

ABSTRACT

Black Helix:
The 1970 Black Power Movement of Trinidad and Tobago
in the Light of Pan Africanism

Chike Sekou Pilgrim

This study seeks to examine the 1970 Black Power Revolutionary Movement of Trinidad and Tobago to determine whether Pan Africanism was a major ideological influence on its emergence and progression. The analysis is in two phases: Firstly, the study examines whether the background to the 1970 Movement was sufficiently embedded in Pan African ideals and activities to justify considering it to be another distinct Pan African event. Secondly, the Movement itself is analyzed to see if the ideals, aims, rhetoric, symbolism and events of the Movement can reasonably situate it within a Pan African tradition. The major catalysts for the Movement were determined by analyzing relevant speeches, newspaper articles, pamphlets, interviews and pictorial and oral records contemporary with the period. The actual progression of the Movement was traced through a series of interviews, done by the researcher, which were also used to supplement the other source material. This material greatly assisted in tracing patterns that confirmed the evolution of a Pan African tradition in the country. Conversely, the material also identified distinctions from the Pan African tradition that challenged the centrality of this ideological view to the Movement. To amplify and supplement the study, other historical studies of the Movement and theoretical framings of Pan Africanism were addressed in some detail. Such secondary sources were important in order to

situate both Pan Africanism and the country's Black Power Movement within an international and local frame of reference; and to deepen an understanding of the forces acting upon the Movement before it began and while it was taking place.

The information gleaned was presented as an analytical discourse so as to complement the qualitative nature of the primary sources. This study found that the ideology and expressions of Pan Africanism greatly impacted the initial rhetoric of the 1970 Black Power Movement of Trinidad and Tobago. However, the actual Movement rapidly evolved into a distinctive expression of "Black Power" that took into account the unique socio-cultural and political space of the Caribbean, and especially Trinidad and Tobago.

Keywords: Black Power; Caribbean History; Caribbean Revolution; Radical Caribbean; Responsive Pan-Africanism; Trinidad and Tobago