

12-23-1986

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## Recommended Citation

Neagle, John. "Trinidad & Tobago: National Alliance For Reconstruction Wins General Elections For First Time In 30 Years." (1986). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/notisur/305>

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## **Trinidad & Tobago: National Alliance For Reconstruction Wins General Elections For First Time In 30 Years**

*by John Neagle*

*Category/Department: General*

*Published: Tuesday, December 23, 1986*

Trinidad & Tobago's political opposition party, National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR), achieved a resounding victory in the Dec. 15 elections general elections. NAR captured 33 of 36 legislative seats, and concluded 30 years of dominance by the Popular National Movement (PNM). Prime Minister George Chambers lost his position, while the NAR took all cabinet positions save one. In the election campaigns, NAR candidates accused the ruling party of wasting thousands of millions of dollars from petroleum export sales, among other accusations of corruption and incompetence. The two-island nation was governed by the PNM since its founding by Sir Eric Williams in 1956. Williams carried the nation to independence six years later. According to press reports, about 70% of 882,000 electorate cast votes on Dec. 15. The Trinidad & Tobago economy has been in recession for the past three years, largely due to the decline in oil prices; oil accounts for 80% of total export revenues. Officially, unemployment is presently at 14%, although unofficial estimates indicate that 22% of the labor force may be unemployed. The NAR, a coalition of four parties formed in 1985, succeeded in mobilizing multi-racial support in a country where politics has for some time been determined by race. The two islands are inhabited by Blacks, Asiatic Indians, whites and mestizos.

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