

# Timeline of the black power revolution

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



February 26, 1970

It surely was a memorable day for us Trinidadians as hundreds of people take to the streets of Port of Spain. The Afro Trinidadian people 'Negros' are recognizing that the Whites get more privilege and uphold high positions in companies while the blacks are just being treated and are generally seen as the low class of society. This particular movement not only made local news but regional and international news also. This story has definitely put Trinidad & Tobago on the map.

A UWI student by the name of Geddes Granger led the The National Joint Action Committee (NJAC) where by other discontented groups, marched to the streets of Port of Spain to commemorate the first anniversary of the Sir George Williams Computer Revolt in support for their Canadian rivals. A racist lecturer in Canada was failing black students in which they complained and in turn started a rebellion. Approximately two hundred (200) students as well as other students locked themselves in the computer lab then proceeded to ignite a fire which eventually got everyone's attention including the police. Unfortunately ten Trinidadian students were arrested and were initially sentenced to life imprisonment but were later freed.

The protesters proceeded through the streets of Port of Spain chanting, "Power! Power!" some persons were seen entering the Roman Catholic Church located on Independence Square to stage a sit in. Conflict rose between the protesters and the protective services where there were excessive shouts and backlash being passed on. The protestors continued using shouting using a loudspeaker and eventually made their way towards

the Royal Bank of Canada in attempt to enter the premises. White business owners closed their shops because they were afraid to encounter the marchers. The demonstrators made their presence felt in front the Furness Building and the Trinidad Chamber of Commerce as well.

After a long hot and eventful day, the marchers congregated at Woodford Square which is now being called as, the ' Peoples' Parliament', for a meeting. The police came and arrested nine of the other leaders of this march. When I heard that, I had to find out for myself what was happening. I heard some people saying that they arrested them and charged them because they ruptured the peace and violated the Cathedral.

March 12, 1970

March to Couva

Today, about forty thousand (40, 000) persons marched from Port of Spain to Caroni led by the men from the NJAC. The Negroes and the East Indians were called upon to unite against the control and dominance of the Whites who have most of the power over the economy. Many East Indians believe that the Black Power Movement does not involve them since the Prime Minister and the other members of the PNM did not like Indians. Had the name be Black and Indian Power Movement then the Indians would've joined.

Foreign companies make their earnings and profits through our oil industry which are controlled and by the Whites. 60 per cent of the money made in transport, storage and communications went to foreigners, 43 per cent of the money made in construction was earned by foreign firms. As a mixed person,

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I am very proud and somewhat surprised to see that the two most dominant races are standing together to fight for rights of the country.

Luckily for me, I was able to get a word with Mr. Granger who clearly stated that the only way for the people to be heard and be taken seriously is by walking the streets and take back control of the economy. The movement's demonstration identified two main factors to portray their reasoning's. The first point was used to deliver the people's demands and secondly, the march gave NJAC the perfect opportunity they needed to launch a nationwide education enterprise. The demonstration was seen as one large educational address.

Thousands of books were imported by NJAC on a number of topics and subjects discussed at the march. Justice and Equality were two of the main values the NJAC members wanted to express to the nation. As you can see there is a lot that is happening in Trinidad and Tobago. I believe that I am or will be part of all of what has taken place in my country and I contributed for standing with the people who are willing to make this country great, not only for us citizens now, but for the future as well.

The route the marchers chose was from Port of Spain along the Eastern Main Road to Curepe and continued along the Southern Main Road to Couva. Banners were displayed with the words; ' Africans and Indians Unite Now' were held by the marchers. Their voices rose shouting the words ' Power! Power!' as they marched alarming everyone around them with their aggressive tones. This surely would've been a sight to see.

The armed forces were in full gear patrolling the streets as well as the air with their helicopters. Word spread along the streets as business owners closed their respective shop after hearing and reading of what happened in Port of Spain. The marchers were also warned not to trespass anyone's property as they will be prosecuted. This really was an eventful day to witness.

Nightfall eventually came as the marches made their way towards the market's car park in Couva. The marchers were weary and were seen lying half asleep on the pavements and at the side of the road. A lot of people were stranded as there was no transportation for them to get home. The East Indians from Couva welcomed the Negroes to spend the night at their homes and shared dinner with them. Here's to another exciting and historical day for our people but I sense that there are those who are not pleased with the integration of the cultures and races Trinidad holds. Nevertheless I will be there to witness all of what will be in history books to be read by persons in the future.

April 6, 1970

Killing of Basil Davis

Weeks have gone by and the protesters are still taking to the streets and will do everything in their power to fight and not give up. The police as well as the government and other in authorities are getting impatient and disgruntled by the day as they are unable to find a solution and to stop this march.

Unfortunately, today has taken a turn for the worst. Sigh! The life of a young protestor has been shot by police officer just outside the gates of Woodford Square. He was only twenty four years old and lived Barataria. I was told that the police was arresting a man who appeared to be a vagrant or was mentally challenged and one of the protestors begged him to give the man a chance. The police officer then reacted in the most unethical manner and the protester lost his life trying to defend an innocent man. His name was Basil Davis and he will forever be known as one of the bravest persons who ever lived.

His death meant that a martyr of the revolution emerged from the masses and encouraged thousands to attend Davis's funeral on April 9 and to join the movement. Things are heating up as protesters are getting anxious and hesitant now that the police are retaliating in a hostile mode.

April 09, 1970

The funeral for Basil Davis is today, the 9 April 1970. My clothes are scattered all over as I am currently searching for a red shirt to wear to attend Mr. Davis' funeral.

That was the largest funeral I ever attended. There was a sea of red for miles. NJAC requested that everybody wear red to show the anger that was felt by the senseless shooting of Basil Davis. The body was laid at the bandstand at Woodford Square where the funeral service took place. There were many speeches. More than a hundred thousand persons attended in the funeral march from Port of Spain to San Juan.

During the march, with the lifting of one hand by Mr Granger, 100, 000 persons stood silent. The demonstrators were much disciplined and there was a sense of solemnity while in the morning. The east Indians also marched alongside the Blacks to pay their respects and continue showing support for the community. My sources however told me that the government tried to stop the Indians from entering into Port of Spain.

April 21, 1970

The government issued a state of emergency where Mr Granger and other members of NJAC were seen detained at the Royal Jail. Soldiers at Camp Teteron in Chaguaramas have staged a mutiny earlier this morning. This was one of the most extraordinary days in history of this country. This occurred shortly after the soldiers were summoned to the parade square and briefed about the emergency and the role they were expected to play in “ restoring peace”. A number of soldiers were tried and found guilty of mutiny. The soldiers’ main concern was the low rate at which they were being paid. This amounted to \$19 a week.

The soldiers won an extensive support and they were renamed the ‘ People’s Army’. Lieutenant Raffique Shah was being sentenced to 20 years in prison while Mr Lassalle and Mr Bazie got 15 and seven years respectively. There were students who else participated in holding demonstrations for the release of the soldiers, with Woodbrook Secondary accompanying them in the march in Port of Spain. There was word that students from Tobago also joined in the march.

One soldier lost his life when the soldiers came attacking from the Coast Guard in their efforts to leave Teteron. The rest of the soldiers used this time to speak their voice with demands in releasing all the political detainees. Despite the shots being fired at the soldiers, they however never fought back with their weapons but with their voices as they did not want a mass murder outbreak. This was probably the most disturbing news I have ever heard. To see both military sides going at each other. These persons took an oath to protect their country as well as its citizens and they are now at conflict.

Horrible as this is, I must commend these people for taking a stand knowing what consequences may follow and for showing an act of bravery to fight for what they believe in. 1970 is a year to remember. It will also forever be a part of our country's history and how it may affect us in time to come.