

**50 YEARS OF THE '70 REVOLUTION**

**26 FEBRUARY - 21 APRIL 1970**

**50**

**COMMEMORATE - CELEBRATE - EVALUATE**



**POWER TO THE PEOPLE**

## 50 Years of the '70 Revolution

Independence in 1962 was a moment of great anticipation and expectation for the people of this country.

The call for Home Rule of the 1930's was becoming reality at last, that was how most of the society felt.

By 1965, with the passage of the Industrial Stabilisation Act (ISA) and the Mbanefo Commission both aimed against "*subversive elements in the society*" and the "*background (of) an open attempt to link the unions in oil and sugar*"<sup>1</sup>, Williams sought to crush the militant Butlerite trade unions and subvert the unity of the workers in oil and sugar.

Industrialisation by invitation failed to deliver the expanded employment opportunities promised at Independence. The "*urban youth who, despite expanded educational opportunities, were unemployed and without employment prospects in increasing numbers*"<sup>2</sup> were disenchanted.

Unemployment in oil fell by 3% in 1965-69 and mechanization in sugar led to retrenchment. Job losses were the order of the day.

The broad cross-sections of the people led by **Pegasus** (founded by Geddes Granger in 1962) who sought to chart a people's programme for nation-building were frustrated by the actions of the Government to block every initiative they proposed or Undertook.

The disappointment of the people was boiling over into action.

TIWU led strikes in 1967, 68 and the May 1969 bus strike battling the ISA. In June 1968, 10,000 workers joined in a March of Resistance.

1 Eric Williams, **Inward Hunger**, p 311

2 Clyde Weatherhead, **Project Independence: After 56 Years**, p 44

In February 1969, UWI students launched protests against the arrest of 11 Trinidadian students, who were part of protests against racial discrimination at Sir George Williams University in Canada.

All these currents of discontent erupted on 26 February as the 1970 Revolution led by **NJAC**, a united front of students, workers and their unions and youth formed that same Night.



The people, disillusioned with the persistence of colonial power structures, sought to address social inequality, foreign domination of the economy, racial inequality and un-representative political governance 8 years after Independence.

The shouts of 'Power to the People' and the sound of marching feet filled the air with banners of 'Indians and Africans, Unite!' at the forefront.

Like the colonial authorities response to the 1937 Butler Riots, the 'independence' state responded with 'Smiles and Blood' – token concessions and severe repression, States of Emergency and blood and steel for those who dared to resort to arms.

The mass culture of illicit drugs was introduced aiming to destroy the growing consciousness of the youth and people demanding the new Trinbago which Independence failed to deliver.

Fifty years later, the demands of 1970 for Power to the People to create a sustainable economy to guarantee the growing needs of

the workers, farmers, youth, women – the majority of the society, remains.

The realization of Trinbago, a society based on the unity of the people and a Free and Equal Union between Tobago and Trinidad remains the People's aspiration.

The struggle for defining the direction of the country to realise these aspirations of 1937, 1962 and 1970 requires that we examine the experience and prospects of 1970 and draw the warranted conclusions for creating the future we desire and demand.

Those who participated in the '70 Revolution must share their experiences and perspectives and help chronicle its history. For those who were not and need to be informed or reminded, let us all participate in all the activities to mark this historic 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and **Commemorate, Celebrate and Evaluate** that most significant development and learn and apply its lessons in building the Future.

**Power to the People!  
For Trinbago!**



Sir George Williams University Protest



Above: UWI Protest

Below: Port of Spain Demonstration





# CIRCLE OF REMEMBRANCE AND CELEBRATION!

Russel Andalcio - Geddes Granger - Earl Lewis - Clive Nunez - Winston Smart  
Delandro Decoteau - Errol Balfour - Carl Blackwood - Dave D'Arbeau  
Kelshall Bodie



**10 Arrested and Charged as a Result of the February 26 Demonstration**

# 1970 Revolution - Timeline

**POWER**



**TO THE PEOPLE!**



## Before

- 1962** - Independence - August 31; Pegasus founded by Geddes Granger.
- March 18-20 1965** - M'baneto Resort issued Industrial Stabilisation Act passed - both aimed against subversive elements in the trade unions.
- 1967** - Pegasus issues Project Independence nation-building Plan.
- 1968** - 10,000 workers join in March of Resistance against unemployment and falling wages.
- February 1969** - UWI Students demonstrate in support of students arrested in Canada against visit of Canadian Governor Michener; NJAC formed.
- April-May 1969** - Bus workers' strike; On May 13, attacked by police; workers, union officers, students beaten and arrested.
- 9** - Protest mas in Carnival 1970; J'Ouvert band by Pinetoppers titled 'The Truth: Before, Then and Now'; UWI students band King Sugar; placard demonstration at Carnival Queen show
- 26** - First Demonstration in Port of Spain; In Solidarity with students in Canada, to Canadian High Commission, East Port of Spain, Royal Bank, and Shanty Town. Demonstration swelled from 200 to about 6,000.
- 27** - 10 Leaders of the Demonstration arrested and charged with disturbing a place of worship, unlawful assembly and conspiracy to violate the peace.

## February

- 3** - NJAC meetings at San Fernando, St. James, Curepe.
- 4** - Shanty Town March; 10,000 march in support of the arrested 10.
- 5** - Demonstration outside Magistrate's court to support 10 arrested leaders, dispersed by police; crowd re-organise in Woodford Square; 4000 strong; UMR0BI demonstration in San Fernando.
- 6** - 14,000 march to San Juan; join 6000 more in San Juan for meeting.
- 7** - 4-hour demonstration in Tobago; Woodford Square declared The People's Parliament.
- 11** - AG on radio/television in 4-minute address to the nation.
- 12** - March to Caroni - 6,000 leave POS for Caroni. At Chaguanas crowd swells to about 10,000 on the way to Couva.
- 16** - Successful NJAC meetings in South Trinidad.
- 19** - First Tapia public meeting at Auzonville Park, Tunapuna. Best presents paper on "Black Power and National Reconstruction After The February Revolution"
- 21** - NJAC march to Arima.
- 23** - PM Williams addresses the nation - promises crash programmes, etc. NJAC meeting in People's Parliament at same time attracts huge crowd
- 24** - Police use tear gas to break up demonstration on Charlotte Street; NJAC leaders in court; Large demonstration to Diego Martin.
- 28** - NJAC march to Arima.
- 29** - NJAC at Mayaro.

## March

- 1** - NJAC and National Steelbands Association.
- 4** - March to Maraval and Belmont. Massive demonstration in Tobago. OWTU officially supports Black Power, Manalla Jackson to give five show.
- 6** - NJAC-activist Basil Davis shot dead by policeman outside Woodford Square.
- 7** - Policeman who shot Davis is tried in absentia in People's Parliament.
- 8** - March on High Street; many show-windows smashed; 17 demonstrators arrested; Weekes leads T & TEC workers in POS march.
- 9** - Funeral of Basil Davis; 30,000 take part in funeral procession from POS to San Juan.
- 10** - UMR0BI - NJAC meeting in San Fernando; police brutality attacked.
- 11** - NJAC marches - Santa Cruz and Tobago; Market Vendors agree to march on 10th; Police Commissioner calls up Special Reserves
- 13** - ANR Robinson Resigns from the Cabinet; NJAC calls for resistance against State of Emergency; March in Diego Martin.

## April

- 14** - Shooting incident at Teteron.
- 15** - Market vendors march averted; Government bans Stokely Carmichael from land of his birth - T&T.
- 16** - Clive Nunez banned from entering Barbados.
- 17** - Work stoppage at WASA; TIWU calls for work stoppage on 21 April; Big UMR0BI meeting in San Fernando; PNM parliamentarians support Government.
- 18** - NJAC marches in South Trinidad and in Tobago; PNM constituency groups pledge loyalty to PM Williams.
- 19** - PNM General Council supports PM Williams; Work stoppage at Brechin Castle.
- 20** - NJAC march from Couva to Caroni; Sugar workers plan to march in POS next day; Tapia's 2nd public meeting at Diamond Vale
- 21** - State of Emergency declared; NJAC leaders arrested and detained on Nelson Island; Smashing of windows in POS as police try to clear the People's Parliament; Soldiers Mutiny at Teteron.

## After

- 1970** - State Response - token concessions, repression and ideological suppression - Draconian Public Order Bill, Drug culture imposition.
- 1970 - 74** - NUJFF carry out armed struggle; Repressive Public Order Bill defeated by mass protest.
- 1971** - Strikes at FecChem, Dunlop, Texaco, Badger and Wimpey; State of Emergency and detention of 10 labour leaders in October; Opposition boycott General Elections resulting in 33% minority Government.
- 1972** - Industrial Relations Act replaces the ISA.
- 1973** - Oil boom
- 1975** - Oil & Sugar Strike, February 18 - Labour Solidarity Rally; March 18 - Bloody Tuesday - brutal police attack on workers' demonstration; 32 trade unionists arrested; Natural Gas Industry at Pt. Lisas development decided.





## 50 Years Of the '70 Revolution



### State of Emergency - April 21, 1970 List of Detainees Nelson Island

1. Abdul Malik
2. Adrian Espinet
3. Anthony Mac Farlane (Jan Jan)
4. Bayliss Frederick
5. Brian Chen
6. Carl Blackwood
7. Carl Douglas
8. Carlos Williams
9. Chan Maharaj
10. Clive Nunez
11. Darwin Lewis
12. Dave D'Arbeau (Khafra Kambon)
13. David Murray (Aiyegoro Ome)
14. Dupont Ewing
15. Errol Balfour
16. George Weekes
17. Gerald Bryce
18. Glenford George
19. Geddes Granger (Makandal Daaga)
20. Hector Greig
21. Hilton Greaves
22. Hugo Piechier
23. Ian Richardson
24. John McKarm
25. Julian Britto
26. Kelshall Britto
27. Leroy Rattan
28. Lester Wilkinson (Efebo Wilkinson)
29. Mervyn Quinn Huggins
30. Michael Als
31. Michael Phillips
32. Nuevo Diaz
33. Otto Patrick
34. Pat Emmanuel
35. Patrick Knight (Apoesho Mutope)
36. Rolston Granger (Dedan Kimathi)
37. Rudolph Lord (Mansa Musa)
38. Stanley Antoine
39. Syl Lowhar
40. Urban Mason (Blackboy)
41. Vibert Harriet
42. Victor Marcano
43. Wayne Davis
44. William Benjamin
45. William Duncan
46. William Rivierre
47. Winston Leonard
48. Winston Pierre
49. Winston Smart
50. Winston Suite

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