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Mr. Tom C. Huston  
Staff Assistant  
The White House

You will recall that at our meeting with the President on domestic intelligence collection, he made reference to black radicalism in the Caribbean and asked to have a brief study made of its relationship to militant black organizations in the United States. Here is that study.

I assume you will see that the President receives his copy.

Richard Helms

Richard Helms

Attachments - 3

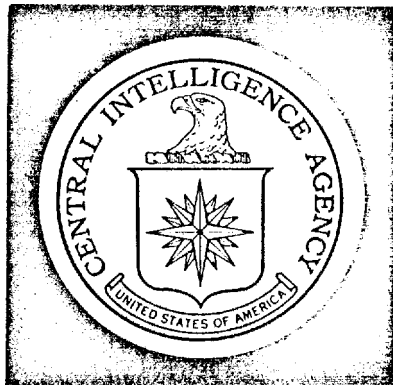
6 July 1970

No. 0524/70 - Intel Memo -  
Black Radicalism in the  
Caribbean.

cc: Chief, CI w/3 attachments

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**Secret**  
*Sensitive*



DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

*Black Radicalism in the Caribbean*

**Secret**

6 July 1970  
No. 0524/70

## WARNING

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
6 July 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Black Radicalism in the Caribbean

Summary

Black radicalism suddenly became a politically disruptive force in Trinidad early this year. The disturbances there sent shock waves throughout much of the Caribbean.\* Other states and territories associated with the British Commonwealth appear vulnerable, as do the Netherlands West Indies. The various black-oriented groups differ widely from place to place in their programs and tactics, and as yet there has been little liaison among them. They share in the goal of stimulating greater economic and political participation by the black masses, who remain at the bottom of the economic and social ladder in most of the area. Black radicalism appears to be largely a homegrown phenomenon in the Caribbean, though ties have recently begun to develop with militant black organizations in the United States. (For a discussion of this, see paragraphs 16 to 23, pages 8 to 11.)

\*Black radicalism is a real or potential factor in the area's four independent members of the British Commonwealth (Guyana, Trinidad-Tobago, Jamaica, and Barbados); in the still dependent British island in the Caribbean (the Windward and Leeward groups) and in the nearby Atlantic (the Bahamas and Bermuda); and in the Netherlands West Indies. The French islands do not seem to have been appreciably affected. Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic are not affected, at least directly.

*Note: This memorandum was produced solely by the CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and coordinated with the Directorate for Plans.*

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### The Nature of Black Radicalism in the Caribbean

1. Black radicalism in the Caribbean today often carries the overtones of a protest movement against "the establishment." In many places it also has a strong nationalist content. And in some respects it is a facet of the search for national or group identity by the black majorities in the newly independent or still emerging nations of the region. Radical black organizations in the Caribbean are difficult to categorize ideologically because their revolutionary antecedents (Marxism, African socialism, and the civil rights movement in the United States) are mixed and poorly digested.

2. Neither political independence in Guyana, Trinidad-Tobago, Jamaica, and Barbados nor progressively increasing internal autonomy in most of the other territories has significantly altered their socioeconomic structures. In many ways, the social patterns that developed in the plantation economies during the days of colonialism persist today. Blacks still make up the bulk of the lower classes (except in Guyana where just over half the population are of East Indian descent and only some 45 percent are black.) The relatively small middle classes are composed largely of "coloured" (i.e. mulatto) people with an admixture of East Indians (especially in Guyana and Trinidad), Chinese, and whites. The apex of the social and economic pyramid is occupied by a small white or near-white elite, accounting for less than one percent to about four percent of the populations. A highly disproportionate share of the agricultural estates, businesses, commerce, banking, and industry is controlled by the white minorities--and by foreign-based companies.

3. Changes are, of course, gradually taking place, and the barriers to black progress are no longer as impermeable as they once were. The biggest changes brought about by the movement toward self government are, of course, in the political sphere. Blacks now have won political office throughout most of the area, though lighter skinned "coloureds" have generally done better than they. In the economic and social spheres, however, change has been so gradual as to seem nonexistent to many blacks. For these

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reasons, even black-run governments are often ridiculed as mere "black fronts manipulated by white power."

4. The fruits of independence in the four countries mentioned above, or of greater local autonomy in most of the others, have not generally lived up to popular expectations. Widespread poverty and high unemployment levels continue. The governments have seldom shown themselves able to bring the kind of progress that would be meaningful to low-income blacks. Popular dissatisfactions sometimes become manifest in racial frictions, which in several places are always close to the surface. When racial tensions erupt into violence between blacks and whites, or between blacks and browns, political and economic progress can be set back seriously. Another manifestation of popular malaise is rising crime rates. Crime has been particularly disruptive in recent years in the densely peopled slum areas of Kingston, Jamaica. The islands, particularly the smaller ones, have some of the highest population densities in the world, a factor further contributing to economic stagnation and popular unrest.

5. Popular grievances, often real and compelling, are of course susceptible to exploitation by political demagogues who promise the impossible or by revolutionaries who advocate destruction of existing political, economic, and social structures. Few, if any, black radical leaders currently on the scene are yet able accurately to claim more than relatively few followers. If the trends of the past year or so are meaningful guides, however, this could change.

6. The past year has seen a growth in the potential of "black power" as a political and social force in much of the Caribbean. New black-oriented groups have appeared, and a number of others that existed earlier have shown signs of becoming more active. They vary widely in their purposes, tactics, and programs. Some are primarily educational; they stress promotion of an enhanced awareness among blacks of their cultural heritage and identity. This kind of group, probably the majority, is only seldom involved in politics. Some groups are semi-religious, and

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others act primarily as political pressure groups urging a better deal for the black man. A few, however, are militantly revolutionary.

7. A vaguely articulated notion common to the more radical black leaders is that the roots of British and other colonial cultures must be broken; new social, political, and economic structures compatible with the needs of the black majorities must be fostered. Black radical leaders become more specific when they discuss economic issues--and these issues are often the most inflammatory ones and the ones most easily understood among the less educated in the radical followings. Black economic control is often made to seem a panacea for the problems of poverty and unemployment of the black communities, where irritation is prevalent over the obvious display of white affluence. The foreign-based companies (primarily US, Canadian, British, and Dutch) are also targets of black radical leaders. Like nationalists in other parts of the world, these leaders resent the fact that such companies dominate many of the economies for (as they see it) the benefit of white foreigners.

8. The most disruptive recent employment of black political action occurred early this year in Trinidad-Tobago, where black radicals suddenly emerged from near obscurity, without funds or effective organization, to pose a formidable challenge to the stability of the government. Geddes Granger, a 35-year-old student now in his last year at the local university, had formed the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC) in early 1969 as a pressure group to secure "black people's rights." The NJAC became a loose amalgam including several preexisting black groups and attracted support from leftists in the labor movement--notably George Weekes' oil workers' union and Clive Nunez' militant Transport and Industrial Workers' Union. In February of this year Granger launched a series of demonstrations to support a group of West Indian students who had come to trial in Canada. Black power themes emphasizing economic nationalism quickly came to dominate the protests, however, and dissent focused on the government. After continuing demonstrations had sparked sporadic disorders, the government in April declared a state

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of emergency and arrested many of the protest leaders, including Granger. This triggered a mutiny in the armed forces, and it was more than a week before the government was able to reestablish control of the military.

9. Although the Trinidad-Tobago government has now firmly reasserted its authority, Prime Minister Williams' prestige has probably suffered irreparable damage. The extent of popular support generated by the protests made evident a deep underlying resentment against the government's failure to promote speedy socioeconomic change. Granger's NJAC, radical from the beginning, seemed to move even further toward a revolutionary position when the opportunity arose to ride a strong current of popular discontent. Unlike black radical groups in most of the rest of the area, the NJAC has made some effort, thus far without success, to secure cooperative arrangements with non-black groups, in this case with the large East Indian minority.

10. Elsewhere in the Caribbean, there are other radical and potentially revolutionary groups, though none of these has yet been tested in action as has the NJAC. Most of these groups are small, and few of them seem to have the advantage of effective leadership. In Jamaica there are several competing groups. One of them, the African National Union, is led by Marcus Garvey, Jr., son of the man whose "back-to-Africa" movement early in this century created some stir in the United States. Another Jamaican group, Jama-Youth, calls for revolutionary change and the exclusion of non-blacks. Still another group in Jamaica, a semi-religious cult called the New Creation International Peacemakers Association, is headed by Claudius Henry, who seems to be trying to use the group as a springboard to enhanced political influence. In Guyana, the newly formed Ratoon Group, composed primarily of radical university students and faculty members, probably comes close to being a revolutionary group. It is much smaller, however, than the more moderate African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa (ASCRIA). The latter is led by Sydney King, who has Africanized his name to Eusi

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Kwayana. This group, which has several hundred members, is influential within the governing political party.

11. Black radical organizations draw their support from a wide variety of sources, and the combinations differ from place to place. Branches of the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, Trinidad-Tobago, and Barbados are important sources of support and inspiration. In Bermuda, the most prominent exponent of radical black positions is Roosevelt Brown, an opposition member of Parliament. An important political leader and a former member of the prime minister's cabinet in Trinidad, A.N.R. Robinson, may become an important black leader in that country. In the small island of St. Vincent most of the educated young people, mainly teachers and other civil servants, belong to the Educational Forum of the People, the island's strongest black-oriented group.

12. The various Caribbean governments have reacted in different ways to the black radical challenge. Following the trouble in Trinidad in April, many Caribbean governments showed fear, uncertainty, and then a tendency to crack down hard on potential troublemakers. Many attribute Prime Minister Eric Williams' difficulties in Trinidad-Tobago to his failure to recognize early the threat of black extremism. Prime Minister Hugh Shearer of Jamaica stated flatly that if disturbances similar to those in Port of Spain should erupt in Jamaica, he would not hesitate to crush them. Prime Minister Barrows of Barbados has strengthened his country's security controls and banned a scheduled regional black power conference. Officials on the islands of Grenada and St. Vincent have reacted similarly.

13. In Guyana, Prime Minister Forbes Burnham has sought to maintain a cordial and consultative relationship with his country's largest "black power" group, Eusi Kwayana's ASCRIA. The recent series of rather drastic nationalist economic plans announced by Burnham were coming anyhow, but the wily Burnham surely recognizes that they have helped take the wind

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out of some of the black radical demands. In Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad-Tobago, and the Bahamas, government leaders also seem to be becoming aware of the political advantage of acceding to some of the nationalist demands of black pressure groups. The large US-owned bauxite operations in Jamaica and Guyana, foreign banks in the Bahamas, and other foreign interests throughout the area are likely to be pressed to relinquish some control to local citizens or governments. Prime Minister Williams has privately asked that the US give up its remaining assets in the Chaguaramas military base area.

#### Intra-Regional Ties

14. The growth--however uneven--of black radicalism in the Caribbean suggests a definite potential for development of a regional movement. The four-day First Regional Black Power Conference, held in Bermuda in July 1969, may prove to have been a beginning in this direction. The conference was organized by Bermudan opposition legislator Roosevelt Brown. Some 1,100 people participated, but about 90 percent of them were from Bermuda itself. Only about 110 participants, including some 40 from the United States, represented "black power" groups elsewhere in the area. Part of the reason for this was the comprehensive controls imposed by the British. Known or suspected agitators were prohibited entry to Bermuda just prior to and during the conference. Considerable enthusiasm appears to have been generated at the conference for a continuing regional association, but the conference seems to have produced few concrete results, and ties among the disparate "black power" groups of the area remain very loose.

15. It was decided at Bermuda to hold a Second Regional Conference in July 1970 in Barbados. The conference was banned by the Barbadian Government, however, after the recent disturbances in Trinidad-Tobago. Conference organizers have decided to reschedule it for this autumn and to hold it in the United States, tentatively in Atlanta, Georgia.

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International Ties--US Black Militants

16. The evidence shows that there is no concerted effort by any significant black militant organization in the United States to control the amorphous black radical groups in the Caribbean. Black militants in the United States have provided an inspirational example to black radicals in the Caribbean, and this, of course, is stimulated by the heavy Caribbean press coverage of black militant activities in the US. Some personal contacts do exist between US and Caribbean "black power" leaders. Thus far, these contacts do not seem to have resulted in more than limited guidance and some material support to the Caribbean groups. These contacts do, however, have symbolic importance and contribute to the morale of the Caribbean extremists, while alienating the established black political leaders.

17. Perhaps the most significant contacts developed in relation to the Bermuda conference of July 1969. Roosevelt Brown, the Bermudan organizer of the conference, had come to the United States in July 1968 to attend the Third National Black Power Conference in Philadelphia. At that conference he proposed that the next such meeting be held in Bermuda. His suggestion was rejected, but Brown was appointed Regional Black Power Coordinator for the Caribbean Area--evidently a recognition of interest among US blacks in developing contacts in the Caribbean. After that, Brown proceeded to organize the Bermuda conference. In so doing, he contacted various leaders of the US movement, including the organizers of the US Black Power Conferences. He apparently received some assistance from them. The Bermuda conference was organized along the lines of the conferences in the United States, and some of the literature available in Bermuda was identical to that used during the US conferences. As noted above, some 40 participants came from the United States. In March 1970, Brown was back in the United States seeking assistance in organizing the Second Regional Black Power Conference, then scheduled for July in Barbados.

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18. Another contact of a different--and covert--nature developed last December and early January when Geddes Granger, the militant black leader of Trinidad's NJAC, visited New York and Montreal, Canada. Before his departure from Trinidad on 23 December, Granger said [REDACTED] that his trip would be on "black power business" and that he wanted his travel to be "as clandestine as possible." After his arrival in New York, Granger contacted the local branch of the Black Panther Party. He is reported to have asked for financial assistance "to help bring about a revolution in Trinidad." Reportedly, he was refused until the NJAC had "proven itself worthy of help by creating some serious internal disturbance in Trinidad." From New York, Granger went to Montreal, where some West Indian students face trial for participating in serious riots at the Sir George Williams University there in February 1969. After a few days, Granger returned to New York, leaving for Trinidad on 23 January. At a gathering of NJAC leaders a few days after his return, Granger stated that the NJAC must "do something" to gain recognition. The demonstrations, it will be recalled, began ostensibly in support of the students in Montreal but evolved into a violent antigovernment protest movement that nearly toppled the Trinidad-Tobago Government. Granger was arrested in April and at last word was still in jail.

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19. One point of continuing contact between US and Caribbean blacks is Professor Cyril L. R. James, who has been on the teaching staff of Federal City College in Washington since early this year. The 69-year-old James, a citizen of Trinidad-Tobago and long-time resident in England, seems to be widely regarded among advocates of "black power" as a learned "elder statesman" of the movement. A self-styled "independent Marxist," he is a sociologist and historian and the author of several books. At the urging of Roosevelt Brown, James delivered the rousing keynote address at the July 1969 conference in Bermuda. During his period of residence in Washington, James has developed contacts with the Center for Black Education, which is headquartered here. This organization, in turn, has recently established some kind of "working relationship" with

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ASCRIA, the larger and more moderate of the two black-oriented groups in Guyana.

20. Other contacts have developed from the travel of US black leaders to various points in the Caribbean, although these trips are usually said to be purely for vacation. There is no evidence, for instance, that H. Rap Brown's trip to Nassau in August 1968 was for any other purpose. On the other hand, some of the several Black Panther members who visited Jamaica in 1969 and 1970 are known to have distributed their party's literature in Jamaica and to have tried to proselytize there. Last January, James Forman, of the Student National Coordinating Committee (NSCC), was expelled from the French West Indies for delivering a "racially inflammatory speech." Another SNCC officer, [REDACTED] was apparently more discreet during a visit to the same place in [REDACTED] In February 1970, just as the NJAC demonstrations were getting under way in Trinidad, two US black militants, Leslie Campbell and Everard Mason, visited the island and addressed a demonstration. This led to a charge by the chief of police that the visiting Americans had tried to foment a black uprising in Trinidad. There has, of course, been some travel to the US by Caribbean militants. Marcus Garvey, Jr. returned to Jamaica last September after a visit in the United States. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Garvey boasted of having friends in the US Black Panther Party who would be willing to help him financially if he decided to overthrow the Jamaican Government. In April 1970, the British High Commissioner in Barbados claimed that Eric Sealy, a black Barbadian activist, was being financed by Black Panther sources in New York. There is no confirmation of this.

21. The greatest amount of travel by US blacks has been to Guyana. ASCRIA, the larger and more moderate black group in Guyana, sponsored (jointly with the Government of Tanzania) the Pan-African and Black Revolutionary Conference that was held in Guyana in February 1970. Several US militants attended, and there was a follow-up meeting in New York in late March. There was talk at both meetings of establishing a permanent secretariat, possibly to be based

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somewhere in the United States. It was agreed that ASCRIA would edit and publish a Pan-African journal in association with the Center for Black Education in Washington, D.C.

22. The most prominent US black militant in the Caribbean area is Stokely Carmichael, whose origins in Trinidad-Tobago give him a certain acceptance and rapport in the area. (Last March, at the height of the antigovernment disturbances in Port of Spain, Carmichael was cheered as "the next prime minister of Trinidad.") Carmichael's most recent visit to the area was in May, when he went to Guyana. This visit, which was sponsored by the radical Guyanese Ratoon Group, was a mixed blessing to black radicals. His speeches, stressing Pan-Africanism and the separate development of the races, may have alienated more people than they attracted in Guyana's multiracial society. On this swing through the Caribbean, Carmichael was not permitted to visit Trinidad, and his stop in Barbados was cut short and heavily controlled by the Barbadian Government. Interestingly, one of the men who often appeared with Carmichael during his appearances in Guyana was Roosevelt Douglas, a West Indian student who is said to have been a ringleader of the Montreal riots of February 1969. Chedi Jagan, Jr., son of the Communist opposition leader, was a leader of the riots. He has sought to capitalize on these "revolutionary credentials," but not in any black power sense.

23. The sum of available information suggests that relationships between US and Caribbean area black militants are only beginning to develop into significant contacts that might prove helpful in the continued development of black radicalism in the Caribbean. If the Second Regional Black Power Conference is held in the United States next autumn, as is planned, these ties would in all likelihood become much closer and of greater value to the Caribbean militants. US black militant involvement in Caribbean affairs would also be likely to increase if the permanent secretariat for the Pan-African and Black Revolutionary Conference is set up in the United States or if it is staffed to a considerable extent by US blacks.

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International Ties--Cuba and Communists

24. Concrete information is lacking on significant Communist ties with black radical groups in the Caribbean. Some black radical leaders and organizations, such as the Ratoon Group in Guyana, profess to be Marxist, but certainly are not disciplined Communists. The leading opposition party in Guyana, Chedi Jagan's People's Progressive Party, is Communist-led, but the members are almost wholly East Indians for whom black radicalism is a racist threat. Guyanese students have traveled to the USSR on scholarships, and some have gone to Cuba, but available evidence does not link these travelers to any black radical movement. Neither the Soviet Union nor any other European or Asian Communist country maintains diplomatic or consular relations with any of the Commonwealth, Dutch, or French Caribbean territories.

25. Cuba maintains a small consulate in Kingston, Jamaica--the only such Cuban installation in the Caribbean. At present, the consulate seems to have only a passive interest in the black radical movement in Jamaica. The most frequent visitor to the consulate, Robert A. H. Hill, is apparently involved on the fringes of the Jamaican black radical movement. Hill, who attended a "cultural congress" in Havana in January 1968, made an extensive two-month visit to the United States in April and May of this year. Purporting to be an authority on "black power," Hill spoke at a number of US universities and did research of some kind at various US libraries. But Hill does not appear to be prominent in the movement in Jamaica or anywhere else. Roosevelt Brown, organizer of the regional conference in Bermuda last July, reportedly made a brief stop in Cuba in May 1969 when he was seeking support for the conference. Nothing is known to have resulted from his Cuban visit. Two of the men involved in the regimental mutiny in Trinidad in April, Reginald Lassalle and Raffique Mohammed Shah, had reportedly received three weeks of guerrilla warfare training in Cuba in 1968, but there is no evidence that Cuba had anything to do with the mutiny.

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26. Cuba has not been represented at any regional meeting on "black power" themes, nor has Cuban propaganda paid much attention to such regional meetings. The Castro government, in fact, seems anxious to avoid inflaming the "black power" issue, perhaps because this would hinder Cuba's efforts to expand diplomatic and commercial contacts in the region and might create dissidence among Cuba's own sizable black population. In 1968, when Walter Carbonell, a Cuban black author and a friend of Castro's, tried to promote black radicalism in Cuba, Castro had him arrested and imprisoned. Although Castro gave asylum to Eldridge Cleaver, he did not permit Cleaver to promote black radicalism while in Cuba. When Cleaver's presence in Cuba became generally known, Castro had him sent to Algeria. There has been occasional contact between Cuba and the Black Panther organization in the US.

#### Conclusions

27. Black radicalism in the Caribbean is growing as a political and social force, especially when it is contrasted to the stagnant old-style leadership that is politically dominant in most places. In some places it may become a threat to political stability, as it already has in Trinidad-Tobago. The extent to which black radicals become an important force for political and social change, however, will depend on the effectiveness of their leaders and on improved organization and better finances. In both these two vital areas, most Caribbean black radical groups are presently seriously lacking.

28. Much will also depend on the ability of the local governments in the Caribbean to defuse the social and economic conditions that otherwise could give radical leaders the mass support most of them still lack. Some governments are already attempting to undermine the potential radical following by instituting popular measures of economic nationalism, but these measures could in time further weaken economic and political stability.

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29. Serious efforts to develop a regional grouping of black radical groups did not begin until last summer at the First Regional Black Power Conference in Bermuda. The disparate black radical groups in the Caribbean are still only very loosely associated, if at all. Future regional gatherings are planned, however, and liaison among the various groups is likely to improve.

30. Ties between black radical leaders in the Caribbean and their counterparts in the United States are only beginning to develop. The prospects are for closer ties, beneficial to the radicals in the Caribbean.

31. Communist influence, and the influence of Castro's Cuba, appear from all available evidence to be negligible factors in Caribbean black radical affairs at this time, though the opportunity for playing a role certainly exists.

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