

PAN TRINBAGO: A CASE FOR

THE 1979 steelband panorama boycott ushered in a new era in the history of the steelband movement, the era of the "New Dawn".

The historic unity which was displayed in 1979 has made possible a whole new scope and perspective for the steelband movement. Because of this, at present, a really positive vibration is running through the steelband movement.

What is the evidence of this positive vibration? What is this new scope and new perspective on the horizons of the steelband movement in 1981?

Prior to 1979, the steelband movement was struggling within what Pan Trinbago terms the "Era of Steelband Stagnation" (i.e. the period of the 1970's). More and more the steelband movement was becoming a carnival organisation, going into virtual hibernation during the rest of the year.

And even within the framework of carnival, panorama, was becoming the only successful venture in that the mass players who had supported the steelbands in the 1960's were showing a preference for the brass bands. The steelband was losing its place in carnival.

Many talented pan players and tuners were leaving our shores to seek their fortunes abroad, whilst at home the movement remained divided.

One of the crucial tasks before the movement in the era of the "New Dawn" is the establishment of a year around framework of steelband activities.



ANIM SMITH

One of the main difficulties in this respect was that the steelband movement only had full time officers for three months every year during the carnival period, when government normally releases executive officers who are public servants on secondment to Pan Trinbago.

The year 1980, however, was a year in which a precedent was set in regard to full time staff. In that Pan Trinbago based on its intensive annual programme was able to apply for and obtain secondment of its public officers for nine months out of 12 months in 1980.

In 1980 the steelband calendar was greatly expanded; as the following breakdown will illustrate:-

- (1) January to March
Panorama and carnival.
- (2) March - Champs in Concert (new production).
- (3) June to August - 1980

Steelband Music Festival.

(4) September - "New Dawn" jamboree and launching of pictorial exhibition. (new production).

(5) October - "Pan Through the Eyes of the Calypsonian" (new production).

(6) December - 1980 "New Dawn" Convention.

(7) December - "Carols and Classics". (New Production)

Within this general framework Pan Trinbago was also able to accommodate a programme of over ten regional jamborees.

Pan Trinbago apart from organising a framework of national ventures, acts as a bargaining unit for its member bands. In this respect it has to negotiate with:

(a) Trinidad and Tobago Television mainly in respect of Steelband Concert.

(b) The Trinidad and Tobago Tourist Board, mainly in respect of wharf concerts and regional jamborees.

(c) The Carnival Development Committee in respect of panorama and carnival.

(d) The Ministry of Education and the Community Development Division - relative such matters as an (I) annual subvention to cover administration, (II) Secondment of public officers,

(III) Government assistance to unsponsored steelband and (IV) foreign tours, to mention a few areas.

(e) Various business organisations in respect of national ventures such as the 1980 Steelband Music Festival.

(f) The Borough Councils in respect of regional panoramas such as Arima and Point Fortin.

Apart from these national bargaining duties the organisation is called upon to make representation on behalf of its member bands, relative to such areas as securing of adequate pan sites, and assistance from the business community.

During 1980, Pan Trinbago was able to make a lot of headway in its role as a registered trade union bargaining on behalf of its member bands.

The following are some of the victories won.

(a) STEELBAND CONCERT.

(I) It was agreed that the show would be filmed in the various communities, thereby involving the social bases of the various steelbands.

(II) The appearance fee was increased to \$1,000.00.

(b) WHARF APPEARANCE

(I) The fee for wharf concerts was increased to \$1,000.00

(c) REGIONAL JAMBOREES

An appearance fee of \$800.00 was negotiated with the Tourist Board, in respect of steelband appearances at regional jamborees.

(d) PANORAMA
Pan Trinbago was able to secure an increase in appearance fees from \$500 to \$5,000.00.

(e) PANSITES
Pan Trinbago was able to intervene and prevent steel bands from being unceremoniously thrown out on the road, such as the case of Birdsong Pandemonium, and Trintoc Invaders.

(f) SECONDMENT
In 1980 Pan Trinbago was able to secure the release of its public officers for nine out of the twelve months of that year.

Another major responsibility of Pan Trinbago is the area of administration.

The organisation is divided into three regions namely North, South-Central, and East whereas Tobago has the status of an association affiliated to the national body (a new development recognising the fact of the formation of the Tobago Assembly).

Administrative duties fall within the following categories.

(a) Organising meetings

(i) Central Executive.

(ii) Regional.

(iii) CÔCERO (Congress of Central Executive and Regional Officers).

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FULLTIME OFFICERS

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In this respect duties involve circularizing members and setting up agendas for the various meetings. This function is one of the most crucial in that Pan Trinbago has set the objective of democracy as one of the main goals in the era of the "New Dawn".

All decisions made in this period must enjoy the full support of panmen in general, this is the real strength of our organisation.

(b) Correspondence.
In this area Pan Trinbago has to maintain contact on a day to day basis with several organisation, both local and abroad.

(c) Fund raising.
Fund raising is also a major administration responsibility, in that although the scope of Pan Trinbago's activities are national, it was not until very recently, that the organisation receive any annual subvention from the government.

During 1980 Pan Trinbago was able to realize revenue of over \$96,000.00 of that amount over \$52,000.00 was raised by the organisation itself.

(d) Panyard Vibrations.
The production of Pan Trinbago's official organ is yet another one of Pan Trinbago's crucial duties, in that it is through this organ that the link with member bands can be maintained.

In 1981 the areas of activity defined so far, have become more intensive. This is a direct result of the mandate which the general body gave to the central executive at last December's Biannual Convention to pursue resolutely the establishment of a "National Policy on Pan".

Pan Trinbago has its part to play in terms of broadening the

annual framework of national ventures. In this respect in addition to the national framework established in 1980 the following ventures are scheduled for 1981.

(1) July TASPO Reunion.

A week long programme of activities in commemoration of TASPO the first steelband to leave our shores in 1951. The surviving members of TASPO will be guest of honour for the celebrations.

(2) August Camboulay Production.

A joint production by Pan Trinbago, the National Dance and Drama Associations in commemoration of the anniversary of August 1st Emancipation Day.

(3) November 1981 Steelband Music Festival

(4) October to December Phase 1 of the Pan Factory Project.

By the end of 1981 Pan Trinbago hopes to have on stream Phase 1 of the long over due Pan Factory Project.

In this phase the activities to be accommodated are manufacture of steel drums, and chroming of instruments.

ESTABLISHING THE POLICY

In respect to the "National Policy on Pan" Pan Trinbago is saying that the relationship between Pan Trinbago and various other national bodies, must be clearly defined in terms of a clear cut policy agreement.

Let the government, the Media, and the business community establish concretely what is their commitment to local Art and Culture. Let such a commitment be clearly defined in terms of a general policy statement, so that we all know where we stand vis - a - vis one another.

1981 is not a time for

relationships based on vagueness and platitudes, this will only hinder proper planning and meaningful progress.

THE CASE FOR SECONDMENT.

(a) The Question of Precedent.

(i) Pan Trinbago had been accustomed to receive secondment of public officers for the carnival period.

(ii) In 1980 a new precedent was set in that officers were seconded for nine months during the year, based on an expanded annual programme.

(iii) In View of the fact that 1981's annual programme is more intensive than the 1980 programme, it stands to reason that the period of secondment should be increased.

(iv) Government second's officers to such bodies as the Best Village Division and the Carnival Development Committee, on a full time basis even though these bodies are concerned with one major activity for the year, and do not have to administer a year round framework of activities.

(b) On the Question of Accountability.

(i) Pan Trinbago has accounted to the government relative to the use of its full time officers during 1980, through over official 1980 Biannual Convention Reports.

(ii) Government has expressed its satisfaction with over work by awarding the organisation a national medal, in 1980 as well as agreeing that the organisation should be granted an annual subvention for 1981.

(iii) Government will receive an account of our work thus far in 1981, in the form of the

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