obtain a transmitter. Unfortunately, they did not succeed. .... The Government, which had previously used all its powers in order to assist Radio Distribution to get a transmitter, then endeavoured to buy one and get one delivered here for itself. That effort ... did not succeed."*[15]

Despite this setback, the company focused its efforts instead on building a broadcast studio in the colony.

ENDNOTES

1.Denis Benn, *The Moyne Report: Report of the West Indian Royal Commission*, Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2011, 448.

2.Ibid,. 352.

3.Ibid

4. Ibid., 351.

5.Ibid., 353.

6.Ibid., 351.

7.Ibid., 353.

8.Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, 177.

9.Ibid., 178.

10.Ibid., 179.

11.Ibid.

12.Trinidad and Tobago, Hansard Legislative Council Records, "Statement made by the Attorney General at Meeting of Legislative Council," June 7, 1946, 1013, National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago.

13.Ibid., 1013.

14.Ibid

15.Ibid., 1014.

EIGHT

REDIFFUSION'S BROADCASTING HOUSE

Radio Distribution (Trinidad) Ltd. was a central player on the media landscape by the end of 1939. This much was evident with Governor Sir Hubert Young noting that "there were approximately 1,000 subscribers to the rediffusion service."[1] This number increased significantly during the early months of the war as rates of listening improved, especially for the BBC news broadcasts about the war.

Those persons who could not afford the $2.00 per month rental fee for the Rediffusion box visited the homes of neighbours, friends, and family members. There, they would gather round the cabinet-type radio box to hear the programmes. Yet others would listen outside the homes of those who had Rediffusion access and who facilitated this need for news. Rediffusion boxes were also installed on commercial premises, including bars, for employees and patrons alike. Thus, by 1941, most residents in Port-of-Spain and those in those towns, extending as far as Tunapuna in the East and San Fernando in the south, had at least some access to Radio Distribution's wired broadcasts.

During the latter months of 1941, given the increased number of subscribers to its network, Radio Distribution (Trinidad) Ltd. decided to build a broadcasting studio. The company eventually spent $151,570 to purchase the necessary broadcasting equipment. Once procured, they requested the services of technicians from Rediffusion Ltd., the parent company. The company granted their request. Eventually, the company sourced the required $6,000 to pay for the traveling expenses and salaries of these technicians. They would provide technical support to the new studio, including technical advice to the Government.[2]

By the middle of 1942, an improved Radio Distribution studio had been constructed. It was 'improved' because this studio was an extension to the company's main receiving center at Mount Hololo (commissioned in January 1936).[3] As revealed in Volume 1 (*"Radio Days in Colonial Trinidad, 1928 - 1939*," the first transmitters at this main center

> "contained advanced radio equipment that received the Empire Service transmissions and then rediffused (or re-broadcast) the audio signals to the surrounding homes across Port of Spain. By then, the company had established a wired network system in Port-of-Spain. This system involved the installation of overhead landlines to eliminate signal interference. The first rediffused broadcast was made from this center on February 1, 1936."[4]

Like the BBC's main centres in Great Britain called 'Broadcasting Houses,'[5] the company also named this new studio 'Broadcasting House'. The building was situated at 11B Maraval Road in Port-of-Spain.[6]

DID YOU KNOW ...?
A **radio studio** is a room in a **radio station**. It is a room in which a radio program or show is produced, either for live broadcast or for recording for a later broadcast.

Eventually, on June 24, 1942, the new Governor, Sir Bede Clifford, officially opened the new studio and made the first broadcast.[7] Note that this 'broadcast' was NOT transmitted in the actual sense of being broadcast to a broad audience from a radio station (that had a transmitter). Instead, the Governor's message was recorded and re-diffused (rebroadcast) across the Radio Distribution (Trinidad) Ltd's wired network. The new studio also had the facilities to rebroadcast programmes from the BBC and other short wave stations in America and Canada.

The new studio broadcasted news, features, music, and entertainment programmes. Most notably among its BBC programme offerings was the *Calling the West Indies* programme. This latter programme had become very popular with Caribbean audiences. As C. A. L. Cliffe, Overseas Programme Director at the BBC noted,

> *"Contact with the listener in far countries is sedulously fostered, and every effort is made to ascertain and meet the tastes of listeners by the encouragement of personal correspondence and criticism and by the close study and analysis of Press comments from every part."*[8]

Yet one of the unspoken but underlying objectives of the studio - not mentioned in the history of Rediffusion in Trinidad - was to aid in the diffusion of BBC programmes to help counter German propaganda.

ENDNOTES

1.Escalante, *Radio Days*, 57; See also CO 323/1651/4. Report from Governor Young to Colonial Secretary of State MacDonald, November 25,1939 in Harriet Edwards, "The Decline of the British and the Rise of American Influence in Trinidad" (PhD. dissertation, The University of the West Indies, 1997), 63.

2.Ibid., 1014.

3.Escalante, *Radio Days*, 56

4.Escalante, *Radio Days*, 56.

5.BBC Yearbook 1940, *Notes of the Year*, 3.

6.Anthony, *Making of Port-of-Spain*, 133.

7.Ibid.

8.BBC Yearbook 1940, *London Calls The World*, 52.

NINE

THE CONTENT OF BBC PROGRAMMES

I

'PROGRAMME FOR THE FORCES'

During the month of February 1940, the BBC's Chairman, Sir Allan Powell, introduced a programme for Britain's Armed Forces. It was created mostly for the soldiers in the Armed Forces. These soldiers were the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.), who were shipped to France.[1] Appropriately, this programme was called '*Programme for the Forces.*'

The programme aired on February 19 and provided news and light entertainment, in one form or another, which would be heard and enjoyed by the B.E.F. troops.[2] Such entertainment included a variety of music and talk shows. However, by May 1940, these broadcasts had stopped as the British Army found itself "kicked off the beaches of Northern France"[3] following the German invasion.

DID YOU KNOW ...?
Dunkirk is a 2017 war film that depicts the evacuation of Allied soldiers (English, French and other Europeans) from the beaches of Dunkirk in May 1940, following their humiliating retreat during the Battle of France at the hands of the German Army.

But such was the success of this initial programme that by June 1940, the BBC started its Empire Entertainments Unit. This unit broadcasted to all the Armed Forces serving abroad.[4] These British troops were stationed in Gibraltar, Malta, Palestine, India, and the Far East.[5] To head this Unit, the BBC appointed Cecil Madden, a Morocco-born Englishman. His job was to manage broadcasts that provided

stories about what was happening to the soldiers posted overseas.[6] He also managed other programmes such as those that produced music and light stories.[7]

One of the Unit's programmes saw the broadcasts of letters from British troops stationed in the Near East, East Africa, and the Far East to families and friends back home. Such intimate broadcasts represented the most significant audience gatherer of all the BBC's broadcasts in Britain. But while for many soldiers, '*home*' meant Britain, for many others, it meant the various British colonies on the other side of the world.

Such was the case in the Trinidad colony.

In 1939-40, there were few West Indians in the British Armed Forces, especially the Royal Air Force. Prominent Trinidadians, however, made early attempts to get the Governor to send a contingent of soldiers to Britain. However, the Colonial Office declined the offer, noting that West Indian troops were not needed because of the then-favourable outlook of the war.[8] This period became known as the *Phoney War*. Despite this setback, many young men opted to purchase their passage to England (by ship) and join the Armed Forces.

Further, West Indian voices failed to be heard on radio sets by those at 'home' in the colony. Nonetheless, many Trinidadians in their homes would listen to the numerous BBC news bulletins broadcasted throughout the day and night. Figure 7 shows a photo of such listening during this period. Here, a man is pictured holding a newspaper with the listing of radio programmes while simultaneously tuning the radio receiver to a desired broadcast frequency.

Such was the importance of transmission times that, by early 1940, entertainment details were no longer published. Evidence of this consequence is indicated in the schedule of 'Radio Programmes' in the *Trinidad Guardian* of March 1940. See Figure 8.

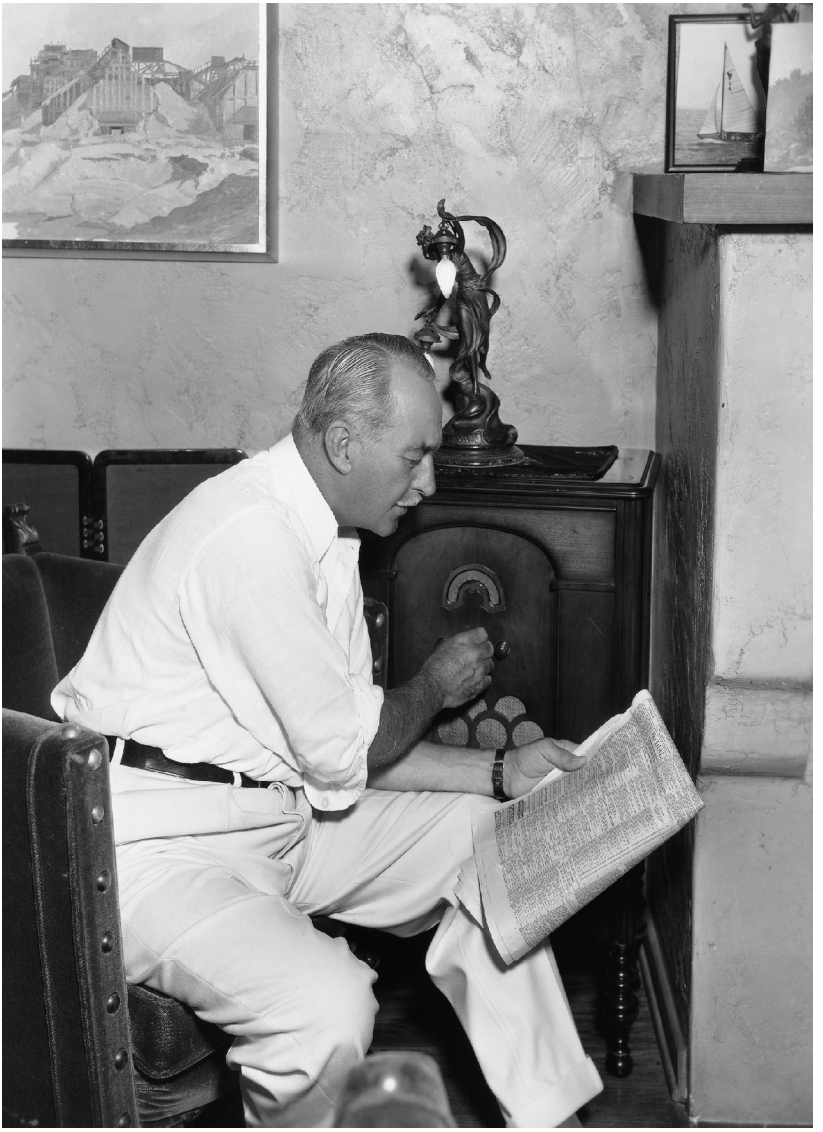

Figure 7: Man surveying the newspaper to tune-in to the news on shortwave radio.
Source: depositphotos.com

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Radio Programmes

DAVENTRY

Following are the times of news broadcasts, which are interspersed with talks, recorded programmes, and entertained items (Trinidad) time is given):

Morning: 2.15 a.m.-Bulletin;
4 a.m.-Summary; 5 a.m.-Bulletin; 6.45 a.m.-Summary; 7.30 a.m.-Bulletin; 9.15 a.m.-Bulletin; 12 noon- Bulletin.

Evening: 1.30 p.m.- Bulletin; 3 p.m.-Summary; 4.50 p.m.-Summary; 5.45 p.m.-Bulletin; 7.30 p.m.-Summary; 8.30 p.m.-Bulletin; 10.45 p.m.-Bulletin; 12 midnight-Bulletin.

Intermediate news items (if any) are given at the hour.

Figure 8: "Radio Programmes," *Trinidad Guardian*, March 1, 1940

Furthermore, the BBC Publication, *London Calls the World*, previously known as *BBC Empire Broadcasting*, gave the programmes' full schedules. These were transmitted by short-wave from the BBC's Overseas Service. As C. A. L. Cliffe, Overseas Programme Director, at the BBC noted,

> "*For the information of listeners and the overseas Press, there exist a number of special publications giving details of the BBC's programmes and a general picture of its activities. These are published in a number of foreign languages as well as in English ... and are an essential part of the system by which `London Calls the World'.*"[9]

The times and frequencies of the short-wave transmission in foreign languages were also provided. The publication further contained

special articles and the more important topical talks broadcasted over the BBC's Home or Overseas Services.[10]

II

A CARIBBEAN REGIONAL FOCUS

Like the rest of the world, Trinidadians had to endure one nerve-racking crisis after another as the superpowers flexed their muscles across the various theatres of war, whether Europe, Mediterranean or the Middle East. It was therefore not uncommon for West Indian families to sit around a typical cabinet-type radio to listen attentively to the BBC news about the war.

In most cases, after listening to the news, they would spend time discussing the recent events. Most discussions revolved around the British in the Mediterranean and the Middle East Theatre. This is significant. The humbling evacuation of the British Army from the beaches of Dunkirk in Northern France in May 1940 witnessed a turn of events in Britain's conduct of the war.

Recently elected as Prime Minister, Churchill decided not to send British troops back to France to fight Hitler's Third Reich. Instead, he sent half of Britain's Armed Forces and tanks, thousands of miles away to Egypt.[11] There, they spent the next four years "paddling around the Mediterranean"[12] and fighting in Northern Africa, far from the main European Theatre. Britain only returned to France with American allies in 1944.

Nonetheless, the radio broadcasts about the British disaster at Dunkirk, and the war in the Mediterranean and Northern Africa inadvertently helped to cultivate a growing fear among the populace. This fear was grounded in the possibility that Hitler might turn his attention to the oil-rich Caribbean colonies.[13] After all, *in 1939, did not*

Hitler want Trinidad and Venezuela as part of Germany's Third Reich?[14]

Given the fear and dread dwelling in the colony, differences between groups were temporarily set aside as the magnitude of the war loomed. The various groups in the colony realized that they were all Trinidadians - all British subjects - and Britain was in this war alone[15] and needed '*all hands on deck*.' In fact, America, the other greatest superpower, had proclaimed neutrality at the time and chose isolationism, preferring not to get involved. Such a perspective did a great deal to unite the various groups in the colony. However, some persons still viewed the war as Britain's war, not theirs.[16]

This attitude did not go unnoticed by the Colonial Office. They realized that radio programmes could be useful in mobilizing awareness and support for the war. They could also serve as a counter to the activism in these colonies. However, the BBC news bulletins were only supplementary to other news sources, such as the *Trinidad Guardian* and U.S. newscasts available to the residents.

In this context, the Colonial Office made a decisive recommendation to the administrators and producers at the BBC's Overseas Service. They suggested that the Empire Service programming be tailored to actively court West Indians' support for the war effort.[17] As Whittington alluded,

> *"in the context of total war and significant civilian sacrifice, programming would need to reflect the communities it was intended to reach."*[18]

Thus, starting in late 1940, with the MoI's approval, and under Madden's direction, the BBC implemented regular programming specifically for West Indian audiences.[19] To achieve an authentic setting, the BBC ensured that it employed writers and broadcasters of colonial origin. One of these broadcasters who later hosted the programme was Jamaican activist and poet, Una Marson.

DID YOU KNOW ...?
Almost four years after the war started, on **February** 20, 1944, a contingent of Trinidad soldiers was despatched to serve in the war. The Colonial Office only gave the go-ahead three months before the Allied invasion of German-occupied France.

ENDNOTES

1.BBC Yearbook 1941, *Broadcasting in 1940*, 12.

2.ibid, 14.

3.David Reynolds, *World War Two: 1942 and Hitler's Soft Underbelly*, BBC Documentary. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NK0FNnTX6cI

4.BBC Yearbook 1942, *Calling Forces Overseas*, 70.

5.BBC Year Book 1941, *The Empire Service*, 37

6.BBC Yearbook 1941, *Broadcasting in 1940*, 13.

7.Ibid.

8.Anthony, *Port-of-Spain in a World at War*, 201.

9.BBC Yearbook 1940, "*London Calls the World*," 52.

10.Ibid.

11.For a thorough explanation as to why, see Escalante's *Flying on Trinidad Oil*, and Reynolds's BBC documentary, *World War Two: 1942 and Hitler's Soft Underbelly*.

12.Ibid.

13.See Richard M. Escalante's *Flying on Trinidad Oil*, Arouca: Kairi Publishing House, 2019.

14.Ibid.

15.The U.S. did not enter the war until December 1941 .

16.See also Anthony, *Port-of-Spain in a World at War, 1935-1945*

17.Ibid, 49.

18.Ian Whittington. *Writing the Radio War* (Edinburgh Critical Studies in War and Culture) . Edinburgh University Press. Kindle Edition. 2019

19.Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, 149.

TEN

UNA MARSON AND "*CALLING THE WEST INDIES*"

Cecil Madden needed an assistant. More so, he needed a West Indian assistant, one who had lived in the colonies and understood the psyche of West Indians. He soon found one in a young Jamaican called Una Marson. Marson was an author, journalist, and political activist who lived and worked in London since 1938.[1] She would assist him on occasions with broadcasts to the West Indian colonies.

According to Jarrett-Macauley, Marson met with Madden frequently where she

> *"suggest[ed] programme alterations as well as developing and moderating programme formats for West Indian broadcasts."*[2]

Marson's ability and education impressed Madden and he implemented several of her suggestions. However, it should be noted that broadcasts to the West Indian colonies were relatively few compared to other colonies throughout the Empire.[3]

Eventually, starting in early 1941, the BBC created a new department that came to be known as the Colonial Service for the Caribbean under John Grenfell Williams, Director of Colonial Services.[4] The department's rationale stemmed from senior officials' interest in the Empire Services Division. Their concern lay in handling British policy toward the West Indian colonies in the wake of previous labour unrest in the Region.

It should be noted that from the very outset of British radio broadcasting in the 1930s, such broadcasts tended "to construct a view of world politics that served its colonial interests."[5] In fact, as Ian Whittington, Assistant Professor of English, surmised,

> *"As an agency charged with projecting a positive image of Britain to its colonies and allies abroad, the Overseas Service had little time for dissenting views of the Empire."*[6]

All this changed when war erupted in 1939.

In the context of total war, Britain needed its colonies. Now, specialized programming was required "to reflect the communities it was intended to reach"[7] and boost transnational solidarity. And as historian Simon Potter showed,

> "*The increase in specialised programming was designed to reinforce ties between the metropole and its colonial sources of material and human resources*."[8]

One of the programmes was *Calling the West Indies*.

Calling the West Indies was a specialized programme that required broadcasters and writers of West Indian origin. Such persons would give a distinct characteristic to the programme. It broadcasted daily for twenty minutes, thirty with advertisements. See Table 1.

Table 1: Transmission Details for *Calling the West Indies*	
Period	7 days a week (Sunday - Saturday)
Time of Programme	7.00 - 7.30 p.m. (30 minutes)
Duration of Programme without advertisements	20 minutes
Total Time Per Week = 2 ⅓ hours	

Soon enough, Director Williams sought a specialist to oversee the West Indian programmes. It was here that Director Madden's

favorable recommendation of Marson was instrumental in her securing this position.[9] The stage was set for Una Marson to move up the BBC hierarchy.

In March 1941, having completed her BBC probation, Marson was appointed full-time Programme Assistant on the Empire broadcasts of the Overseas Service programmes. But despite her advancement, Marson, like other BBC employees of colonial extract, had to contend with the notion that the BBC was primarily an 'agent of imperial diffusion.'[10]

In her position, Marson continued to host and coordinate featured broadcasts for the *Calling the West Indies* programme. One of the programme's main features was similar to the '*Programme for the Forces*.' This aspect of the broadcast featured actual West Indian servicemen and other war workers stationed in Britain, not just war correspondents.[11] According to the BBC Yearbook 1942,

> "Members of the forces from all the West Indian Islands sent messages home every week, [with] Una Marson, the Jamaican journalist, acting as compère."[12]

Trinidadian and other West Indian soldiers serving in Britain now had the opportunity to read letters and send messages to their families back home on the programme. Many families would regularly gather around the radio in their living rooms to listen to these messages.

Ulric Cross was one such Trinidad serviceman who read letters and publicly endorsed the '*Calling the West Indies*' programme.[13] Like him, many persons had made their way to the 'mother country.' For them, the programme played a key role in keeping their families abreast of their well-being while in Britain. Eventually, as the war progressed, so too did these specialized broadcasts increased in length.

Marson also set about conceiving and developing several broadcasts grouped under this title programme. These broadcasts covered/articulated such topics as current events, interviews, music, and cultural features from the Caribbean. Other aspects of the programme included West Indian poetry and journalism that connected West Indian listeners across the Atlantic to "West Indian and diasporic black experiences" in Britain.[14] Many West Indian musicians were also brought into the studios to give a distinctive West Indian slant to the programme.

Such instances did not go unnoticed. Whittington states that

> *"internal correspondence indicates that Marson's presence, especially in the early months of the programme, received considerable attention in the West Indies, and that the contents of broadcasts were summarised in newspapers, thereby extending the reach of the programme through print (R46/92)."*[15]

From the BBC's perspective, the programme appeared to be growing in popularity in West Indian colonies. But then again, perception is not always truth.

In fact, for all her zeal, Marson's distinctive West Indian slant did not appear consistent across the British Caribbean colonies. Whittington mentions the following incident which throws light on the already-forming nationalist yet xenophobic nature of West Indians in the colonies, and toward Marson. He states that

> *"On 19 May 1941, the West Indian programmes division received a telegram from Port of Spain, Trinidad, which claimed that public interest in Calling the West Indies was virtually non-existent in Trinidad owing to a perceived focus on Jamaican speakers and issues."*[16]

Despite such complaints, it must be realized that the programme's producers only had "a limited pool of students, soldiers, intellectuals

and war workers" in Britain to call upon as a representative sample of Caribbean voices.[17]

Nonetheless, Marson persevered and was duly rewarded. In March 1942, her report on the production of various Caribbean broadcasts programmes found favor with both Williams and Madden as well as the BBC's senior management. Williams, in particular, noted that

> *"in fairness to her, I must say that with the limited material at her disposal and the extremely hard work involved, she has done a very good job."*[18]

By April 1942, just one month after her report, Marson was promoted to West Indies Producer for the *Calling the West Indies programme.*

Although Trinidadian listeners regularly tuned-in to U.S. entertainment programmes, the increased news bulletins and the *Calling the West Indies* programme helped foster a definite change in West Indians' attitudes toward the BBC Overseas Service. The potential audience for these BBC broadcasts was now multiplied many times over by the regular re-transmitting of at least one of the BBC's news bulletins every day.

ENDNOTES

1.Marson had begun freelancing for the BBC in London back in 1938 with the aim of making her mark as a BBC Caribbean journalist.

2.Delia Jarrett-Macauley, *The Life of Una Marson, 1905–65*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010, 146.

3.Ibid.

4.Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, 176.

5.Wasburn, *Broadcasting Propaganda*, 11.

6.Ian Whittington. *Writing the Radio War* (Edinburgh Critical Studies in War and Culture) . Edinburgh University Press. Kindle Edition, 2019.

7.Ibid.

8.Simon Potter J., *Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922-1970*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, 117.

9.Jarrett-Macauley, *Una Marson*, 146.

10.Whittington. *Writing the Radio War,* 2019.

11.Darrell Newton, "*Calling the West Indies: the BBC World Service and Caribbean Voices*," Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television 28, no. 4 (Dec. 2008): 489.

12.BBC Yearbook 1942, *'Calling Forces Overseas,'*71.

13.Ulric Cross was one of over 10,000 West Indians who enlisted in the British Armed Forces (most of whom were in the RAF) during the war. Many other persons (in the thousands) volunteered for other forms of war work.

14.Whittington, *Writing the Radio War,* 2019.

15.Ibid.

16.Ibid. Quote from National Archives (R46/92).

17.Ibid.

18.Jarrett-Macauley, *Una Marson*, 146.

PART 4:

THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN RADIO STATIONS

ELEVEN

AMERICAN RADIO STATIONS

Before the outbreak of war in 1939, America had just over700 radio stations. These stations operated in the long-wave, medium-wave, and short-wave bands and were privately owned by individuals and companies.[1] They possessed low-powered transmitters that broadcasted programmes both domestically and internationally. Yet the United States had no government station with an official American presence on the international airwaves.

With the declaration of war by Britain and France against Germany, the Federal Communications Commission established the following policy:

> "A licensee of an international broadcast station shall render only an international broadcast service which will reflect the culture of this country and which will promote international goodwill, understanding and cooperation. Any program solely intended for and directed to an audience in the continental United States does not meet the requirements for this service."[2]

However, some broadcasters and many citizens thought that this policy was an attempt by the U.S. Department of State to impose censorship measures.

In some respects, the American listening public were like the Trinidadian listeners to the BBC programmes. That is, American listeners did not take kindly to the propaganda broadcasts from their country's radio stations. Government officials now sought to convince citizens that the state did not intend to censor information. To achieve this, they used various new programming techniques to inform the public.

One such approach was the use of 'fireside chats' by President Roosevelt. Through these carefully cultivated 'chats,' the President made his listeners feel as if they were both at home.[3] He could thus directly address the fears and concerns of the American people and inform them of the positions and actions taken by the U.S. government.

Another successful method employed was the "*you technique.*" This approach served to put the listener directly in situations, like a battle or being in a military camp, by addressing them personally. This technique demanded the use of imagination. Generally, Trinidadians were influenced by listening to and imagining this type of radio programming. For example, once America entered the war, Trinidadians became vicariously immersed in actual battle situations even though they lived thousands of miles away. Such subtle techniques had a decisive influence on how Trinidadians perceived the Allied war against the Nazi threat.

Developments in programming also extended to news, dramas, and comedy, and these soon became standardized on all stations. Radio programmes, in particular the "soap operas," were also very popular. Through the use of voice and special sound effects, these radio shows sought to replace vision with visualization. Such broadcasts provided a variety of top-class entertainment that entered the homes of many Trinidadian families.

DID YOU KNOW ...?
Soap operas were so called because the sponsors of these serialized radio shows were usually soap companies who targeted housewives.

Further, like the American listeners, Trinidad radio listeners were particularly receptive to American fast-paced popular music. Such

music included Swing, Big band, Jazz, and Country music, that dominated the airwaves. They also enjoyed listening to sporting events, talk shows, newscasts, and political commentaries.

ENDNOTES

1.Scott, Carole. "History of the Radio Industry in the United States to 1940". EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. March 26, 2008. URL http://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-history-of-the-radio-industry-in-the-united-states-to-1940/

2.Rose, Cornelia Bruère. *National Policy for Radio Broadcasting*, New Hampshire: Ayer Publishing, 1971, 244.

3.Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol 3: The War of Words*, London: Oxford University Press, 1970, 662.

TWELVE

FOUR U.S. RADIO STATIONS

I

THE RADIO STATIONS

U.S. radio stations featured prominently during the war years in Trinidad, and by extension, the West Indian colonies. Four key stations were Radio WRUW, Radio WRUL, Radio KGEI, and Radio KWID.

All these stations were commercial in operation and had call signs starting with 'K' or 'W.' These initial letters stemmed from an International Radiotelegraphs Conference convened in 1912. Here, several countries agreed that they would allocate specific letters to identify each country's radio and television signals. The United States was assigned the letters W, K, N, and A. The letters 'W' and 'K' were assigned for commercial stations in the United States with 'K' for stations located west of the Mississippi River and 'W' for stations east of the river. There were, however, exceptions to this assigning of letters; military stations used the letters 'N' and 'A'.

Radio WRUL and Radio WRUW

Radio WRUL was an experimental short-wave station at Hatherly Beach on the Massachusetts coast. It was founded in 1927 by Walter S. Lemmon, a former IBM president, and the World Wide Broadcasting Foundation. Before the war started, the station had a 20-kW high-power transmitter and broadcasted local non-commercial, educational, and cultural programs. The station's transmitter call sign at the time was W1XAL.[1] The station later secured an additional transmitter with call sign W1XAR.

The station became closely associated with the Christian Science Church and the scripture teachings of its founder, Mary Baker Eddy. With Mr. Lemmon being a Christian Scientist and teacher, several principles of these teachings found their way into the radio broadcasts.

Four days after Britain and France declared war on Germany, on September 7, 1939, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regularized the call sign letters for the two transmitters. They were registered as Radio WRUL (World Radio University Listeners) and Radio WRUW.[2]

Then, in April 1940, recognizing the immense public interest in the European War, the FCC decided

> "to permit domestic broadcast stations to rebroadcast the programs of international stations, on a non-commercial basis, with the originating station's consent."[3]

As such, through its programmes, the station gained a large national as well as a worldwide listening audience. This coverage did not go unnoticed by foreign operatives in America, and it soon caught the eye of the British Security Co-ordination organization.

The British Security Co-ordination (BSC) was a covert organization created by Prime Minister Winston Churchill when he came to power in May 1940. The BSC worked in close collaboration with the FBI, and more so with its Director, J. Edgar Hoover, who sanctioned its activities on American soil. President Roosevelt also endorsed the co-operation between the two organizations. The Canadian industrialist William Stephenson headed the BSC office in America.

DID YOU KNOW ...?
The BSC was a covert division of the **British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)** established in May 1940 in New York City.

The organization's general mandate revolved around intelligence gathering and propaganda services. Specifically, the BSC was to promote and mobilize pro-British opinion British interests in the United States, counter Nazi propaganda, and protect the Atlantic convoys leaving Trinidad from enemy sabotage.[4] It achieved its mandate by influencing news coverage in key newspapers on the U.S. East Coast, as well as Radio WNYW (New York Worldwide). Other radio stations and newspapers later received these stories, which were then relayed to the American public.[5]

The BSC viewed Radio WRUL as a vehicle for conducting political warfare on behalf of the British. Through third parties, the BSC provided the funding and the personnel to develop the station's foreign-language broadcast capability. It also supplied high-quality stories and programming for dissemination worldwide to Europe and South America. The BSC staff also wrote the news stories for American audiences over an informal network of over 300 stations. By 1941, WRUL had become, unintentionally, an arm of the BSC, though outwardly independent and believing itself to be so.[6]

DID YOU KNOW ...?
Notable personalities who worked for the British Security Co-ordination included Ian Flemming (naval intelligence officer and author of the James Bond books), Roald Dahl (British novelist and wartime fighter pilot), and Gilbert Highet (historian, and professor of Greek and Latin at Columbia University).

Interestingly, the BBC's *Calling the West Indies* programme found its way to America, where it was broadcast by the U.S. Office of War Information in Washington. The programme aired daily from 7.00 to 7.25 p.m. over two U.S. radio stations: Radio WRUL and Radio WRUW.[7] Then again, Trinidadians may not have found it unusual (nor questioned it) to listen to this particular BBC programme broadcasted from these two U.S. radio stations.

With America's entry into the war, the BSC's hold on Radio WRUW began to lessen. On November 9, 1942, the BSC handed over the WRUL operation to U.S. control.[8] But this was not because of Section 606 of the U.S. Communications Act of 1934. This Act allowed the President to control the broadcasting operations of short-wave stations and other telecommunications facilities in times of war or other national emergencies.[9] Instead, the President established two government agencies: the Office of War Information (OWI) to handle vital communication issues, and the Office of Censorship to deal with censorship issues.[10] WRUL's operations were transferred to the OWI.

Radio KGEI

It was located in Redwood City, California, Radio KGEI was a high-frequency, short-wave radio station established by General Electric Company in 1939. The call sign letters KGEI stood for General Electric International. The station offered a wide range of programming content that catered to the tastes of the local population. However, Radio KGEI was fortunate to possess a 50-kW transmitter, which allowed it to propagate short-wave signals worldwide. These signals reached far and wide across the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean, the latter including the Caribbean.

During 1942,with US soldiers fighting in the Pacific theatre, the station was the *only* voice from mainland America from which they could hear the news from 'home.'[11] On July 19, 1942, *The New York Times* wrote an article headlined "*KGEI Tells Them*." It noted that

> "Nothing stirs the hearts of soldiers and sailors as much as hearing the introduction to the station's programs: "This is the United States of America.""[12]

Interestingly, over in the Caribbean, Trinidadians heard these same broadcasts.

Radio KWID

Radio KWID was a short-wave radio station based in San Francisco. Before the war started, it operated as a medium-wave news station with the call letters KSFO. In November 1942, the federal government commissioned the station to reach an international audience. Within three months, the owners upgraded the infrastructure. They now had a powerful short-wave station with a range of antennas allowing broadcasts to be transmitted to Alaska, the Far East, Australia, and Latin America.[13] The station's call letters were also changed to KWID.

II

THE *VOICE OF AMERICA* NETWORK

These four U.S. shortwave stations were the main ones that most Trinidad residents listened to during the war. They also formed part of a few such stations that cooperated with the U.S. State Department and the F.C.C to expand the government's overseas news programme.[14] Initially, the government leased these radio stations to its Office of the Coordinator of Information(COI) in Washington. Established on July 11, 1941, the COI provided "war news and commentary" to these stations "for use on a voluntary basis."[15]

Following America's entry into World War II in December 1941, the COI began direct broadcasting via General Electric's Radio KGEI. Other stations soon followed. The COI also began developing an

overseas radio programme for broadcast by these stations to Germany and its captured territories. This programme became known as the Voice of America. The first broadcast to Germany - called 'Voices from America' - was transmitted on February 1, 1942.[16] Eventually, these short-wave stations served as the basis for the 'Voice of America' (VOA) radio network. This latter network initially borrowed transmitters from the commercial networks for their programmes.[17]

Four months later, on June 13, 1942, President Roosevelt dissolved the COI and separated its functions by creating two new agencies. These agencies were the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)[18] and the Office of War Information (OWI).[19] With the latter, Sterling and Kittross mention that

> "roughly two-thirds of OWI's budget went for overseas operations, leaving one-third for the domestic bureau. A section of the latter, the Radio Bureau, ... was created to deliver important war-related messages efficiently to radio listeners."[20]

As such, the Office of War Information (OWI) officially took over VOA's operations. The VOA now consolidated government information services and created, disseminated, and broadcast Allied war propaganda at home and abroad.

DID YOU KNOW ...?
The Office of Strategic Services was the predecessor of the **Central Intelligence Agency**.

DID YOU KNOW ...?
The Office of War Information preceded the United States Information Agency (USIA). This latter agency became known overseas as the **United States Information Service (USIS)**.

ENDNOTES

1.http://www.stellamaris.no/wnyw3.htm

2.http://www.stellamaris.no/wnyw3.htm

3.https://www.bostonradio.org/timeline/timeline-40s

4.See
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Security_Co-ordination

5.Ibid.

6.William Stephenson. *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas 1940-1945*, Illinois: Fromm International, 1999, 60-62.

7.See Paragraph 3 of "New Broadcast from America to W. Indies," *Trinidad Guardian*, February 4, 1943, 5.

8.http://www.stellamaris.no/wnyw3.htm.

9.Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned: A History of American Programming*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002, 3rd ed, Chapter 6: Radio Goes to War (1941-1945), p.235.

10.Ibid.

11.http://www.theradiohistorian.org/kgei.htm.

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THIRTEEN

THE AMERICAN PRESENCE

On October 10, 1940, shortly after the Destroyer-for-Bases Lease Agreement was signed, an expeditionary group of U.S. military planners arrived in Trinidad aboard the USS St. Louis. They were to search for appropriate sites for Army and Navy bases. Two U.S. Army Air Force bases (designated as Base Headquarters and Air Base Squadrons) would be constructed. One Army Air Force base (Fort Read) would be at Waller Field in the forested area of Cumuto (south of the town of Arima) in North Trinidad. The other base would be situated at Carlsen Field, a forested area (south of the town of Chaguanas) in Central Trinidad. A U.S. Naval Operating Base and a Naval Air Station (with a blimp base), would also be constructed in Chaguaramus, the North-West peninsula of the island. Ancillary construction sites were further procured in Valencia, Sangre Grande, Port-of Spain, St. Clair, and Laventile. In Port-of-Spain, the Americans were given a section of the wharf, and access to the vicinity of Wrightson Road.[1]

DID YOU KNOW ...?
The **Destroyers-for-Bases Agreement** was an agreement between the United States and Britain whereby America transferred 50 U.S. Navy destroyers to the Royal Navy in exchange for land rights on British possessions in the Caribbean and Canada.

But right from the start, there were disagreements between Governor- General Young and the U.S. personnel over the location of these sites. Eventually, the Americans prevailed. Between March and April 1941, a garrison of U.S. troops and workers landed in Trinidad and began groundwork on the construction and staffing of the U.S. bases.[2]

The Americans had landed in Trinidad amid social conflict, and where the mantra for change was being echoed in all quarters of society. Despite reassurances from the U.S. military officials "to minimize any disturbance in the normal life of the [local] community,"[3] the Americans made their presence felt almost immediately among the local populace. And as Harvey Neptune aptly noted,

> *"the myriad manifestations of their presence - from big, rumbling trucks to casual laboring, white men to abundant, well-paying work - all but guaranteed the eras's chronic unsettlement."*[4]

The Americans left the public little choice but to deal with the "America" in their midst.[5]

The arrival of American troops saw several significant changes, almost overnight, to the colony's way of life. First, thousands of locals - black and white, African, East Indian and Creole - found gainful employment with the U.S. Armed Forces. By April 1942, the number of local workers had swollen to 25,000 persons.[6] They received higher wages than they were accustomed to in the agricultural, oil, and public sectors. Neptune noted that the Americans paid these workers $120 a month compared to the $80 a month they previously obtained with local employers.[7] Comparatively, the U.S. troops were highly paid "with enlisted personnel receiving (in 1994 dollars) an average of $750 a month and officers $2,200 a month."[8]

Although seasonal rains in the colony had delayed construction, these local workers were able to clear vast tracts of forests before U.S. construction crews could be brought in to build the required infrastructure.[9] They also helped to construct the bases and roads to transport troops as the existing transportation arteries in the colony were too narrow to accommodate the heavy American vehicles. Soon, both American and local workers quickly converted the colony into an outpost of Caribbean defence.

Second, the Americans generally viewed the Trinidadians as their equal and not as colonial subjects. This idea of equality grasped the attention of the local public. Apart from seeing thousands of white men, sometimes bare-chested, engaging in heavy manual labour, Trinidadians also witnessed local black and East Indian workers working side-by-side with the white Americans.[10] This situation helped dispel myths of white supremacy in a society bred to respect and perpetuate the perception of the privileged nature of "whiteness."

Third, American culture influenced all aspects of social life in the colony: local music, fashion, labor practices, and everyday racial politics. The fast-paced American way of life had disrupted existing social norms and standards.

With fewer class prejudices, the Americans were frequently fraternizing with local Trinidadians. Residents were now confronted with all manners of 'delicate' relationships between U.S. servicemen and Trinidadian women. This was in sharp contrast to the more 'genteel' British type of relationships. As Dunnigan and Nofi noted,

> "this led to the British referring to the relatively flush GIs as "*oversexed, overpaid, and over here*." Less well known is the phrase often said of the less-affluent British troops, *"underpaid, undersexed, and under Eisenhower*" (who was in command of all the Allied forces)."[11]

More to the point, historian Harvey Neptune wryly noted that,

> "Calysonians ... told of cuckolded husbands, of destroyed marriages and homes, and advised young men to be wary of women who fraternize with the Yankee soldiers."[12]

These unsolicited relationships threatened to disrupt the existing social mores and practices in the colony and had lasting effects. The Americans had certainly arrived.

ENDNOTES

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3.Neptune, *Caliban*, 7.

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8.James F. Dunnigan and Albert A. Nofi, *Dirty Little Secrets of World War II,* New York: William Morrow Paperbacks, 1996.

9.Humphrey Metzgena and John Graham, *Caribbean Wars Untold: A Salute to the British West Indies*, Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2007, 127; A temporary runway at Waller Field was in use by the end of October 1941.

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FOURTEEN

THE AMERICAN FORCES RADIO SERVICE

I

EARLY U.S. DEVELOPMENTS

Hardly had the Americans arrived when the local colonial authorities began complaining about the American influence undermining British dominance in the colony. Much earlier, spillover radio signals from the U.S. mainland had allowed many U.S. radio programmes to infiltrate the carefully crafted British culture in the colony. Now these programmes appealed to the residents' newfound taste in live music, pop concerts, talk shows, and sports.

Second, in 1942, the construction of American bases of operations on the island led to many Trinidadians either leaving or abandoning their regular jobs to gain meaningful employment working for the Americans.

The third concern came fast and furious. Officials of the U.S. Armed forces proposed a U.S. Armed Forces radio station in the colony. For the senior military officers at the War Department in Washington, radio broadcasts were fundamental to the morale of U.S. troops.

This proposal arose from the fact that shortly after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbour, American deployed thousands of troops at U.S. military locations overseas. Many of these troops had never ventured far from their hometown or traveled abroad. Now, like their counterparts in Newfoundland, Canada, these servicemen who were assigned to the tropical Caribbean islands. Here, they were exposed to

> "overcrowded [situations], inadequate housing, dust and mud, isolated surroundings, and shortages of equipment ..."[1]

All of these conditions

> "depressed the spirits of the men, and frayed the tempers of commanding officers."[2]

Mindful of this, the War Department established the American Forces Radio Service (AFRS) on May 26, 1942, just five months after the attack.

The AFRS was under the command of Thomas Lewis, a film and broadcasting producer and writer, with its headquarters in Los Angeles, California. The mission of the AFRS was to provide programming, shortwave service, and broadcast equipment for America's foreign military locations. Thus, the AFRS would give the troops a "touch of home" as well as combat enemy propaganda. With the overwhelming support of the entertainment industry and dedicated military personnel, Thomas quickly turned AFRS into a professional broadcast unit.[3]

A year later, the AFRS turned its attention to the Armed Forces Base in Trinidad. Captain True Boardman, Special Service Division of the U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., arrived in the colony to establish a radio station for the thousands of troops stationed throughout the island. The radio station would be one of several networked stations built overseas by the US Armed Forces during the war.[4]

II

RADIO WVDI

Eventually, on February 3, 1943, the *Trinidad Guardian* announced that the U.S. Army intended to establish a radio station. It

would be known as the "Armed Services Radio Station" and would be located at the Special Services offices in the Signal Corps Building, St. Clair Cantonment (See Figure 9).[5] The newspaper reported that the station would

> "carry programmes devoted to the U.S. Navy, Army, Air Corps and Marines, as well as to British and local troops."[6]

With American bases situated throughout the island, Captain Boardman and his team considered the station's broadcasts invaluable in maintaining troop morale and providing them with up-to-date information.

DID YOU KNOW ...?
A **Cantonment** refers to temporary living quarters, specially built by the Army for soldiers.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

U.S. Radio on Medium Wave Band

Trinidad's first "non-amateur" radio station U.S. Army's "Armed Services Radio Station, "will be on a medium wave band (or long wave in American radio terminology).

The new station is in the process of erection and the local Government has already allotted its wavelength. The station will be located near Special Service Office in the Signal Corps building, St. Clair Cantonment. A studio, reception and monitoring rooms, and administrative offices will be constructed in the offices now occupied by the Sector Quartermaster, according to the Army's newspaper, "Trinidad News Tips."

Capt. True Boardman, of the Special Service Division of the U.S. Army, of Washington, D.C., came to Trinidad recently to assist in preparing plans for the station. He arrived from Puerto Rico, where he has just completed a radio station for the armed forces there.

According to the "T.N.T." a call has already been made to American Servicemen serving in Trinidad who have had previous experience in radio broadcasting.

"Although only those who already have been engaged in radio work in civilian life are needed at once to form the nucleus of a staff," says "T.N.T.", "there will be ample opportunity for those interested in radio to be on programmes and assist in the technical work when the station is operating." "T.N.T" urges those willing to offer their services as announcers, programme producers, newscasters, and continuity writers to write, outlining their experience and qualifications, to Major N. W. Harrison, Sector Special Service Officer, at St. Clair Cantonment.

According to "T.N.T," it is planned that the station carry programmes devoted to the U.S. Navy, Army, Air Corps and Marines as well as to Britain and local troops. News, education al and entertainment programmes will also be broadcast at regular hours with as wide a variety as possible. The "Trinidad Guardian" understands that arrangements have already been completed with American broadcasting systems to send recordings of the more popular programmes heard over shortwave - like Charlie McCarthy and Jack Benny - by 'plane for rebroadcast here.

Medium wave broadcast provide the best, regional reception within a limited area but are also picked up at longer distances where the shortwave has a much better reception. It is not yet know what wavelength has been allotted this station nor what will be its call letters.

Figure 9: U.S. Radio on Medium Wave Band
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*, February 3, 1943

The power requirements of the station were in the vicinity of one-kilowatt (1,000 watts) and operated on a frequency of 950 kHz (on

the medium wave band) granted by the local government. Comparatively, this appeared to be a far cry from the 10 watts output from the transmitters used by local radio amateurs.

> The choice of a medium wave band provided
>
> > "the regional reception within a limited area" but which could also be "picked up at longer distances where the shortwave has a much better reception."[7]

It can be surmised that with other smaller U.S. bases in the West Indies, the Armed Forces radio station was intended to reach as broad an audience as possible, not just locally but also regionally. By so doing, the radio station would serve the needs of both American troops and the Region's inhabitants. These broadcasts would further cultivate the populace in the islands by appealing to their taste in live music, pop concerts, talk shows and sports.

Although the radio station had no named designation, it was eventually designated officially as Radio WVDI by mid-May 1943. Subsequently, Radio WVDI began its operation on May 18, 1943, from the St. Clair Cantonment outside Port of Spain (see Figure 10). The radio station operated each weekday continuously from 6.00 a.m. to 7.30 a.m. and from 11.30 a.m. to 12 noon on mornings, and from 6.30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on evenings. On Sundays, it operated from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. A typical daily radio schedule for May 28, 1943, is shown below (Figure 11). The radio schedule now has Radio WVDI included under "Trinidad."

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

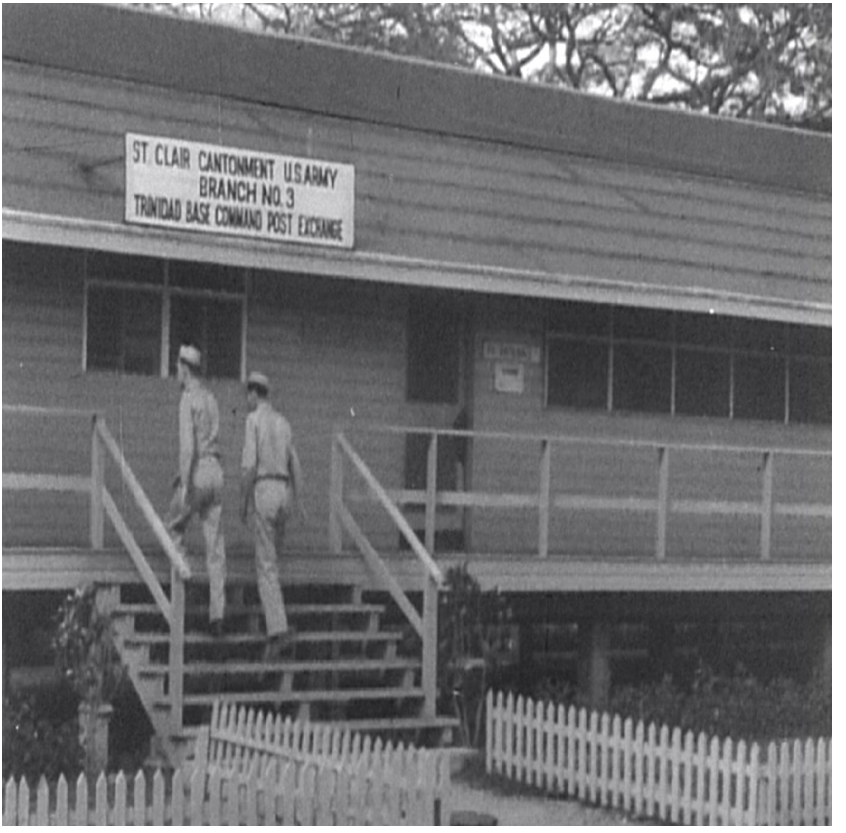

Figure 10: The St. Clair Cantonment where the U.S. Armed Forces Radio Station WVDI was initially housed temporarily in February 1943.
Source: CriticalPast.com. All Rights Reserved.

On The Radio

Frances Day At 8.45 p.m.

BBC

A.M.: 7.00, 9.00, 11.00, and 12 (noon), The News.
P.M.: 2.00, 4.45 and 5.45. The News; 6.00, Music (Fred Hartley); 4.25, War on Land (Capt. Cyril Felix); 6.25, Interlude; 6.45, The News; 7.00, Marching On; 7.30, Workers' Playtime; 8.00, Talk by William Holt; 8.30, World Affairs (Wickham Steed); 8.45, Frances Day - Revue Star; 9.00, Interlude; 9.04, The News; 9.15, Tommy Trinder in "Tommy Get Your Fun"; 10.00, Marching On; 10.45, The News.

U.S.A.

Over Stations WGEA (11.84 m.c)

A.M.: 7.00, 8.00, 9.00, 10.00, 11.00 a.m. and 12 (noon), The News.

Over Stations WBOS (15.21 m.c)

P.M.: 1.00, News; 1.15, Sports; 1.30, News from Home; 2.00, News; 2.15, Personal Album; 2.45, Fred Waring; 3.00, News; 3.15, Information Please; 3.45, Sports News; 4.00, News; 4.15, Fashions in Jass; 4.35, Back Home.

Over Stations KGEI and KWID

P.M.: 5.00, News; 5.10, Programme Preview; 5.15, Fred Waring; 5.30, American School of the Air; 6.00, News; 6.30, Screen Guild Players; 7.00, News; 7.15, Stock Market Reports; 7.30, Victory Hour; 8.00, Brooke Temple; 8.10, Sports; 8.15, Song Sheet; 8.30, Dance Band; 9.00, William Winier; 9.15, Evening Varieties; 9.30, Cavalcade of America ; 10.00, News; 10.05, Camel Caravan; 10.45, We the People Sing; 11.00, Raymond Gram Swing; 11.30, Victory Hour; 12 (mid), Brooke Temple; **A.M.**: 12.45, Andre Kostelanetz; 12.35, News; 12.45, Sign Off.

Over Stations WRUL and WRUW: 6.15 p.m., West Indian Radio Newsletter.

TRINIDAD
Over Station WVDI (950 kc, 315 m)

A.M.: 6.00, Morning Parade; 6.30, Records; 6.45, News; 7.00, Music with Fellows; 7.30, Sign Of; 11.30, Records; 11.45, G.I. Jive; 12 (noon), BBC News; 12.15 p.m., Make Believe Ballroom; 1.00, Sign Off; 5.00, G.I. News; 5.15, Fred Waring; 5.30, Allen Roth and his Orchestra; 6.00, Command Performances; 6.30, Melody Roundup; 6.45, The News; 7.00, Dinah Shore; 7.15, Herb Cohen; 7.30, Dawnbeat; 8.00, Kate Smith; 8.30, U.S.O. Dance (Sea Bees Band); 9.00, The Latest News; 9.15, Sports; 9.30, Night Owl Club; 10.00, Sign Off.

Figure 11: Radio Schedule of May 28, 1943
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*

Eventually, the station's transmitter was transferred to the U.S. Army's Fort Read post at Waller Field, just east of Arima. At around the same time, the station's broadcasting studio was moved to the U.S. Naval Station at Chaguaramus, in the north-western peninsula of the colony. Radio programmes, such as news, educational and entertainment programmes, were broadcast at "regular hours with as wide a variety as possible."[8] Recent recordings of the popular U.S. radio programmes were flown to Trinidad for re-broadcasting over the radio station.[9]

Although the U.S. radio programmes were intended for U.S. military personnel at the U.S. Naval Base, the local people also tuned-in to these programmes. Apparently, the station's 1 kW signal could be heard throughout the colony. Aware of this development, U.S. radio officials ensured that music requests programmes were directed to both the military and the civilian populace. These music programmes were highly popular and indirectly contributed to spreading American culture and values in the local population. The station also provided a platform for local calypso musicians whose performances were broadcast and proved to be very popular. Further, no commercial material was transmitted.

III

HOLLY BETAUDIER: THE ARIMA KID

The story of how Holly Betaudier, a local worker at the U.S. base in Chaguaramus, became one of the Radio WVDI's local announcers is an interesting one. It is revealed here through an interview between the author and Betaudier at the latter's home in 2012.

In 1941, Betaudier recalled that he was a driver for the senior military officers' wives and very popular with the military personnel at the Base. He was also called "The Arima Kid" as he hailed from the town of Arima. One day, Betaudier recalled that one of the American announcers was unable "to go on air," since the Base Commander (Brigadier-General Ralph Talbot, Jnr) had assigned him to another duty. Being acquainted with Betaudier, the announcer asked him to "fill in for a half-hour." Betaudier gladly acceded to the request, and "the rest was history," as the proverbial saying goes. Holly Betaudier had become the first colored local broadcaster on Radio WVDI "by accident."

Betaudier revealed that the response by both the local people and Base personnel appeared extremely positive. In fact, he mentioned that he was asked to stay on as an announcer. Soon, one of the more popular radio shows that featured the best of local talent was "Holly's Happy Moments" hosted by Betaudier. However, as Betaudier quickly pointed out, the Base Commander did not seem too pleased initially at this turn of events. Questioned as to why, Betaudier recalled the Commander as saying he did not want a local person going on air from a U.S. Naval Radio Station.[10]

But the Base Commander was not the only person with issues. The local authorities also frowned on the influence of WVDI's broadcasts on the residents. For the colonial officials, Radio WVDI

seemed to be cultivating a civilian listening audience at a time when other U.S. broadcasts also subtly emphasized a pro-American agenda.

Such widespread American radio influence in the colony, away from the BBC's Empire Service, soon became a source of contention between the local authorities and the U.S. military. As such, the local colonial authorities made every effort to limit the power of the transmissions and control the programme content of Radio WVDI. Under the 1940 Destroyer-for-Bases Lease Agreement, they cited Article XV: Wireless and Cable, which stated

> 1. Except with the consent of the Government of the Territory, no wireless stations shall be established or submarine cable landed in Leased Area other than for military purposes.
>
> 2. All questions relating to frequencies, power and like matters, used by apparatus designed to emit electric radiation, shall be entitled by mutual arrangement.[11]

The colonial authorities reasoned that broadcasts from Radio WVDI were expressly for military purposes and that the radio station broadcasted outside its legal parameters, as expressed by the 1940 Destroyer-for-Bases Lease Agreement.

However, American military officials countered this argument by interpreting Article XV(2) as giving them the legal right to broadcast to their military personnel. If other non-military personnel could tune-in to the broadcasts, then that was not their problem. At the risk of not offending the Americans since they were a vital ally in the war, the local authorities acquiesce to the U.S. military officials. Radio WVDI could now continue broadcasting its current schedule of programs.

ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Army Center of Military History, *Managing and Organizing the New Atlantic Bases*, 397. See https://history.army.mil/books/wwii/Guard-US/ch5.htm

2.Ibid.

3.http://afrts.dodmedia.osd.mil/facts/1.pdf

4."U.S. Radio on Medium Wave Band," *Trinidad Guardian*, February 3, 1943.

5.Ibid.

6.Ibid.

7.Ibid.

8.Ibid.

9.Ibid.

10.Holly Betaudier in discussion with the author, July 13, 2012.

11."The Anglo-American Destroyers-Bases agreement, September 1940," Archive, accessed September 28, 2012, https://archive.org/stream/angloamericandes00sutp/angloamericandes00sutp_djvu.txt.

PART 5

A JOINT BRITISH-AMERICAN PROGRAMME

FIFTEEN

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN CARIBBEAN COMMISSION

"Oh what a tangled web we weave,
when first we practice to deceive!"[1]
Sir Walter Scott (1771 - 1832)

Churchill, in 1941, faced a bitter hard truth having accepted the Prime Ministership the year before: *he could not win the war without the Americans' help*. Now, the British government approached the American government with a proposal. The idea was to seek an arrangement between the two countries to handle the social and economic problems of the West Indies. As James Bough, Chief of the Caribbean Section at the United Nations, noted

> "*The standard of living of the people is low, and many of the territories are faced with persistent problems of overpopulation and unemployment*."[2]

But such issues did not reveal the real reason Britain approached America: *Britain was short of hard currency to pay for its military supplies for the war*.

Further, the arrangement, as British historian Piers Brendon noted, reflected

> *"a war time expedient by which Prime Minister Churchill hoped to tighten transatlantic bonds."*[3]

Britain suggested that the proposed arrangement take the form of an organization: the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission (AACC). But despite this overture to America, the U.S. government took a long-term, post-war view of the arrangement. It came to view the proposed

AACC as an instrument to maintain social stability and, therefore, hemispheric peace and security in a post-war world. Yet as Brendon mentioned, the planned Caribbean Commission

> *"was not a Rooseveltian ploy to supercede Britain in the eastern approaches to the Panama Canal and the American mainland,"*[4]

but "another step toward US hegemony in [the] region and elsewhere."[5]

Eventually, the two countries agreed to cooperate in establishing the organization. On March 9, 1942, both Britain and the United States formally inaugurated the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission (Figure 12). The Commission was mandated to supervise various social and economic programmes in the Caribbean region.[6] These would help ease the poverty and food shortages experienced by West Indians because of the war.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Anglo-American Committee for Caribbean Appointed

Washington. - (AP) - The United States and Great Britain announced yesterday the creation of an Anglo-American commission designed to strengthen the economic and social co-operation in the vital Caribbean area.

One of the first tasks of the commission will be to improve labor and health conditions in areas where the United States is building naval bases in the British West Indies. Another major job will be to co-ordinate and improve shipping from a region that can supply many of the wartime needs of the United Nations.

Co-chairmen of the commission, which will establish its headquarters on one of the British islands, are Charles W. Taussig of New York: Caribbean expert and president of the American Molasses company, and Sir Frank Stockdale of London.

The six-man group will have three members from each country. President Roosevelt named Rexford G. Tugwell, governor of Porto Rico, and Coert Dubois, chief of the state's department Caribbean office, as the other two American members.

The joint announcement, made in Washington and London, said the commission members would "concern themselves primarily with matters pertaining to labor, agriculture, housing, health, education, social welfare, finance, economic and related subjects in the territories under the British and United States flags ..."

The commission is empowered merely to formulate recommendations and submit them to their governments.

DuBois said the commission would concentrate its studies primarily on the five British crown colonies on Trinidad-Tobago, British Guiana, the Leeward islands, Barbados and the Windward islands. He added he did not think the six-man group would into Porto Ricon problems.

Coincidentally with creation of the Caribbean commission, President Roosevelt announced he was also forming a Caribbean advisory committee composed of Governor Tugwell; Martin Travieso, Porto Rico supreme court justice; Judge William H. Hastie, civilian aide to Secretary of War Stimson, and Carl Robins of California, former president of the Commodity Credit corporation. The fifth member, and the chairman, will be Taussig who, in 1940, made a study of social and economic studies in the West Indies as a personal representative of President Roosevelt.

Figure 12: "Anglo-American Committee for Caribbean Appointed"
Source: St. Petersburg Times, March 10, 1942.

Six members comprised the AACC, three from each of the United States and Great Britain, with one member from each country designated as co-chairman. The AACC was co-chaired by Charles W. Taussig, an American from New York, and Sir Frank Stockdale of London. The Caribbean colonies, as identified by the Commission, were those where the United States was building naval bases in the British West Indies. These colonies were Trinidad and Tobago, British Guiana, the Leeward Islands, Barbados, and the Windward Islands.

ENDNOTES

1.Sir Walter Scott, Marmion, Canto vi. Stanza 17, accessed July 13, 2011, http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/27150.html.

2.James Bough, "The Caribbean Commission," *International Organization*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Nov., 1949), pp. 643-655.

3.Piers Brendon, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire, 1781 - 1997*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2007), 607.

4.Ibid.

5.Ibid.

6."Anglo-American Committee for Caribbean Appointed," *St Petersburg Times*, March 10, 1942; See also James A. Bough, "The Caribbean Commission," *International Organization* 3, no. 4 (Nov. 1949): 643 - 4.

SIXTEEN

THE *WEST INDIAN RADIO NEWSPAPER*

Misinformation, by German propaganda, was prevalent in the Caribbean Region in 1942. Such misinformation, as the Colonial Office recognized, would psychologically affect the Caribbean society, if left unchecked.[1] Yet, although the BBC had increased its radio service to the West Indies (as discussed earlier), they still found this coverage to be inadequate. Now, following the first Trinidad meeting of the AACC in March 1942, the BBC decided to develop a special news programme for the West Indies from the United States. Arrangements were made with the U.S. Office of War Information to produce and transmit nightly newscasts to the West Indies.[2]

On October 15, 1942, the newly established Radio Division of the AACC was inaugurated. The Director of the Division, William Harris, now suggested that the yet proposed broadcast be named the West Indian Radio Newspaper (WIRN). The underlying purpose of the WIRN was to be cultural, informational, and educational. Specifically, the WIRN would be designed

> "to divert the infiltration of Axis propaganda and to acquaint the peoples of the Caribbean with the work of the Commission."[3]

The scope of the programme was to broadcast "items of essential interest to the peoples of the Caribbean area,"[4] much like the BBC's "*Calling the West Indies*" programme. To realize this aim, the WIRN would be a daily half-hour broadcast from 6.15 to 6.45 p.m. Eastern War Time (see "Did You Know ...?") to the Caribbean area.[5]

DID YOU KNOW ...?

During the Second World War, German submarines (U-boats) operated along the east coasts of the United States and Canada and the Caribbean Sea. To make the American people feel that the war was on their doorstep and keep clocks from changing every six months when daylight savings time came, the US Congress enacted the War Time Act in 1942. This Act meant that there was one year-round standard time for the East Coast. The time was set at 4 hours before Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) in England.

The West Indies also adopted Eastern War Time and were **5 hours before GMT**. Hence, when it was 12 noon in England, it would be 7 a.m. in Trinidad. The Act remained in effect until September 30, 1945, after the war. By this time, Trinidad reverted to its standard time difference of being 4 hours before GMT.

On February 1, 1943, the *West Indian Radio Newspaper* programme broadcasted its first transmission to the Caribbean Region across Radio WRUL and Radio WRUW. This was just one year after the first *Voice of America* broadcast. In an official release, the AACC stated that the WIRN would succeed the "*Calling the West Indies*" programme previously broadcasted on these two American radio stations (see Figure 13).[6] The broadcast opened with a specific West Indian theme song and greetings to all the Caribbean peoples.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

New Broadcast From America to W. Indies

A new 30-minute radio programme is being short-waved at 6.15 p.m. daily to the people of the West Indies by the "Voice of America" under the auspices of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission in Washington.

These broadcasts can be heard locally over WRUL, on 9.70 megacycles, and WRUW, 11.79 megacycles, both on the 25-metre band. Tentative plans call, beginning next week, for relaying this programme to its subscribers on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

According to an official statement, the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission series, which began the night of February 1, succeeds the"Calling the West Indies" programme previously broadcast by the U.S. Office of War Information from 7 to 7.25 p.m. over the same two stations.

Comment from Trinidad listeners on the new programme, listed as "The West Indian Radio Newspaper," will be appreciated. Letters should be addressed to Mr. Julian P. Fromer, U.S. Office of War Information, Queen's Park Hotel.

Figure 13: "New Broadcast from America to W. Indies"
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*, February 4, 1943

With the WIRN now a permanent feature on the media landscape, the *Trinidad Guardian* now included a daily notice on its radio schedule that showed the transmission time of the broadcast (see Figure 14). The WIRN was broadcasted for 3 ½ hours per week.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Kate Smith At 10.05 p.m.
America's Best Loved Songstress On The Air

B.B.C.

B.B.C. programmes for Saturday are not available as they have not been sent to the newspaper by the Cable and Wireless (West Indies) Ltd., who usually supply them.

News times are as follows:
A.M.: 7.00, 9.00, 11.00, and 12 noon
P.M.: 2.00, 3.45, 5.45, 6.45, 9.00, 10.45 and 12.30 a.m.

U.S.A.
OVER STATIONS KGEI AND KWID

P.M.: 5.00, News; 5.10, Programme Preview; 5.15, Fred Waring; 5.30, Unlimited Horizons; 6.00, News; 6.05, Great Plays; 6.30, Contented Hour; 7.00, News; 7.15, Stock Market Reports; 7.30, First Line; 8.00, Commentary; 8.10, Sports; 8.15, Grand Stand Seat; 8.30, Dance Band; 9.00, Hemisphere News; 9.15, Evening Varieties; 9.30, Chamber Music Society; 10.00, News; 10.05, Kate Smith; 10.30, Our Secret Weapon; 10.45, Sports Parade; 11.00, News Analysis; 11.15, Fred Waring; 11.30, First Line; 12 (mid), Commentary; A.M.: 12.10, Great Plays; 12.35, News; 12.45, Sign Off.

Over Stations WRUL and WRUW: 6.15 p.m., West Indian Radio Newsletter

Figure 14: Radio Schedule for March 13, 1943
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*

As the "*Newspaper*" programme - as it came to be popularly known - developed, many weekly features became established parts of the programme. In September 1943, in Washington, D.C., the Social Sciences Division at Howard University held its Seventh Annual Conference. At the conference, the AACC's Director Harris mentioned that these features included:

> Elmer Davis' review of events;
> "*Answering the West Indies*"— The reading of listeners' letters;
> "*Freemen Against the Axis*"— Stories of West Indian contributions to the war effort;
> "*The Victory Gardener*"— Talks on food and agriculture;
> "*Freedom on the March*"-—Stories of the War campaigns;
> "*The Symphonic Hour*";
> "*The Vagabond Traveler*"
> Chats on history and travel in the Caribbean.[7]

Harris also revealed the potential size of the listening audience to the WIRN programme. He stated that

> *"According to a detailed survey made in May of this year [1943], it is estimated that there are approximately 100,000 radio sets in the United States and British West Indian possessions, offering a potential listening audience of roughly 400,000 people of the 5,125,000 living in the above-mentioned Caribbean colonies."*[8]

Here, Harris averaged a ratio of one radio set to four persons. This ratio indicated that the listening public would have constituted 7.8 percent of the total combined population (i.e., 5,125,000) in the U.S. and British West Indian colonies.

However, the AACC previously provided a much more accurate figure for the actual number of radio sets in the Trinidad colony. In its AACC report of March 12, 1943, entitled "Radio Communications in the Caribbean Area," the AACC noted that the Trinidad colony had 7,000 radio sets.[9] Thus, by using Harris's ratio of one radio set to four persons, then the projected number of potential listeners to the WIRN programme in Trinidad would be in the vicinity of 28,000 persons.

Given Director Harris's earlier comments about a potential listening audience400,000 persons, officials at the Colonial Office became extremely concerned about the programme content influencing a considerable segment of this listening audience. This segment referred to the colonial expatriates.

Two considerations were now uppermost at the Colonial Office. First, the United States maintained the dominant position on the Caribbean Commission and the WIRN staff. As far as the Colonial Office was concerned, a pro-American policy at the AACC could alienate this segment of the listening audience from the BBC's Overseas Service.

Second, like the *Voice of America* programme, the WIRN programme was based in America and produced by the Office of War Information in Washington, D.C., with Radio Division personnel serving

as advisors. The latter placed a much greater emphasis on WIRN broadcasts that subtly emphasized a pro-American agenda.[10]

The situation did not auger well for the *Newspaper*.

ENDNOTES

1.Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, *The Caribbean Islands and the War: A Record of Progress in Facing Stern Realities*. US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1943.

2.Ibid.

3.James A. Bough, "The Caribbean Commission," International Organization 3, no. 4 (Nov. 1949): 645.

4.Ibid.

5.US National Archives, RG 43, "The Anglo American Caribbean Commission. Radio Division," August 17, 1943.

6.“New Broadcast from America to W. Indies.” *Trinidad Guardian*, February 4, 1943.

7.William Harris, "The West Indian Radio Newspaper" in The Economic Future of the Caribbean, ed. Edward Frazier and Eric Williams (Washington: Howard University Press, 1944), 76.

8.Ibid.

9.US National Archives, RG 43, "AACC Confidential Report on Radio Communications in the Caribbean Area," March 12, 1943. 173

10.Dittloff, "Anglo-American Caribbean Commission," 82.

SEVENTEEN

WIRN AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE: JOHNSON'S SURVEY

Right after the outbreak of war, the Colonial Office appointed Information Officers in the colonies. They would serve as monitors of foreign propaganda and disseminators of information bulletins designed to boost the morale of the residents. E. Johnson was one such British Officer assigned to the Trinidad colony.

In 1943, Johnson conducted a three-month survey on WIRN's programming for the Colonial Office. The purpose was to investigate whether WIRN's policy sought to alienate the colonial expatriates whom the Colonial Office believed constituted a sizeable segment of the general listening audience. Apparently, the Colonial Office thought, unlike most local inhabitants, that these persons could have afforded the expensive radio sets to tune-in to the 'Newspaper.'

This was not necessarily the case.

To many persons, the WIRN broadcasts targeted mainly black West Indians, and not just the British expatriates living in the colony. These broadcasts sought to encourage self-respect and confidence among the former.

Further, the 'Newspaper' was more than just a propaganda programme for promoting American culture at the expense of Great Britain. It also served as an Allied war propaganda operation designed to counter German radio propaganda targeted at the West Indies. Evidence of this is noted by the fact that the WIRN worked in close collaboration with the U.S. Office of War Information (OWI). This office handled most of the anti-German propaganda coming out of the American government.

Along with the West Indian audience, another targeted audience of the WIRN broadcasts was the Afro-American soldiers serving on U.S. Military Bases in the Caribbean. Although Trinidadians saw black and white soldiers working side by side, the fact of the matter was that segregation existed in the U.S. military establishment. These black American soldiers also needed to be convinced to fight in a "white man's war." Black lives mattered just as much as white lives on the war front.

Although the report was required to consider the entire region, Johnson focused his attention on Trinidad only. He believed that this colony best reflected the Caribbean Region, given its diverse population. Through various reports Johnson received from throughout the colony, he compiled a comprehensive report on the WIRN applicable to the entire region (see Figure 15).[1]

The report was instructive. It confirmed the fears of a pro-American influence through the radio medium in the colony. It further highlighted the differences in attitudes between the different ethnic groupings and social classes in Trinidad society.

In the report, Johnson divided the Trinidad populace into four groups. He noted that these groups could be identified as follows:

- the first group comprised the expatriates from outside the colony and who mainly represented the Oilfields and Sugar Estates;
- the second group was the White Trinidadians;
- the third group comprised the educated coloured Trinidadians; and
- the fourth group was the colored Trinidadians belonging to the labouring classes.[2]

CONFIDENTIAL

Hon. G.S.

I have listened very carefully to the WRUL programme for the past three months and in addition, I have received reports from various people. I now feel that I am in a position to give a general response on Station WRUL.

2. For the purpose of this report, I have split the population into four groups, (1) people from outside the colony, mainly represented the Oilfields and Sugar Estates (2) White Trinidadians (3) Coloured Trinidadians (Educated type) (4) Coloured Trinidadians (Labour classes).

3. Taking these groups in order:

GROUP I. Reports from these sources indicate that WRUL is most unpopular. The specific reason appears to be that they feel that the broadcasts were purely U.S. propaganda and for the main part this group has ceased to listen to this programme.

GROUP II The general indication from this group coincides very closely with the views expressed under group 1 although, in this particular case, comments have been much more to the point. Comments from three listeners condemn the programme as being wholly U.S. propaganda purposely put out for the benefit of the coloured people."[3]

GROUP III Here comments have been rather varied, but one comment is general, and that is, they feel that these broadcasts put Trinidad on the map. Criticism from this group point out that certain features of the programme do not however improve the prestige of the West Indies coloured people but rather destroy any that exist.

One listener states "The intelligence of Trinidadians is left in doubt with the marked inference that this could be improved by the people in the States."

The calypsoes are generally acknowledged to be badly rendered and many feel that there is a strong suggestion that no musical talent exists in these islands or that there is any appreciation of classical music.

GROUP IV: Here again, it is felt that these programmes do put the island on the map. The calypsoes are enjoyed, even though it is admitted that they are badly played. The obvious propaganda interspersed in the broadcasts appears to pass over their heads.

GENERAL. The general opinion appears to be that this is a U.S. propaganda programme, with the idea of interesting the population of the West Indies in the United States at the expense of Great Britain. It is agreed however, that these broadcasts do serve a useful purpose in making the West Indies better known. However, for the main part, opinions appear to differ as to whether or not the broadcasts are of the type which will increase the prestige of the West Indies, as a whole.

/ PERSONAL

Figure 15: Survey Report on WRUL Broadcasts on Trinidad Population
Source: Copy of Report submitted to AACC. September 21, 1943
Location: US National Archives, Maryland, USA.

In the first group, Johnson noted that these expatriates found the WRUL extremely unpopular as they felt

> *"the broadcasts were purely U.S. propaganda," and many in this group "ceased to listen to the programme."*[4]

Like the first group, the second group - the white Trinidadians - condemned the WRUL programme viewing it as

> "being wholly U.S. propaganda purposely put out for the benefit of the coloured people."[5]

The third and fourth groups reflected the views of the coloured classes. For Johnson, the third group - the educated coloured Trinidadians - saw the broadcasts as helping to put Trinidad on the map. However, they criticized certain features of the programme that

> "did not improve the prestige of the West Indies coloured people but rather destroy[ed] any that exist."[6]

Many in this group also acknowledged that calypsoes were "badly rendered" and that there seemed to be

> “a strong suggestion that no musical talent exists in these islands or that there is any appreciation of classical music."[7]

The fourth group - the colored labouring classes - also enjoyed the calypsoes but found that they were “badly played.” For this group, the propaganda component of the broadcasts "appear[ed] to pass over their heads."[8]

Johnson concluded the report with his comments that the WRUL programme served as

> *"a U.S. propaganda programme with the idea of interesting the population of the West Indies in the United States at the expense of Great Britain."*[9]

He agreed, however, that

> *"these broadcasts do serve a useful purpose in making the West Indies better known."*[10]

The Colonial Office received Johnson’s report and sent a copy to both co-Chairmen of the AACC.

Johnson's division of society has some merit in the sense that it showed how 'outsiders' - in this case, an American - viewed Trinidad society. But perhaps Caribbean historian Bridget Brereton offers a more accurate picture of the society's divisions. Brereton's analysis of Trinidad society during the century after emancipation reflects the reality of how the residents, or 'insiders,' perceived the divisions in their setting.

Prefacing her perspective at 'the risk of over-simplification,' Brereton states,

> "... Trinidad in this period was divided into four major sectors. There was the white upper class; few questioned its ranking as the political, social and economic elite. There was the black and coloured educated middle class, . . . There was the Creole working class, mainly of African descent. Finally, the Indians [who] were separated from the rest of the population by culture and religion, by race and by legal restrictions, and by the relatively late arrival."[11]

Interestingly, as Brereton further noted about this last grouping,

> "they were not generally considered to be part of 'Creole society' in this period."[12]

This appeared to be a more accurate rendition of the composition of Trinidadian society than Johnson's perspective.

Yet, even though most residents generally accepted their place in each sector of the hierarchy, they all desired access to information and entertainment from the numerous U.S. radio stations. But by so doing, American ideas of race and class infiltrated Trinidadian society subtly and helped to change their view of British colonialism.

ENDNOTES

1.US National Archives, RG 43, "The West Indian Radio Newspaper," September 21, 1943

2.Ibid.

3.Ibid.

4.Ibid.

5.Ibid.

6.Ibid.

7.Ibid.

8.Ibid.

9.Ibid.

10.Ibid.

11.Bridget Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad, 173 1962*, Champs Fleurs: Terra Verde Resource Centre, 1981, p. 122.

12.Ibid.

EIGHTEEN

HARRIS'S SURVEY: THE *WEST INDIAN RADIO NEWSPAPER*

Radio broadcasting in the West Indies was the focus of Director Harris's survey conducted between May 6 and June 21, 1944. The resulting report was entitled "*Survey of Radio Broadcasting and the West Indian Radio Newspaper*." In his report, Harris explained that,

> "*The West Indian Radio Newspaper has begun to be a medium that can be relied upon - it is catching hold well, and the people are flattered to have a daily broadcast designed for their special benefit. This the British Broadcasting Corporation, with all its transmitters, has never attempted to do*."[1]

Harris also commented that West Indians were

> "*apt to consider themselves as Americans and to think of the people in the United States as United States citizens*."[2]

According to Harris, one of the most popular features of the WIRN programme was the "review of the News of the Caribbean Review," which aired toward the close of each daily programme. As explained earlier, this feature served to bridge the communication gap between the various islands since "communications with the outside world had been crippled by the war and submarine interference with shipping."[3]

Another prominent feature was "*The Caribbean in World History*." This broadcast was a series of radio talks targeted to West Indians and intended to provide them with "a better understanding of the islands of the Caribbean."[4] The Caribbean historian, Dr. Eric Williams, helped to produce this programme.

Williams had formerly been employed by the AACC since 1943, where he worked as the Secretary of the Agricultural Committee of the Caribbean Research Council.[5] He was later assigned to the Radio Division as a Consultant on West Indian affairs. Apparently, Director Harris believed the programme could benefit from the influence of a black, educated West Indian. Williams now became part of the Howard University Advisory Group that advised Harris about programme content and who should be on the programme. As an expert in historical research, Williams contributed to developing the programme's content for West Indian audiences.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Trinidad Scholar To Broadcast Talks

Continuing the series of radio broadcast talks aimed at providing a better understanding of the islands of the Caribbean, Dr. Eric Williams, Trinidad -born Associate Professor of the Social Sciences at Howard University, and recently-appointed secretary of the Agricultural Committee of the Caribbean Research Council, will speak to listeners every Friday evening at 6.15 p.m. From Wednesday on "The Caribbean in World History."

The series which started last Friday is on the West Indian radio newspaper programme broadcast over WRUL (11.73 megacycles) and WRUW (15.35 megacycles).

Figure 16: "Trinidad Scholar To Broadcast Talks"
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*. Monday, May 7, 1944.

The programme began on May 5, 1944, and sought to educate West Indians on the history and development of the Caribbean.[6]

Williams eventually became a broadcaster at the Radio Division (see Figures 16 and 17).[7] In his capacity as a broadcaster who was "both educated and black," Williams was suitably positioned to be the "Caribbean face" for the WIRN. Ironically, the perception by the British

was that the radio station had a pro-American agenda.[8] Suffice to say, West Indian listeners received William's programme, "*The Caribbean in World History*," quite favorably.

Figure 17: Rehearsal Time at WIRN (circa 1944). Eric Williams is seen standing second from left. Declassified Photo. *Source*: RG 43 Box 20. Anglo-American Caribbean Commission 1940 - 1946. *Location*: US National Archives, Maryland, USA

A sample of the WIRN's daily programme for August 1944 is displayed below (Figure 15). It was published on July 27, 1944, in *The Virgin Islands Daily News*, a newspaper in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Each month's programme was published toward the end of the previous month. The schedule itemized the features for the upcoming month. Williams's broadcast "Caribbean in History" soon became a staple feature of the Newspaper. Each monthly schedule stated that each daily programme "will close with a Review of the late News of the Caribbean." This review served as an attempt to bridge the communication gap which existed between the various islands.

Programme Schedule of
THE WEST INDIAN RADIO NEWSPAPER

sponsored by the
ANGLO-AMERICAN CARIBBEAN COMMISSION
The Month of August 1944

Sunday August 6, 13, 20, 27	The WEST INDIAN RADIO NEWSPAPER Symphony Concert
Monday August 7, 14, 21, 28	Letters from Listeners; Creole Cook; Science in the News
Tuesday August 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	Quiz Show; Health Chat; Featurette
Wednesday August 2, 9, 16, 23. 30	Stamp Club; Agricultural Chat; Poets' Corner
Thursday August 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	America at Play; Dinner Concert
Friday August 4, 11, 18, 25	Vagabond Traveler; Caribbean in History
Saturday August 5, 12, 19, 26	Featurette; Music

The WEST INDIAN RADIO NEWSPAPER is heard daily from 6.15 to 6.45 p.m. Eastern War Time over short wave Station WRUL operating in the 25 meter band on 11.79 megacycles, and over Station WRUW in the 19 meter band on 15.35 megacycles. Programs due to war conditions are subject to change without notice.

In addition to the above features, each program will contain musical selections and will close with a Review of the late News of the Caribbean. The Sunday broadcast, however, will be devoted entirely to music.

All correspondence should be addressed to
THE WEST INDIAN RADIO NEWSPAPER, Washington, D.C.

Figure 18: Programme Schedule of The *West Indian Radio Newspaper*. Source: *The Virgin Islands Daily News*, July 27, 1944.

ENDNOTES

1.US National Archives, RG 43, "AACC Confidential Survey of Radio Broadcasting and the West Indian Radio Newspaper," August 17, 1943.

2.US National Archives, RG43, "The West Indian Radio Newspaper," September 9, 1943.

3.Bough, *The Caribbean Commission*, 645.

4.”Trinidad Scholar To Broadcast Talks,” *Trinidad Guardian*, May 7, 1944.

5.The Caribbean Research Council was established in August 1943 at the fourth meeting of the AACC.

6.US National Archives, RG 43, "The West Indian Radio Newspaper," September 9, 1943.

7.Tony Martin, Eric Williams and the Anglo-American Carribean Commission. Journal of African American History 88, no. 3 (2003): 281.

8.Ibid.

PART 5:

RADIO IN SOCIETY

NINETEEN

COMPETING FOR AIR TIME

News bulletins formed the key feature of the various programmes offered by the BBC. For one thing, they stood out. BBC news bulletins bombarded the colonies with continuous programming, each with a degree of credulity and always on time. In Trinidad, such regular programming ran from 3:00 p.m. to 10.45 p.m.

The *Trinidad Guardian* published the daily broadcasting times of the BBC News. Yet such was the importance of transmission times that even when the BBC schedule was not received (a common occurrence), the newspaper continued to publish these transmission times. In such cases, the Trinidad Guardian would publish a disclaimer at the top of the schedule.

As shown in the *Trinidad Guardian* of March 11, 1943, (see Figure 19), a typical radio schedule highlights programmes from the BBC and two U.S. radio stations. The popular U.S. radio programme "Red Skelton" featured as the billed attraction. As mentioned above, the disclaimer is depicted in the first part of the radio schedule. The schedule brings to the fore the relationship between the British radio station, BBC, on the one hand, and the U.S. radio stations on the other at the height of the war period.

RADIO SCHEDULE

Red Skelton At 9.30 Tonight

B.B.C.

B.B.C. programmes for Thursday are not available as they have not been sent to the newspaper by the Cable and Wireless (West Indies) Ltd., who usually supply them.

News times are as follows:
A.M.: 7.00, 9.00, 11.00, and 12 noon
P.M.: 2.00, 3.45, 5.45, 6.45, 9.00, 10.45 and 12.30 a.m.

U.S.A.

OVER STATIONS KGEI AND KWID

P.M.: 5.00, News; 5.10, Programme Preview; 5.15, Fred Waring; 5.30, Unlimited Horizons; 6.00, News; 6.05, Great Plays; 6.30, Contented Hour; 7.00, News; 7.15, Stock Market Reports; 7.30, First Line; 8.00, Commentary; 8.10, Sports; 8.15, Grand Stand Seat; 8.30, Dance Band; 9.00, Hemisphere News; 9.15, Evening Varieties; 9.30, Chamber Music Society; 10.00, News; 10.05, Kate Smith; 10.30, Our Secret Weapon; 10.45, Sports Parade; 11.00, News Analysis; 11.15, Fred Waring; 11.30, First Line; 12 (mid), Commentary; A.M.: 12.10, Great Plays; 12.35, News; 12.45, Sign Off.

Over Stations WRUL and WRUW: 6.15 p.m., West Indian Radio Newsletter.

Figure 19: Radio Schedule of March 11, 1943,
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*

From this schedule, we note a total of eleven 15-minute news bulletins broadcasted to the West Indies (Table 2).

Table 2: BBC Air Time during the Second World War (March 1, 1943)							
Station: BBC				**Total Weekly Time = 64 ¾ hours**			
News Bulletins Alone with No Continuous Programming							
12.30 a.m		7 a.m	9 a.m	11 a.m	12 noon		2 p.m
News Bulletins with Continuous Programming 3.00 - 11.00 p.m.							
3.45 p.m		5.45 p.m.	6.45 p.m.			9 p.m	10.45 p.m
Eleven 15-minute Daily News Bulletins (12.30 a.m. - 10.45 p.m.)							
Eight hours of Continuous Programming (3.45 p.m. to 10.45 p.m.)							

Evidence of such detailed timing was observed by the Trinidad residents. In an interview with Mrs. Keither Romany, former proprietress of Romany's Hardware on Norfolk Street, Belmont, Romany recalled that, as a child,

> "*my parents would religiously tune-in to listen to the 7 o'clock every morning, at lunch-time, and on evenings also.*"[1]

Like many of the residents in Port-of- Spain, Romany also stated that

> *"I could always tell when it was BBC news time on the radio when I heard the chimes of Big Ben."*

Thus, residents could tune-in at these times listen to accurate information about the war's progress (Figure 5 above). Even the local Rediffusion Service provided subscribers with the benefit of listening to the rebroadcasts of the BBC's programmes.

Although the U.S. radio stations also broadcasted every week, their airtime was much less than the BBC. The table below (Table 3) highlights the daily times and weekly hours for these U.S. radio stations.

Table 3: U.S. Air Time during the Second World War
(March 1, 1943)

Radio KGEI and Radio KWID				**Total Weekly Time = 54 ¾ hours**		
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
5 - 12.45 p.m.	5 - 12.45 p.m.	5 - 12.45 p.m.	5 - 12.45 p.m.	5 - 12.45 p.m.	5 - 12.45 p.m.	5 - 12.45 p.m.
7 ¾	7 ¾	7 ¾	7 ¾	7 ¾	7 ¾	7 ¾

However, as mentioned earlier, these were not the only U.S. radio stations Trinidadians tuned-in for programmes. Both WRUL and WRUW continued to broadcast the West Indian Radio Newspaper. Further, by May 18, 1943, Radio WVDI had joined the list of radio stations being listened to by locals. Now, the local radio schedules in the newspaper reflected this recent development. The schedules were also cross-referenced for ease of comparison. The following radio schedule of July 2, 1943, shows this new approach (see Figure 20). Table 4 shows the allotted airtime for Radio WVDI.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Radio Programmes

News times in the morning are: BBC-7.00, 9.00, and 11.00; U.S.A. (WGEA 11.86mc), 7.00. 8.00, 9.00, 10.00, 11.00 and 12 (noon). TRINIDAD (WVDI 950kc, 315m), 6.45. Over stations WRUW and WRUL: 6.15 pm: W.I. Radio Newspaper.

	BBC		**WBOS** **(15.21mc, 19.7m)**	**WVDI** **(950kc, 315m)**
12	:00	News	Spotlight Bands	News
	:15	--	Rock Home	Sound off
	:30	--	This is Jean	Make Believe Ballroom
	:45	--	This is Jean	Make Believe Ballroom
1	:00	--	News	Sign off
	:15	--	Sports	--
	:30	--	News From Home	--
	:45	--	News From Home	--
2	:00	News	Servicemen's Reporter	--
	:15	--	Personal Album	--
	:30	--	Personal Album	--
	:45	--	Fred Waring	--
3	:00	--	News	--
	:15	--	Raymond Paige	--
	:30	--	Raymond Paige	--
	:45	--	Sports	--
4	:00	--	News	--
	:15	--	Fashions in Jazz	--
	:30	--	Fashions in Jazz	--
	:45	News	G.I. Jive	--
	BBC		**KWID** **KGEI**	**WVDI** **(950kc, 315m)**
5	:00	--	News	G.I. News
	:15	--	Fred Waring	Fred Waring
	:30	Frontline Family	Am. School of Air	Tune from Home
	:45	News	Am. School of Air	Records
6	:00	Fred Hartley	News	Command Performances
	:15	War on Land	Screen Guild Plays	Command Performances
	:30	To Be Announced	Screen Guild Plays	Yarns for Yanks
	:45	News	Screen Guild Plays	News

7	:00	Marching On	News	Dinah Shore
	:15	Marching On	Stock Market Reports	Ask For It
	:30	Workers' Playtime	Victory Hour	Downbeat
	:45	Workers' Playtime	Victory Hour	Downbeat
8	:00	Talk	Brooke Temple	Kate Smith
	:15	Tomorrow's progs.	Song Sheet	Kate Smith
	:30	World Affairs	Dance Band	U.S.O. Dance
	:45	Pat Kirkwood	Dance Band	U.S.O. Dance
9	:00	News	William Winter	Newspaper of the Air
	:15	Tommy Trinder	Evening Varieties	Newspaper of the Air
	:30	Tommy Trinder	Cavalcade of Amer.	Night Owl Club
	:45	Frontline Family	Cavalcade of Amer.	Night Owl Club
10	:00	Marching On	News	Sign Off
	:15	Marching On	Camel Caravan	--
	:30	Tomorrow's progs.	Camel Caravan	--
	:45	News	We, the People Sing	--

Station WVDI is on the air from 6.00 a.m. to 7.00 a.m. and from 11.30 a.m. to 12 (noon) in addition to the above-mentioned time.

By CHIC YOUNG

Figure 20: Radio Schedule of July 2, 1943; Source: *Trinidad Guardian*

Table 4: Air Time for U.S. AFN Radio Station WVDI (July 2, 1943)

Radio WVDI			Total Weekly Time = 59 hours			
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
6 - 7 a.m. 10.a.m. - 11 p.m.	6 - 7 a.m. 11.30 - 12 noon 5 -11 p.m.	6 - 7 a.m. 11.30 - 12 noon 5 -11 p.m.	6 - 7 a.m. 11.30 - 12 noon 5 -11 p.m.	6 - 7 a.m. 11.30 - 12 noon 5 -11 p.m.	6 - 7 a.m. 11.30 - 12 noon 5 -11 p.m.	6 - 7 a.m. 11.30 - 12 noon 5 -11 p.m.
14	7 ½	7 ½	7 ½	7 ½	7 ½	7 ½

ENDNOTES

1.Keither Romany in an interview with the author, Dec. 3, 2011.

TWENTY

HARRIS'S SURVEY: RADIO RECEIVERS

Listening to radio programmes over the airwaves only benefitted persons if there were available radio sets from which they could listen. Unfortunately, as the war progressed, the supply of radio sets from Canada and America to in the Caribbean proved to be a serious problem. German U-boats were clearly disrupting the flow of supplies across the Atlantic to the Caribbean. The war in the Caribbean exacted a heavy toll on oil, food, equipment, and people. Such losses included radio sets.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

RADIO SHORTAGE EXPECTED SOON

Trinidad radio fans must preserve their radios as there is a great possibility that soon no more radios will be permitted to enter into the Colony because of the present shortage of sets in the Dominion of Canada and the fact that no more radio sets will be manufactured for civilian use by the United States of America after April 22.

Because of the war condition, an officer of the Control Board told the "Sunday Guardian" yesterday , radios had not been coming to the Colony recently and he expected these would soon be stopped altogether.

The Dominion of Canada and the United States, said he, were sympathetically inclined towards the needs of the Colony and they would try to ship orders whenever possible. The international situation was however such that the Colony might get no new radios shortly.

In the weekly news magazine "Time" of February 23, the situation was discussed in an article as follows:-

No more radio sets for U.S. civilians will be made after April 22. By the end of June there will probably be no more on the market. The U.S. which brought 13,100,000 sets last year, heard this news last week from the War Production Board.

Under a previous WPB order cutting down civilian production by 40 per cent, many radio manufacturers were already far along in conversion to war work. WPB warned all of them last week that any facilities not required in making military radio equipment must be converted within "three or four months" to war production of other kinds (e.g., bomb sights).

Radio equipment was more badly needed in the Pacific than in the U.S. Army and Navy procurement and the Netherland Indies purchasing commission, the American Radio Relay League appealing last week to radio "hams" to sell their apparatus to their country.

Figure 21: "Radio Shortage Expected Soon"
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*, March 1, 1943

In an article published by the *Trinidad Guardian* of March 1, 1943, Trinidadians were notified about the possibility of a radio shortage in the colony (Figure 21). With the strong likelihood of a dwindling listening audience, even the radio advertisements included the warning of a possible shortage. Figure 22 shows a typical U.S. radio receiver manufactured by General Electric (GE) and advertised for sale by W.D. Henderson of Chacon Street, Port-of-Spain. The advertisement also informed readers that this was probably their last chance to purchase a radio until after the war.

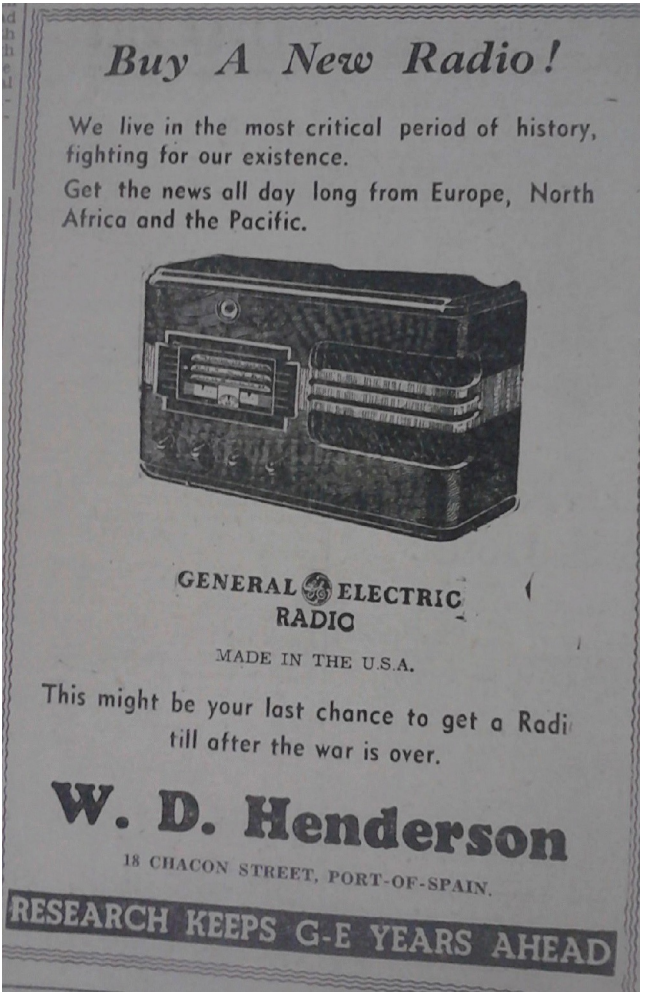

Figure 22: Advertisement for GE Radio
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*, November 13, 1942

AACC's Director William Harris painted an even broader picture in his confidential report of August 1943. Entitled "*Confidential Survey of Radio Broadcasting and the West Indian Radio Newspaper*," Harris commented on the distribution of radio sets in the Caribbean (Table 5 below).

Table 5: Distribution of Radio Sets in the Caribbean (Extract from AACC Report).	
Grenada	300
St. Vincent	100
St. Lucia	210
Dominica	225
Antigua	550
Montserrat	60
Tortola	15
British Virgins	10
St. Kitts and Nevis	370
Bahamas	2,000
British Honduras	1,350
Jamaica	10,000
Puerto Rico	60,000
U.S. Virgins	500
Cuba	200,000
Haiti	5,000
Dominican Republic	10,000
Martinique and Guadeloupe	7,000
Netherlands West Indies	4,500
Total	318,638
Source: AACC Report (Declassified): Confidential Survey of Radio Broadcasting and the West Indian Radio Newspaper. May 6 - June 21, 1943. *Location*: US National Archives, Maryland, USA.	

Harris indicated that there were 7,548 registered sets in Trinidad and Tobago.[1] He further noted that about 3,000 radio sets were unregistered. With a population of approximately 502,401 Trinidadians,[2] the number of persons who owned radio sets would have represented 1.5 percent of the Trinidad population, or 15 persons per 1,000 inhabitants (Table 6).

Table 6: Ownership of Radio Sets (Overall) in Trinidad, 1943	
Number of Registered Sets	7,548
Number of Unregistered Sets	3,000

Total Number of Radio Sets	11,548
Total Population	502,401
Calculated Percentage of Persons with Radio Sets as a Percentage of Population	
(11,548 / 502,401) x 100 =	**2.3%**
or, Radio Ownership per 1,000 persons	**23**

Considering that these islands lay geographically outside the manufacturing countries of America and Britain, the war in the Caribbean would have interfered with the supply of radio receivers.

This figure is also deplorably small when compared to societies where radio was already a mass medium. By comparison, in America, Margaret Graham observed,

> "So important did radio sets become to the US population that they could be found in 14 million households by 1930, a rate of penetration far in excess of that achieved by either household electricity or the telephone."[3] [Underline mine]

Given that the United States population in 1930 was 123.1 million persons, then the diffusion rate of radio sets in that country would be in the vicinity of 114 owners to every 1,000 residents. This figure amounted to five times that of the British colony of Trinidad!

However, in his 'Confidential Survey,' Harris noted that 20 to 30 percent of the sets were inoperable. These percentages translate to between 5,284 and 6,038 (or an average of 5,661) working radio

sets. When the number of unregistered sets is added, then there were approximately (on average) 8,661 radios in the colony (Table 7). This suggests that with a population of approximately 502,401 Trinidadians[4], the actual ownership of operable radio sets was more in the vicinity of 17 persons per 1,000 inhabitants. This figure was much less than the previously estimated figure of 23 persons (Table 7).

Table 7: Actual Number of Operable Sets in Trinidad, 1943

Number of Registered Sets	7,548
Percentage Margin of Inoperable Sets	20 - 30 %
Calculated Number of Operable Sets	
70% Minimum: 0.7 x 7,548 =	5,284
80% Maximum: 0.8 x 7,548 =	6,038
Average No. of Working Sets	**5,661**
Number of Unregistered Sets	3,000

Total Number of Sets	8,661
Calculated Percentage of Persons with Radio Sets as a Percentage of Population	
(8,661 / 502,401) x 100 =	**1.72%**
or, **Average Radio Ownership per 1,000 persons**	**17**

As to the causes of inoperable radios, Director Harris raised the issue of shortages of radio parts. In his report, he noted that for those who owned short-wave radio receivers, both operable and non-operable, there were shortages of batteries and spare parts. Again, such shortages resulted from the war's interruption of the transportation of goods to the colony.

Because of these interruptions, the Trinidad Control Board instituted a quota system for the colony. According to the *Trinidad Guardian* of February 4, 1943, under the caption "Radio Equipment,"

> "all importers of U.S. radio receivers and spare parts were required to submit their estimated requirements to the Director, Bulk Purchasing Department at the Control Board."[5]

However, these estimated needs were not required for items imported from Britain (Figure 23).

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Radio Equipment

Importers including Government Departments of radio receivers and spare parts are hereby notified that they should submit to the Director, Bulk Purchasing Department, Control Board, not later than the 15th February 1943, orders for their estimated requirements of radio receivers and spare parts from the United States. Orders should be submitted in duplicate, both copies being signed, and should cover requirements for one year.

2. The following information must be clearly given:-
(1) Quantity and value of imports from the United States against each item during 1941.
(2) Quantity and value against each item of present stock.
(3) Quantity and value against each item now required.

3. Requirements should be broken down into the following categories:
(a) Receivers. Differentiate between mains and battery types with suggestions as to model preferred.
(b) Receiving valves with type numbers.
(c) Repair parts and accessories with type numbers and/or other details to facilitate recognition and procurement.

4. Importers are reminded that the foregoing does not apply to requirements coming from the United Kingdom.

A. Maillie,
for Director
Bulk Purchasing Department
Control Board

3rd February, 1943

Figure 23: Radio Equipment
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*, February 4th, 1943

Nonetheless, many local companies continued to advertise battery-operated radios. In several of their radio advertisements during the period 1939 to 1945, they gave purchasers a choice of whether they preferred either American or British-manufactured radio receivers.

ENDNOTES

1.US National Archives, RG 43, "AACC Confidential Survey of Radio Broadcasting and the West Indian Radio Newspaper," August 17, 1943.

2.Michael Anthony, *Port-of-Spain in a World at War*, 136.

3.James W. Cortada. *All the Facts: A History of Information in the United States since 1870*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 44.

4.Michael Anthony, *Port-of-Spain in a World at War*, 136.

5."Radio Equipment," *Trinidad Guardian*, February 4, 1943.

TWENTY-ONE

RADIO RECEIVERS: INTERNAL FACTORS

I

WEALTH DISTRIBUTION

Economic depression was a factor that contributed to the low rates of ownership of radios during the war period. Most of these shortages occurred because of German U-boat attacks on trading vessels sailing to and from the Caribbean. But in the context of the colony's economic environment, another closely related factor would have been wealth distribution.

It should be noted that Trinidad's economic climate operated under unique circumstances in the mid-1940s compared to most other Caribbean colonies. These circumstances were vis-à-vis the American 'occupation' in Trinidad. With the construction of U.S. military bases (namely, at Waller Field, Carlsen Field, and Chaguaramus), the Americans employed thousands of local labourers. They came from all walks of life: from agricultural workers to teachers and civil servants. These persons were now earning much-improved wages (sometimes four times their original salary) by working for the Americans.

Reasonably, such improved standards of economic development in the colony should have opened up new channels for the increased purchase, and consequently, rapid diffusion of radio sets. Unfortunately, our previously estimated figure of 11 persons per 1,000 residents who owned a radio set stands in stark contrast to the colony's economic reality.

Increased shortages of battery-operated radio sets drove their prices upwards. Such conditions made it impossible for many persons at the lower end of the socio-economic bracket to purchase a radio. The AACC noted evidence of this inability in its Confidential Report of

March 12, 1943, entitled "Radio Communications in the Caribbean Area" that stated

> "Due to the problem of low income, it is impossible for the peasant to own a standard wave radio set in the minimum price range, let alone a short wave set, which sells from US$75.00 to US$125.00 in the West Indies."[1]

Such prices became the norm given the exigencies of war, all of which served to account for the low adoption rate of radios in the colony.

For those individuals unable to purchase radio sets, the AACC Report mentioned that,

> "communal receivers and loudspeakers units [were] set up in the village squares on various islands and turned on at a stated time each evening to present the news."[2]

This approach by the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission illustrates a cross-fertilization of ideas, as the Moyne Report had earlier referred to this system of communal receivers and loudspeakers. However, the latter's approach was in the context of such apparatus being used in

> "schools and ... at centres, both indoor and on suitable open spaces, whenever Government wished to disseminate news."[3]

As an example of its effectiveness, the Moyne Report referred to the colony of India. The Report mentioned that the standard receivers for broadcasting in villages in India cost about £22 and could reach the whole of an audience in a room of 1,500 square feet. This figure included the expense of providing batteries and the maintenance cost of about £6 per annum per receiver.[4]

The Moyne Report further recommended that

> "it would be advisable for any West Indian Colonies, where electric mains are not available to profit by the experience of India in this respect."[5]

Where electricity was available, the report recognized the use of amplifiers and loudspeakers for public addresses that were

> "capable of reaching an audience of 500 people when indoors can be provided in the county [India] at a cost of about £25."[6]

However, there is no indication (such as Hansard Records and Colonial Office Records) that any such correspondence on learning from India's experience with receivers was initiated between both governments.

II

FOOD SHORTAGES

Another crucial factor during the war period that would have influenced any decision to purchase a radio was the persistent shortages of food.

Ideally, the increased wages obtained by the thousands of local workers employed by the Americans should have stimulated the economy and allowed many to purchase short-wave receivers. Again, ideally, this would have contributed to a successful diffusion and adoption of radio receivers, not only in the city but also in the rural areas. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

However, I am on the view that only a fortunate few could have purchased reasonably priced radios. The more pressing need was purchasing food and essentials, given the food shortages and war austerity practiced in the colony.[7] Anthony noted that

> *"By the advent of the second half of 1942, war difficulties had so set in that Port-of-Spain and the rest of the country were in the grips of the most critical food shortages."*[8]

An indication of the severity of the food shortage in the colony is noted in Figure 24. This 1943 article highlighted food shortages (here, rice) being addressed from an unlikely source: Tobago. Here, sweet potatoes were being supplied to the Trinidad colony as a response to the "Grow More Food" campaign launched in the colony. What is particularly striking is the reference to "peasants and estate owners" to identify the division between those who were agricultural workers and those who owned the agricultural estates.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Tobago Can Feed Trinidad For 3 Months

Sweet potatoes sales got brighter in city markets during the past few days as rice became increasingly difficult to obtain in the shops, but they were still not brisk enough, it is reported, to give deserved employment to the peasants and estate owners who have combined to give Trinidad an enormous sweet potato crop this year.

Vying with potatoes for consumer choice at the markets are yams, also coming out of the fields in record quantities, and English potatoes, of which it is said 5,000 crates were recently released to the shops, are helping also to retard sweet potato sales.

Yams before sweet potatoes are not Trinidad's best choice at the moment, one interested in production told the 'Trinidad Guardian' investigator. Hihs view was that yams can keep right down to the usually lean months of July and August, while if sweet potatoes are not to rot and so be a discouraging loss to grocers, they must be eaten now.

Reports reaching the 'Trinidad Guardian' indicate that Tobago has enough ground provisions to feed Trinidad right on to May. This is attributed directly to the farmers' response to the Grow More Food campaign.

Meanwhile ladies of the W.V.S. [Women's Voluntary Services] cookery centre in the city are engaged in showing Trinidad housewiives52 different dishes in which sweet potato can be served.

Figure 24: 'Tobago Can Feed Trinidad For 3 Months'
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*, February 9, 1943.

Controlling the distribution of food proved challenging as "people were grabbing at every kind of foodstuff they could buy [and] the unscrupulous were having a field day."[9]" Things became so bad that by March 1941, "a Food Controller had been appointed to regulate the distribution of whatever foodstuffs were available."[10]

The Legislative Council later proposed on July 31, 1942, that a food rationing system be introduced.[11] Such a rationing system required the Food Controller to enforce a plan "whereby members of the public would register, after which they would be issued with ration cards."[12] For those refusing to register, the threat was in the slogan: "*No registration, no ration.*"[13] Rationed commodities included bacon, butter, sugar, tea, jam, biscuits, cheese, eggs, and milk.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

Persons had to register at chosen shops to buy rationed items. Each person received a ration book containing coupons. Shopkeepers were provided with enough food for registered customers.

Given the colony's food shortages, the economical choice of purchasing radios versus buying foodstuff would have been settled before it began. Further, given the war's adverse effects on the colony,

any successful diffusion of radios would have been limited in all areas of the island.

ENDNOTES

1.US National Archives, RG 43, "AACC Confidential Report on Radio Communications in the Caribbean Area," March 12, 1943.

2.Ibid.

3.Benn, The Moyne Report, 352.

4.Ibid., 353.

5.Ibid.

6.Ibid.

7.” Tobago can feed Trinidad for Three Months,” *Trinidad Guardian*, February 9, 1943.

8.Anthony, *Making of Port-of-Spain Vol. II*, 133.

9.Ibid, 137.

10.Ibid, 133.

11.Ibid, 136.

12.From the registration, the authorities were able to ascertain that the population exceeded half-a-million, approximately 502,401 persons, and that the literacy rate in the country was not as high as previously believed. Anthony, *Making of Port-of-Spain Vol. II*, 136.

13.Anthony, *Making of Port-of-Spain Vol. II*, 136.

TWENTY-TWO

THE LISTENER AUDIENCE SURVEYS

Radio provides a form of communication that uses a *one-to-many* model for sharing information. In such a setting, a single broadcasting source provides information to multiple receivers. That is, radio's potential as a mass medium exists by its ability to reach not only one listener but several listeners at the same time. But how many listeners are considered 'several'?

An idea as to the listening audience in the colony was noted in a memo dated December 23, 1941, and addressed to John Grenfell-Williams, then-Assistant Controller for the BBC Overseas Service. In it, an unidentified BBC official indicated a conservative range of 20,000 to 30,000 potential listeners based on a survey of the radio audience for Trinidad. He mentioned that these figures were the

> "*estimates from the Trinidadian government ... [of] the total potential radio audience in Trinidad.*"[1]

With a population of approximately 502,401 inhabitants, then the peak number of potential listeners in the colony would be around 60 persons per 1,000 inhabitants. See Table 8.

Table 8: Listening Audience in Trinidad, 1941	
Population of Trinidad colony	502,401
Minimum Number of Listeners	20,000
Maximum Number of Listeners	30,000
Calculated Percentage of Maximum Radio Listeners as a Percentage of Population	
(30,000 / 502,401) x 100 =	5.97% **(or 6%)**
or, **Listening Audience per 1,000 persons:**	**60**

Two years later, in early 1943, another survey was undertaken. This time, the survey was conducted from the American perspective. Later that year in September 1943, AACC Director Harris attended the Seventh Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. (mentioned previously). In his presentation, Harris explained,

> *"... it is estimated that there are approximately 100,000 radio sets in the United States and British West Indian possessions, offering a potential listening audience of roughly 400,000 people ... in the above-mentioned Caribbean colonies."*[2]

Here, Harris averages one radio set to a listening audience of four persons in the West Indies.

Based on our previously determined average of 8,661 working radio sets (5,661 registered + 3,000 unregistered) for the Trinidad colony, then, by applying this ratio, we would arrive at a likely listening audience of 34,644 persons. With a population of 502,401 persons, this translates into 6.9 percent of the populace, or 69 persons per 1,000 residents (see Table 9). This figure is deplorably small for a listening audience.

Table 9: Listening Audience in Trinidad, 1943

Average No. of Sets (Registered + Unregistered)	5,661
Ratio of Working Radio Sets to Listeners	1:4
Calculated Number of Potential Radio Listeners	
5,661 x 4 =	34,644
Calculated Percentage of Radio Listeners as a Percentage of Population	
(34,644 / 502,401) x 100 =	**6.9%**
or, **Listening Audience per 1,000 persons:**	**69**

It is, however, comparable to our other previously calculated average of 17 radio owners per 1,000 residents, which - by virtue of the 1:4 ratio - translates into approximately 68 listeners per 1,000 residents.

By comparison, it would appear that two years later, in 1943, the BBC figures had not increased significantly; a mere 13 percent above the peak number of potential listeners in 1941. (Table 10.)

Table 10: Comparison of Listening Audiences 1941 and 1943

Year: 1941	
Listening Audience per 1,000 persons:	60
Year: 1943	
Listening Audience per 1,000 persons:	69
Percentage Increase in Listening Audience	
(9/69) x 100	**13.04%**

These figures highlight the reality that despite the varied programmes from American radio stations and the BBC's efforts to capture the Trinidadian listening audience, the overall low rate of listenership did not justify radio as being a mass medium in the colony.

ENDNOTES

1.Memo from official with initials 'WMM' and the occupational acronym 'A/ EID', to John Grenfell-Williams, 23 December 1941 (R46/92) in Whittington, Ian. *Writing the Radio War*. Edinburgh University Press. Kindle Edition.

2.William Harris, "The West Indian Radio Newspaper" in The Economic Future of the Caribbean, ed. Edward Franklin Frazier and Eric Williams (Mass.: Majority Press, 2004), 76.

TWENTY-THREE

LOCAL BROADCASTING PIRACY

I

EARLY BROADCASTING PIRACY

Although the colonial government viewed with concern the influence of American programming, the activities of Radio Distribution (Trinidad) Limited - a pro- British company - left much to be desired. Seemingly, Radio Distribution's subscribers were being provided with a diet of controlled programme content. But this was to be expected. The company officials were quite aware that their clientele preferred entertainment rather than news programmes.

Since its inception, back in 1935, Radio Distribution (Trinidad) Ltd. had been illegally taping broadcasts from American shortwave stations on a regular basis. These broadcasts were then re-diffused to subscribers as part of their programme schedule. The colonial authorities would have viewed this illegal broadcasting as an act of piracy. It was also a direct violation of British broadcasting policy that emphasized pro-British programming coming from a British company.

Further, when Radio Distribution first premiered, its broadcasts were transmitted for only one hour a day.[1] But when the war broke out, they expanded the broadcasting time. So too did they extend the amount of listening time for American programming. As rates of listening improved, the number of subscribers also increased significantly. By 1943, Radio Distribution had speaker boxes in over 2,000 homes, with subscribers being charged a monthly rate of $2.00 per household. As for the listenership audience, this translated into 8,000 persons (using Harris's formula), mostly in the urban areas.

The expansion in operating hours also provided subscribers with further war coverage from the BBC's increased news bulletins and other newsworthy sources. One of these latter sources was the West Indian Radio Newspaper, broadcasted by WRUL and WRUW.

With WIRN's introduction on February 1, 1943, Radio Distribution (Trinidad) saw an opportunity again to engage meaningfully with its clientele. Within a week of the Newspaper's first shortwave broadcast, the company placed advertisements in the *Trinidad Guardian*, informing subscribers of the programme's availability on their system (Figure 25). WIRN broadcasts were now

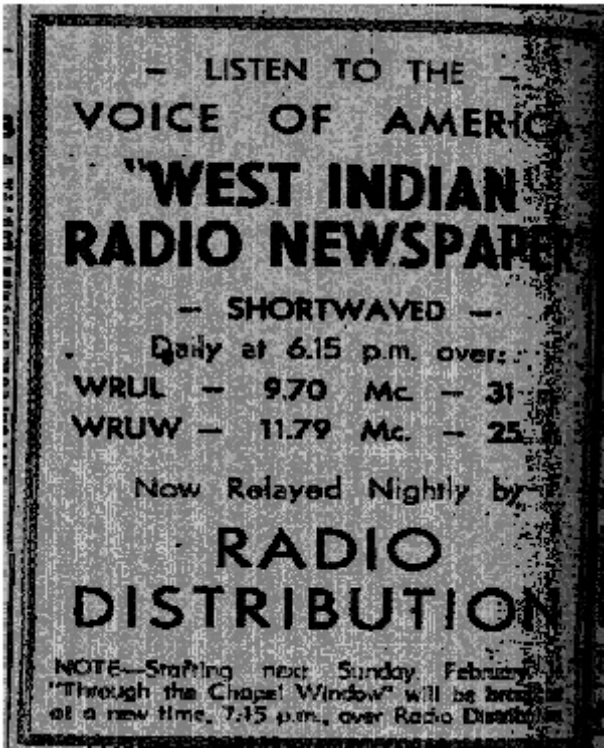

Figure 25: WIRN Advertisement by Radio Distribution (Trinidad) Ltd.
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*, February 7, 1943

taped in the evening and later re-diffused during the night. Economics and satisfying their growing clientele were more of a priority than a pro-British broadcasting policy.

Overall, Trinidadians had a choice in deciding which stations and what programme content they wished to listen to regularly. However, while they preferred the BBC news, which they perceived as objective, they tuned-in to the U.S. radio stations for entertainment, sports, music, and other programmes. As such, U.S. entertainment programmes would have helped to foster their interest away from the more "serious" programming content broadcasted by the BBC.

In the final analysis, U.S. radio stations and radio programmes were readily providing Trinidadian listeners with "an acquired taste" for the American way of life. Rediffusion assisted with this preference by capitalizing on this information through 'novel' ways to expand their service throughout the colony.

II

MORE LOCAL BROADCASTING PIRACY

In May 1943, just three months after Radio WVDI began broadcasting to the colony, Radio Distribution Radio Distribution again saw an opportunity to return to pirating American programmes for rebroadcasting. This time, they pirated Radio WVDI's programmes and re-diffused them to their subscribers. But, as in the past, the company did not have an issue engaging in radio piracy, particularly if such piracy increased Radio Distribution's popularity and subsequent listenership.

Suffice to say, Radio Distribution's actions would have eventually elicited criticism from the American military authorities. The Americans did not take too kindly to Radio Distribution's illegal practice of taping their programmes without permission or payment.[1]

However, this act of piracy should be viewed in the wider context of the gradual undermining of British influence on the listening audience. Apparently, Radio Distribution was predisposing listeners to prefer American culture to British culture by re-diffusing American broadcasts across its wired system. This attitude stands in stark contrast to the BBC's broadcasting efforts to influence the local people by encouraging "a cultural West Indianness - framed and defined by the British imperial system."[2]

A better perception of the influence of the BBC and competing US radio stations on the local populace is obtained by reviewing their air time in broadcasting to the colony (Table 11). This information comes from the radio schedules listed in the *Trinidad Guardian* during the Second World War.

An analysis would reveal that the BBC had significantly more air time (64¾ hours) than the other competing stations. However, with the Trinidad-based U.S. radio station, Radio WVDI, ostensibly on British soil, the projection of Britain through the BBC began to diminish, even despite the special BBC programmes targeted at the Caribbean colonies. Trinidadians' attitudes toward radio listening were fast becoming Americanized.

Table 11: Comparison of Radio Stations by Countries and Hours of Operation during the Second World War				
Station Name	**Country Manage-ment**	**Year Started in Trinidad**	**Station Location**	**Hours of Operation per Week**
US Radio Stations	USA	1936	USA	54 ¼
BBC Overseas Services	Britain	1939	Britain	64 ¾
Radio WVDI	US Armed Forces	1943	Trinidad	46
1 Only the BBC broadcasted with a morning and afternoon schedule every 15 minutes after the hour starting at 7 a.m., 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. from Monday to Saturday compared to the other US stations. On Sundays, they competed with the US Armed Forces Radio WVDI which operated continuously from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.				
2 All radio stations (British and American) competed for listener-ship from the local populace every evening: the BBC from 3 p.m., the US stations from 5 p.m., WIRN from 6.15 to 6.45 p.m. only, and Radio WVDI from 6.30 p.m.				
3 All stations (except WIRN) stopped broadcasting around midnight every day: the BBC and Radio WVDI at 11 p.m. and the US stations at 12.45 a.m.				
Source: compiled from Radio Schedules Tables 2 -4.				

ENDNOTES

1.Escalante, *Radio Days in Colonial Trinidad*, 57.

1.Harriet Edwards, "The Decline of the British and the Rise of American Influence in Trinidad" (PhD. dissertation, The University of the West Indies, 1997).

2.Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, 178.

PART 7:

GAME CHANGER: A NEW FOCUS

TWENTY-FOUR

THE BBC AND D-DAY

At 6.30 a.m., on June 6, 1944, the Allied Invasion of German-occupied France began, and the world did not know it.

Figure 26: D-Day: Allied soldiers landing on German-occupied France on June 6, 1944
Source: Free Image by skeeze from Pixabay

The Allied Invasion, termed D-Day, began with successive waves of ships and aircraft crossing the English Channel (Figure 26[1]). The world only learned D-Day was a reality three hours later from the BBC. At precisely 9.32 a.m. (or 4.32 a.m. Trinidad time), both Home and Overseas General Forces programmes were interrupted. The BBC's John Snagge then made the first official announcement of the

Normandy beach landings by reading a broadcast by General Eisenhower to Europe's peoples.[2]

Trinidadians only learned of the invasion when the Overseas Services' first broadcast to the West Indies began at 7.00 a.m. (local time). According to Asa Briggs, BBC historian,

> "It was estimated, indeed, that 725 out of a total of 914 United States stations carried BBC programmes on 6 June."[3]

As the day passed, the BBC repeatedly broadcasted the news that the invasion had started. Information from Allied sources of early successes also began to reach the BBC. Special broadcasts soon followed that allowed listeners to follow the opening moments of this long-awaited Allied Invasion.[4] Even the *Trinidad Guardian* released a second publication of its newspaper later that day with the headline "*Invasion Started*." See Figure 27 below.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Trinidad Guardian

No. 8,140, 27TH YEAR — PORT-OF-SPAIN, TRINIDAD, B.W.I. TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 1944. — PRICE: FOUR CENTS

INVASION STARTED

Allied Troops Land In Northern France

Mr. Churchill Tells Parliament Of Air And Sea Armadas

Winston S. Churchill

Gen. Montgomery In Charge Of Assault Troops

By WES T. GALLAGHER

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS, WITH THE ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, June 6 (AP).—Allied troops—American, British and Canadian—landed in northern France this morning, launching the greatest overseas military operation in history.

Gen. Bernard L. Montgomery

Figure 27: "Invasion Started"
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*, June 6, 1944, 1.

Also, that same day, the War Reporting Unit of the BBC came into operation. In the weeks following D-Day, this Unit provided many broadcasts of the historic action of D-Day

> "when BBC men went with the forces on to the beaches, and jumped with the airborne troops."[5]

Briggs further mentioned that,

> "After the nine o'clock News, the King spoke to the nation and the first BBC *War Report* was introduced by John Snagge."[6]

Like many Britons and thousands overseas, many Trinidadians also tuned-in frequently to these *War Reports* during the months that followed for accurate and reliable news on Europe's liberation. As Asa Briggs further noted, such *War Reports*

> "became the most important and effective link between 'the civilian and the services': 'it took the microphone to places where things were happening, and let it listen - as one would one's self like to listen - to the sounds of battle, to the voices of men just returned from the fighting line, to observers who spent that day touring the scene of action."[7]

But it was not just the BBC news that Trinidadians listened to in the ensuing months following D-Day. As Britain began to see victory in sight across Europe and an end of the war, the BBC started broadcasting a series of programmes to contribute to the solution of colonial problems. As John Grenfell-Williams, Assistant Controller of the Overseas Services, stated in the BBC Yearbook 1945,

> "The BBC could not, and would not, try even to offer advice in maters which concern the colonies themselves. What it can do is to throw into the partnership between the United Kingdom and the colonies once valuable asset - the experience of the people of Britain in tackling some of their own problems, in the hope that this

> experience may be of some use to the people of the colonies in tackling similar problems."[8]

These broadcasts by recognized experts in their various fields discussed such subjects as

> "the growth of and organization of trade unions in Britain, the development of women's institutes and cooperative movement; there have been talks on parliamentary government, housing, education and so on."[9]

Interestingly, one of these experts was none other than Dr. Arthur Lewis, the West Indian economist.[10]

ENDNOTES

1.Image by skeeze from Pixabay

2.D-Day. https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/100-voices/ww2/d-day

3.Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol 3: The War of Words*, London: Oxford University Press, 1970, 662.

4.BBC Year Book 1945, 9

5.Asa Briggs, *The War of Words*, 662.

6.Ibid.

7.Ibid.

8.BBC Year Book 1945, 92.

9.Ibid.

10.Ibid, 91.

TWENTY-FIVE

THE BBC AND VE- DAY

Eventually the inevitable happened.

On May 8, 1945, the *Trinidad Guardian* headline announced "Victory in Europe," indicating that the Second World War had come to an end (see Figure 28). In the aftermath of the war, the Colonial Office resumed responsibility for expanding radio broadcasting in the West Indian colonies in the postwar era. They had been halted it during the Second World War when Britain turned her attention to the more pressing needs of the war in Europe.

V-Day Special

Trinidad Guardian

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VICTORY IN EUROPE

Churchill To Announce Surrender Today

ondon Crowds Jam
ity Streets; Wild
cenes In New York

CAPTURED GERMANS in Berlin—part of the 134,000 taken during the Battle for Berlin. The prisoners are massed in a Berlin square. Now surrender in Europe has gripped 11,000,000 German prisoners.

Trinidad All Set To Mark Allied Victory In Europe

Capitulation Takes Place In Old Reims Schoolhouse; Eisenhower Not At Signing

Germans Give Up Norway

Garrison Bows To Surrender Order

Crowning Allied Triumph Comes After 5½ Years Fighting

By ALEXANDER KNOLTON

LONDON, May 7, 1.30—Complete victory in Europe was won by the Allies today with Germany's surrender and unconditional

Mr. Winston Churchill, President Truman, and Marshal Stalin will proclaim the historic simultaneously at 9 a.m. E.D.T. tomorrow from Washington, London and Moscow.

Figure 28: “Victory in Europe”
Source: *Trinidad Guardian*, May 8, 1945

However, the wartime situation had not entirely prevented the Colonial Office from periodically considering plans for radio broadcasting postwar development. As early as the summer of 1939, the Moyne Report had suggested that radio broadcasting was a useful tool for furthering the social and political development of the West

Indian colonies. The Report also mentioned the need for a local West Indian broadcasting service tailored to the particular demands of the West Indies.[1]

However, as Lord Moyne himself indicated in 1940,

> "*the Government decided that the Report contained certain matters which ought not to fall into enemy hands.*"[2]

Based on his recommendation, the British government decided to suppress the Report.

In mid-1945, with the curtailment of war activities in Europe, the British government published the Moyne Report. The Trinidad colonial government welcomed this turn of events. In the context of broadcasting, it now transmitted a message: *the medium of radio was set to go beyond the broadcasting of propaganda and war stories*.

Nonetheless, the local authorities approached the Colonial Office for assistance on a matter of key importance that afflicted them during the war, namely, 'rival' broadcasts. As far as the local officials were aware, these 'rival' broadcasts were promoted by

I. the U.S. Armed Forces Radio Station at Chaguaramus where *Radio WVDI* was stationed, and
ii. the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, which broadcasted the West Indian Radio News Newspaper (WIRN) programme. These broadcasts were produced by the Radio Division of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission in consultation with the U.S. Office of War Information.

These broadcasts were viewed as exposing and subverting Trinidadians' attitudes to 'alternative' cultural and social norms. Such transmissions could not be tolerated in a British-governed colony.

The Colonial Office, having now assumed full responsibility for expanding radio broadcasting in the colonies, now considered their options. In July 1945, the Colonial Office engaged in discussions with the AACC to cease the operations of the WIRN programme. They had repeatedly raised complaints about WIRN's programming during the war. As far as the Colonial Office was aware, the programme content was sometimes construed as critical of British official wartime policy. But with the AACC having more influence, coupled to the fact that it was headquartered in America, these concerns were treated lightly.

Now the eruption of the Cold War and the possible use of radio broadcasting by Communist states to influence the population of the British Empire seemed sufficient cause to warrant an extension of the life of the 'Newspaper' programme. The Colonial Office also recognized that the WIRN programme had a higher listenership than the BBC's "*Calling the West Indies*" broadcast feature. Since there existed a sufficiently broad audience for WIRN, the Colonial Office adopted the view that the 'Newspaper' programme content should be suitably modified to influence the attitudes of the populace in the West Indian colonies against political subversion.

Although the 'Newspaper' programme continued to be broadcast, the expansion of the Anglo American Caribbean Commission (AACC) to include France and the Netherlands became the proverbial "writing on the wall" for the dissolution of the "Newspaper." Both the British and American members of the AACC were of the view that France and the Netherlands might misinterpret the continued existence of WIRN. These later countries might view the Newspaper as an attempt by the British and Americans to gain an unfair advantage in the dissemination of information. Accordingly, the AACC agreed that WIRN's presence did not serve the best interests of the Commission, and the programme was effectively discontinued on October 31, 1946.

As for Radio WVDI, unfortunately, this U.S. military radio station would continue to be a proverbial '*thorn in the side*' for the

local colonial authorities. The popularity and influence of Radio WVDI's broadcasts continued to be felt among the civilian population. Yet, despite the local colonial authorities' attempts to minimize Radio WVDI's impact, the Americans could always rely on the Base Lease Agreement of 1940. Article XV(1) of the Agreement gave them the legal right to broadcast.

Furthermore, the Base Lease Agreement was between the United States and the British Government. So until the terms of the Agreement changed, Radio WVDI's programmes continued to be broadcasted and widely enjoyed by the Trinidadian civilian listeners. But as Harvey Neptune pointed out,

> *"... even though Radio WVDI was instrumental in promoting calypsoes and making it a respectful place in society, the calypsonians also lamented the way in which the Yankees destroyed the carefully cultivated way of life that had existed in the colony before their arrival."*[3]

This situation was understandable. In the aftermath of the war, many Trinidadians (and West Indians, too) began to find it increasingly difficult to identify with the British Empire anymore. A new dawn was rising on the British West Indies; a crisis of identity began to emerge. Also, the idea of self-government and the increased sense of nationalism had begun to take root in the Region. And as Ian Whittington accurately summed up the situation in the post-war years,

> *"The BBC, like the British government, seemed uninterested in acknowledging the concerns and culture of a region with a specific history of colonisation and creolisation."*[4]

Thus, the stage was set for the emergence of local *Radio Stations in Colonial Trinidad*.

ENDNOTES

1. Benn, *The Moyne Report*,

2.https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/1940-03-20/debates/30a41fd6-d61f-4b62-a361-1071c8edde95/ColonialDevelopmentAndWelfare

3.Harvey R. Neptune. Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation (Kindle Locations 1975-1976). Kindle Edition.

4.Ian Whittington. *Writing the Radio War* (Edinburgh Critical Studies in War and Culture) . Edinburgh University Press. Kindle Edition.

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INDEX