Pauulu’s Diaspora

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Aborigine—Not Puerto Rican!

Bruce McGuinness was a 5’5½” stoutly built Koori activist from Australia with straight hair and a pale complexion. At thirty-one years old, he was secretary of Melbourne’s Aborigines Advancement League (AAL). But on the streets of Atlanta in 1970, he pretty much looked just like another American white liberal interested enough in Black Power to brave the Congress of African Peoples (CAP).1 Kamarakafego was the program director of CAP. It was he who had invited McGuinness to the congress, along with indigenous Australian activists Patricia Korowa, Bob Maza, Jack Davis, and Sol Bellear.

At CAP, McGuinness learned much about race and Black Power in the Americas. But he had also fielded a lion’s share of questions about his racial background, and, quite frankly, it was getting to be a bit much. One incident had escalated to a physical clash with a Black Panther, who incorrectly assumed that he was white. But now, in a closed workshop session, he had the perfect opportunity to settle the issue of his ethnicity. McGuinness took pains to explain his ancestry within the context of colonial violence in Australia. After hearing his lament about genocide, complexion and heritage, a workshop participant sought to console him: “But brother Bruce, you could always pass off as a Puerto Rican.” McGuinness blew a gasket. Lacing his response with expletives, he retorted, “I’m not a . . . Puerto Rican! I’m a . . . Aborigine from Australia and the sooner you get to . . . know that the better!” He then stormed out the room.2

Profanity aside, this moment captures the essence of this chapter, which is centered on the international dynamics of the congress. One of Black Power’s most critical meetings, CAP convened September 3–6, 1970, at Morris Brown College, a historically black institution. A four-day political whirlwind, it was as politically hot as the 90° weather that scorched the concrete sidewalks of Atlanta. The congress called for four ends of Black
Power—self-determination, self-sufficiency, self-respect, and self-defense for the black world. In an intense space of protest and contestation, leading activists, scholars, scientists, students, and artists from across the black world rallied around Black Power and pan-Africanism.

The congress's official speakers were primarily black men, and included Hayward Henry, Jesse Jackson, Louis Farrakhan, Yosef Ben-Jochannan, Larry Neal, Haki Madhubuti, Kenneth Gibson, Ralph Abernathy, Akclynn Lynch, Howard Fuller, Julian Bond, Amiri Baraka, Surinam’s Cyriel Karg, Guinea’s ambassador Hajj Abdulaye Touré, and Dominica’s Rosie Douglas. Its eleven workshops spanned black technology, economics, communication, education, history, creativity, history, law and justice, religious systems, social organization, and political liberation. According to Baraka, the congress was a contemporary manifestation of African men such as Blyden, Garvey, Du Bois, Hayford, Nyerere, Nkrumah, Touré, Elijah Muhammad, and Malcolm X. Yet as this chapter shows, black women from across the world were central to the talks.

The Congress represented an impressive ideological collage of black political thinkers. Baraka defined CAP as being in the tradition of international pan-African gatherings, such as the previous five pan-African congresses, and the Black Power conferences of Washington, DC, Newark, Philadelphia, and Bermuda. These efforts for international African liberation served to help African people across the world understand that they were brothers and sisters.

Still, McGuinness's experience reminds us how centuries of white hegemony, surveillance, colonialism, and miseducation had dislocated black communities physically and conceptually from one another. As such, the road to global black solidarity was not always smoothly paved with asphalt and flanked by sidewalks of black gold. It was a rocky one, logistically littered with dead ends, stop lights armed with surveillance cameras, political potholes, and side tracks of ideological contestation, Olympics of suffering, and misplaced racial expectations of global blackness. Furthermore, the drivers of Black Power also had to cope with an intelligence network of sleeping policemen that included the FBI, the CIA, Australia’s Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO), Britain’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and France’s Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure. Still, activists stepped over these speed bumps, hills, and valleys to use the lessons learned at the talks to further their political struggles at home and abroad.

The congress reflected both the necessity and complications of black internationalism. As did other Black Power conferences, it served as a critical
berth where black activists could be politically reeducated about the geographical scope of the black radical tradition. Still, scholarship has not given enough detail to CAP’s global scope and significance. This chapter aims to do so by unpacking Kamarakafego’s specific involvement in the congress and the experiences of international participants such as the black Australian delegation. It also highlights Black Power in Australia. While the movement there was driven by organizations such as Australia’s Black Panther Party (1970) and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy (1972), this chapter shows how the AAL became a critical international conduit of Black Power in Oceania through its engagement with Kamarakafego and CAP.

From Back-of-Town to the Block

During Bermuda’s 1969 Black Power conference, Kamarakafego received a phone call from Gerald John Frape, a journalist from Melbourne’s radio station 3AW. During the live interview, Frape asked him about the meaning of Black Power. In response, Kamarakafego stated that blacks in the Americas were concerned about the human and land rights of their indigenous black brothers and sisters in Australia.6

A month earlier, Frape had interviewed Maza for a Broadside magazine article, “Black power in Australia?” Perhaps flamboyant, dark complexioned, and bearded, Maza expressed affinity toward African Americans and continental Africans who lived in white minority–ruled societies. Maza was vexed that white Australian society had violently divided Aboriginals into different groups—those in the Northern Territory outback, those on church missions, fringe survivors on the outskirts of the urban cities, and an assimilated group that was trying to become white. He also found it conceivable that Aboriginal peoples could resort to violence in their fight for freedom—they had nothing to lose by embracing militancy. Black Australians would risk annihilation for their cause, and Maza was willing to “take up arms” if necessary. “We’ll just go underground,” he declared, “and then it will be on.”7

The twenty-nine-year-old greatly admired Malcolm X, whom he felt had given black people an identity and ancestral pride. The minister’s legacy, he argued, was evidenced by the emergence of black lecturers in US colleges, courses on black history and culture, and soul food. Malcolm X “let every white man within reach know” that he was black, and Maza hoped that upon his own death, he would still be able to say that it was beautiful to be black.8
Frape described Maza as representing an emerging generation of Aboriginal organizers who were studying Malcolm X, watching African American uprisings on television, and growing tired of waiting for what was rightfully theirs—sovereignty and land. He gave a recording of his interview with Kamarakafego to Korowa, Maza, and McGuinness, suggesting that they “had to hear” it. At the time, all three were leaders in the AAL.9

Victoria’s AAL was formed in 1957. An inner-city organization, its initial charge included assisting people of Aboriginal descent to acquire full citizenship rights, promoting integration in Australian society, and informing federal policy for the advancement of Aboriginal peoples.10 In 1969, its director was veteran Aboriginal activist Pastor Doug Nicholls, a rugby player who was very popular among Australia’s Aboriginal community.11

Korowa, Maza, and McGuinness were re-radicalizing the AAL in the direction of Black Power. They listened to the tape with interest. Korowa recalled hearing Kamarakafego discuss how delegates to the Bermuda conference had been harassed by the United States, British, and Bermudian governments. The three activists were particularly moved by his call for black people from across the world to attend the Barbados conference. They looked at one another in excitement. “A Black Power Conference in Barbados!” they exclaimed, “We should go!” The next day they cabled Kamarakafego in Bermuda and expressed interest in the talks.12

Once he received the cable, Kamarakafego spoke to the Central Black Power Committee about going to Australia. He reasoned that because he had to travel to Africa to organize for the Barbados conference and then return via California, it made sense to go to Australia before reaching the United States. The committee was supportive. Given that the AAL had reached out to him, it suggested that Aboriginals in Australia were already organized. It was decided that he would head to Australia from East Africa.13

Weeks later, Kamarakafego arrived in Tanzania. While there, he met with Prime Minister Julius Nyerere, who agreed to host the Sixth Pan-African Congress (6PAC). Kamarakafego sent a cable to the AAL: “Arriving Melbourne from Nairobi on a Qantas flight.” Though the telegram was signed as Browne, Korowa, Bob, and Bruce were confused as to its origins because it came from Kenya. “Where’s Nairobi, Kenya? Where’s Kenya, Africa? Who do we know in Africa? Is this a joke? Who is Browne?”14

Korowa recalled that moment:

All of a sudden, there was this eye-to-eye contact between Bruce and Bob. . . . They said, Roosevelt Browne. One of them said, Black Power.
[We] began to whisper “Black Power, Black Power” to one another, as if to say, “What have we done! He’s coming! He was the embodiment of Black Power, and we were the ones causing it!”

Kamarakafego passed through Mauritius, where he met with its prime minister, Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, about 6PAC. Concerned about Australia’s immigration restrictions, from Port Louis he sent a wire to Australia’s prime minister requesting that a visa be arranged for him. He announced himself as a Bermudian MP and asked to be met in Sydney. However, the prime minister’s office received the telegram a day late. While Sydney’s chief traffic officer supervisor of Qantas confirmed his arrival on August 26, 1969, from Johannesburg, South Africa, they were unaware of his whereabouts.

When Kamarakafego arrived in Perth, Western Australia, he listed the 3AW radio station as his address. When asked by immigration officers if he was an entertainer, he said yes. Eventually arriving in Melbourne, ASIO agents placed on the AAL were awaiting him at Victoria’s Essendon Airport. Photographs taken by ASIO show Kamarakafego dressed in a suit and carrying a small piece of luggage, flanked by Maza and McGuinness. The trio was closely followed and photographed along its travels through the suburbs of Melbourne via Old Bulla Road, a stop at the Koori Club in Fitzroy, and a departure from Maza’s house, where Kamarakafego resided.

Since the previous week, ASIO agents had been on standby for Kamarakafego’s arrival. They had anticipated a meeting at Maza’s home to coincide with his landing, where “something political” would be discussed that would “put the black man” on the front page of newspapers. Such a gathering did not occur until a week later.

On Kamarakafego’s first evening in Australia, he met with AAL and Aboriginal activists at Maza’s home. Australian security claimed that participants had been told that he was “Stokely Carmichael’s first lieutenant” and that the meeting was to launch an Australian Black Panther Party. Kamarakafego showed attendees his bullet wound from Cuba, as well as scars from the rope burns he sustained after the Klan attack in South Carolina. The ASIO was told that Kamarakafego claimed that black students rescued him and killed his attackers. Its agents deduced that his philosophy was “retaliatory violence—get him before he gets you.” Bruce Silverwood, AAL director, who happened to be white, had been told that views expressed at the meeting were so sinister they were frightening.

Korowa, Maza, and McGuinness bonded immediately with Kamarakafego. He “looked like an ordinary black man” and not like the “violent
Panther” that they had perhaps expected. They had hoped to make face-to-face contact with him and to continue organizing to attend the Barbados conference. He only spent a few days in Australia, but they made sure to take him to spaces critical to Koori struggle and suffering in Melbourne. At one settlement, Kamarakafego met a fifteen-year-old Aboriginal girl who had become pregnant after being raped by a white man. He also spent more time at the Koori Club, which McGuinness launched in January 1969.\(^\text{20}\)
A few days later, Maza suggested that Kamarakafego conduct a press conference on Black Power. Initially not open to the idea, he conceded after Maza reasoned that Aboriginal peoples needed to know that the black world stood in solidarity with them. The AAL leader also felt that the conference could inspire other indigenous movements in Oceania. Kamarakafego agreed, but insisted that the conference be held on the day of his departure and that he be referenced as the chairman of Bermuda’s international Black Power conference.21

Kamarakafego’s press conference has become enshrined in the lore of Black Power in Australia. Held at the AAL’s headquarters, it was attended by AAL members and several Australian journalists. Seated next to Maza, Kamarakafego fielded several questions: Why had he come to Australia and why was his trip shrouded in secrecy? What was the difference between the political situations of West Indians and Australian Aborigines? Why was he in Australia to talk to black people, and what did he plan to do with that information? What was Black Power? How did he plan to help Aboriginals? Were any Australians invited to the next Black Power conference? As violence was the only way to get justice in South Africa and America, how did this apply to Australia or the Caribbean? Why did he want Black Power or supremacy as opposed to black equality? And had he himself been a victim of violence?22

Kamarakafego retorted that he entered Australia covertly because he was concerned about Australia’s racist immigration policies. Furthermore, he felt that white Australians would denounce him because he was a Black Power advocate. The difference between West Indians and Aborigines was that the former were brought to the Americas as enslaved persons, while Aborigines had been in Australia before Europeans arrived. He identified land rights as the central problem facing Aboriginal peoples. Black Power was the empowerment of black people, but the movement also had white supporters. Kamarakafego had come to Australia because while Black Power advocates in the Americas discussed Aboriginal peoples at conferences, they did not have any concrete information about their situation. It was unwise to rely only on books written by (white) anthropologists, and it was important to speak directly to Aboriginals. Kamarakafego affirmatively stated that indigenous persons would be invited to the next Black Power talks.23

In response to the question of violence and the Caribbean, Kamarakafego stressed that Black Power was diversely applicable to different countries. He referenced Malcolm X’s phrase about the ballot or the bullet, asserting that the Caribbean’s majority black populations could use the vote to achieve...
political power. However, in Australia, where Aborigines did not have the numbers, Australia had a chance to do something about the political situation before things got out of hand. Kamarakafego saw himself as a simple advocate of Black Power as opposed to a leader. He emphasized that black people had as much right as any other group to seek power over their own destiny. Although he had been the recipient of white violence, he did not seek to do the same to whites. However, he was not naïve. The pattern was that whenever anyone, white or black, sought to bring about justice for black people, they would be “rubbed out.” This included Marcus Garvey, Patrice Lumumba, Medgar Evers, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X.  

It was at this point that AAL codirector Nicholls directly challenged Kamarakafego, demanding to know who had invited him to Australia. Kamarakafego refused to tell him who did so, which only made Nicholls more irate. Nicholls pressed further, claiming that Kamarakafego had not talked to the Aboriginal people or veteran leaders to know enough about their situation. Kamarakafego retorted that he had not implied as such, but that it was impossible to talk to everybody. He had only been there a few days, but apologized to Nicholls if had indeed offended him.  

Interestingly enough, Nicholls was aware that Maza, Korowa, and McGuinness had invited Kamarakafego to Australia. He had overhead the three activists discussing him, and out of respect, they informed him of the details. As expected, he was totally against the trip. According to Korowa, in contrast, some white AAL members were excited by the “buzz” of Black Power, whose advocates were portrayed in the Australian media as gun-toting Black Panthers, a fiery Malcolm X, and racial violence.  

Australia’s government was also intrigued by Kamarakafego’s time in Australia. As was his entry, Kamarakafego’s exit was closely monitored by the ASIO. Agents took photographs of and notes on Korowa, Maza, Frpe, Myra Atkinson, and Kamarakafego at the airport. On his way back to the United States, Kamarakafego passed through Fiji and Hawaii, where he visited the East West Center in Honolulu. During these travels, he continued to meet activists from Oceania. This included Chief Tabuke Rotan of Kiribati’s Banaba Island, whom he met in Fiji’s airport. Rotan challenged British phosphate mining on Banaba. This environmental injustice led to the forced migration of Banabans to Fiji’s Rabi Island.  

These experiences would greatly affect Kamarakafego’s work in Oceania in the years to come. Within a week, he wrote to Kwame Nkrumah, informing him that the “Black people of Australia” would “be more than happy” to
receive any of his books. Passing on the addresses of Maza and McGuinness, Kamarakafego continued to work with the AAL in their efforts to attend CAP.²⁸

**Black Power in Australia**

According to Australian Black Power activist and scholar Gary Foley, Kamarakafego’s visit propelled Black Power into the popular vernacular of Australia. For Korowa, Black Power in Australia was essentially about sovereignty, self-determination, and “the necessity for black people to define the world in their own terms.” It was a response to genocide, environmental injustice, and the ongoing quest for land rights. Marked by the 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy and Brisbane’s Black Panther Party, Black Power’s most striking impact was arguably in Sydney’s black neighborhood of Redfern. Led by Paul Coe, Sydney’s young group of activists read literature such as the *Autobiography of Malcolm X, Black Power*, and Cleaver’s *Soul on Ice* just as much as *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee*. They established police patrols, an Aboriginal legal aid center, a medical service, and a wide canon of print media.²⁹

However, Australia’s indigenous radical tradition against white violence was as historic as European colonialism on the continent. Aboriginal peoples experienced genocide, invisibility, insults, trauma, and torture at the hands, bayonets, chains, nuclear bombs, poisons, and firearms of British invaders. Furthermore, Australia’s constitution was based on the doctrinal
racist myth of *terra nullius*—that the land was unhabituated by humans until Europeans arrived.30

As such, Black Power in Australia could call on the names of indigenous freedom fighters like Yagan of the South Western Noongar, Truganni of Tasmania, and Pemulwuy of the Bidjigal. Indigenous historian John Maynard details black resistance in Australia in the twentieth century through the Sydney branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the Australian Aborigines Progress Association. Yet the emergence of Black Power did reflect a shift in black Australian protest from the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. For Foley, Australia’s UNIA and Black Power movements were both critical moments of Aboriginal radical black internationalism.31

In between these two movements lay decades of civil rights and human rights activism. In the post-WWII era, this included the massive organizing efforts of black women like South Sea Islander Faith Bandler and Aboriginal poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker). Both women were leaders in the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship and the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) and members of the Communist Party of Australia. Noonuccal’s son, Denis Walker, founded Australia’s Black Panther Party in 1971.32

Formed in 1957, FCAATSI’s charge included assisting people of Aboriginal descent to acquire full citizenship rights, working toward the complete advancement and integration of Aboriginal peoples into Australian society, and coordinating various groups in Victoria who worked on behalf of Aboriginal peoples. In 1967, it launched a successful campaign for a national referendum to have Aborigines counted in the country’s census.33

Typical of the era, FCAATSI was controlled, formed, and heavily supported by white liberals. In April 1969, at FCAATSI’s annual conference, Aboriginal delegates called for Aboriginal leadership of the institution and its representative organizations. Walker’s speech there galvanized black attendees such as McGuinness and Korowa. “When you leave this conference,” Walker asserted, “and go back to . . . the rat holes you call homes, that you have inherited from the Australian society, unite your people, and bring them out fighting!” This speech, “Political Rights of Aborigines,” was widely reprinted in Aboriginal print media, including in the AAL’s newsletter, *Smoke Signals*. Korowa had first met Walker through her father in 1962, and joined FCAATSI and later the AAL through her instigation.34

Kamarakafego’s time in Melbourne was a short but transformative political spark that electrified Australia’s emerging Black Power movement.
Denounced in the media, his conference and exchange with Nicholls made national headlines. Victoria’s minister for Aboriginal affairs stated that he would be “perfectly happy if he never heard from Black Power leader Browne.” Allegedly on behalf of Victoria’s Aboriginals, he stated that they were “happy to forget” Browne, who had come to stir up trouble. He claimed that a Black Power movement would not be tolerated in Australia, and called for trust and patience from Aboriginal peoples to achieve equality.\(^{35}\)

While Kamarakafego’s speech about black self-determination was “fairly harmless,” Foley suggests that it received a tremendous backlash because Australia had always been a white supremacist nation. Thus, Australia’s collective psyche was simultaneously violent toward and paranoid about black agency. White Australians claimed Aborigines were being infected by foreign ideas. Ironically, this “overreaction” only hastened the spread of Black Power in Australia, as younger Aboriginal activists quickly embraced Browne’s proposition of self-determination.\(^{36}\)

This included the AAL. The day after Kamarakafego’s departure, McGuinness informed Victoria’s Herald that he agreed with Kamarakafego’s definition of Black Power as black empowerment. He also argued that Black Power had been in Australia long before Kamarakafego’s visit. For example, he asserted that Victoria’s Aboriginal Tribal Council was a Black Power movement and whites could not enter their meetings or influence their decisions. The AAL also published its own monthly newspaper, the Koorier.\(^{37}\)

Galvanized by Kamarakafego’s visit, Maza, McGuinness, and Korowa sought to radicalize the AAL into a voice of Black Power. White liberals—or “do-gooders”—dominated the leadership of the league. Aware that they would face resistance from Nicholls, they proceeded to remove white leadership from the organization.\(^{38}\)

In the September issue of Smoke Signals, the AAL released its definitive statement on Black Power. This began with an excerpt from Jean-Paul Sartre’s foreword to Fanon’s Wretched of the Earth—“Not so very long ago, the earth numbered 2,000 million inhabitants: 500 million men, and 1,500 million natives.” This, the AAL argued, was the essence of white power. In contrast, Black Power was the post-WWII movements for self-determination by black and brown communities against white domination.\(^{39}\)

For the AAL, Black Power did not entail one single form of action. It was not inherently violent or an expression of black supremacy, but it could be if necessary. The statement drew on a 1968 essay by Barrie Pittcock on Black Power, which indicated that Black people were likely to achieve freedom if they worked together as one group. According to the AAL, Aboriginal
communities had already adopted Black Power in idea if not in name. Expressions of black Power included the Aboriginal delegation’s push at the 1968 FCAATSI’s Easter conference and the United Council of Aboriginal Women. Most importantly, the AAL felt that it needed to provide a forum from which Aboriginal peoples could discuss Black Power. Its non-Aboriginal members needed to take a step back while its Aboriginal leaders made decisions for the group.⁴⁰

Immediately following the statement, *Smoke Signals* printed a full transcript of Kamarakafego’s press conference, “Roosevelt Brown Meets the Press.” The AAL’s October newsletter stated that the small gathering with Kamarakafego had caused alarm and fear of Black Power, on one hand, and excitement and hope on the other. Yet the newsletter declared that three other international visitors had also stimulated their thoughts on Black Power. These were Papua New Guinea’s Leo Hannett and Albert Maori Kiki and four Indian nuns who had come to Australia to work with Aboriginal communities. Hannett had made a “world wind visit” to Australia on behalf of Bougainville’s (a province in Papua New Guinea) struggle against ecological injustices. Kiki was a secretary of the Pangu Pati, which was driving decolonization in Papua New Guinea.⁴¹

On October 6, 1969, Maza conducted an interview for Australia’s *Newsday*. The AAL’s executive committee had just been reconstituted to include only Aborigines. According to the paper, Black Power had “woven its embryo” and “won its first victory.” The article described Maza as the “face of Black Power, a prophet to a lost tribe—a whole race—which had grown tired of waiting.” He was part of a growing legion of activists who preached the same religion—“black is beautiful, proud, and equal,” positions only to be proved by power. If their message had indeed originated from America’s Negro rebellion, Indigenous activists in Australia had stamped it with their unique brand. Maza stated that there would be “no violence, no clenched fist salutes, no black armies,” as these were not necessary. Aboriginal power would be “black representation” and “power for the Koories to make their own decisions.” Aborigines were the world’s greatest socialists. They shared everything—and now they wanted their share. When offered a cigarette by the interviewer, Maza retorted that he wanted “none of those white men evils.” Instead, he called for reparations for Aboriginal peoples.⁴²

Kamarakafego’s trip prompted ASIO to open a file on Maza. It was pressed to take Black Power more seriously. It proceeded to inquire through the Social Services Department about Maza’s family status and his two young daughters. The organization also asserted that Kamarakafego’s visit had
spurned a split in the AAL. Nicholls was concerned with the branch’s connection with Black Power under the leadership of Maza and McGuinness. At a November AAL meeting of about three hundred people, Silverwood resigned.\(^{43}\)

In a November 1969 report titled “Black Power and the AAL,” ASIO claimed that McGuinness and Maza had become inactive in establishing a Black Power movement in Australia. The report claimed that McGuinness’s views on Black Power had changed—he now spoke against the movement and was against multiracial groups and black internationalism. However, ASIO believed that he was only “covering” himself after Kamarakafego’s visit, as his actions suggested otherwise. For example, it was reported that he had intended to travel to Northern Australia to establish a National Aboriginal Liberation Front.\(^{44}\)

As for Maza, the report continued, he was the only AAL member who openly stated that he could not rule out violence as a tactic of liberation. This all depended on the Aboriginal community’s negotiations with Australia. Opposed to white control of Aboriginal organizations, ASIO found him to be “violent with words,” but a dedicated family man who was “kind at heart.” One Hilas Maris had been receiving a monthly booklet from the World Black Power movement. However, it claimed that other branches of the AAL expressed disproval at Kamarakafego’s visit.\(^{45}\) Despite all this, Maza, McGuinness, and Korowa continued to communicate with Kamarakafego regarding the Barbados conference. When they found out that the talks would be held in Atlanta, there was little disappointment. The chance to come to the Americas to be part of a worldwide black freedom struggle was more than enough.

**Surveillance**

The promotional materials for CAP described the talks as being the successor to the national and international Black Power conferences. Its proposal for funding defined it as the logical outgrowth of the four Black Power conferences held between 1966 and 1969. Bermuda’s First Regional International Black Power Conference had added an important global dimension to the talks, as it sought to address the global problems of black self-determination. The theme of CAP was “Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism,” and the congress was to provide an ideological framework for the Black Power movement, create an organization structure for black liberation, and
create concrete plans to build black institutions at the local, national, and international level.\textsuperscript{46}

Featuring leading activists from across the black world, it aimed to be a working rather than a merely talking session. It sought to create and implement models for black institution building at the local, national, and international levels. The congress’s initial schedule included Julius Nyerere, Eusi Kwayana, Kwame Ture, Miriam Makeba, and Kamarakafego’s cousin, leader of Bermuda’s Progressive Labor Party (PLP), Lois Browne-Evans. Entertainers were to include Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, Don Lee, Baraka, Spirit House Movers, Stevie Wonder, and Pharaoh Saunders. This initial schedule was likely finalized by Kamarakafego, who was the delegated head of the program. However, a July 31 report of the Program Committee—apparently under the stewardship of Baraka—claimed to have stabilized the program and schedule.\textsuperscript{47} Browne-Evans was no longer on the schedule; yet her presence as a featured speaker would have made a significant impact at CAP, which was otherwise dominated by black men at the lecture level.

Writing in December 1970, \textit{Ebony} editor Alexander Poisnett poetically covered the meeting. Given the colorful collage of dashikis and \textit{bubas}, he felt that Atlanta’s airport could have been that of Nairobi—“\textit{except for the white faces and flies}.” The sidewalks of Morris Brown could have been the streets of Mombasa. He recalled how CAP was originally slated to take place in Barbados. Abruptly canceled, with less than three months of planning, CAP welcomed some 2,700 delegates, including 250 attendees from Africa and the Global South.\textsuperscript{48}

By June 1970, the FBI had become aware that CAP was going to be held in Atlanta. The national office launched a concerted effort to notify its Atlanta office of potential attendees. It called for its “racial informants” (read, black, or brown) to attend the Black Power conference, and call the local office with secure discretion when they reached the city.\textsuperscript{49}

Kamarakafego arrived in Atlanta in late June for a CAP planning meeting at Paschal’s Motor Motel. FBI agents observed him there, along with about thirty other black activists. They reported that as a member of Bermuda’s “Negro” political activist PLP, he was making arrangements for an expected five thousand at CAP. During a social event, agents spotted him seated on a floor. They claimed that he told people there that he would not be able to stay in Atlanta very long because he had not brought sufficient clothes. Allegedly, he remarked that he was unhappy with Atlanta because he had not met any suitable women.\textsuperscript{50}
In anticipation of the Barbados conference, in April 1970, the FBI furnished all of its offices with a report of Kamarakafego’s “extremist” views. As this document circulated, it conducted background checks on those persons whom he had met with at Paschal’s. It hoped to use those details for “informant development” at CAP via the organizations that they represented.51

In July, a “reliable informant” provided the FBI with the minutes of a preliminary meeting between CAP’s host committee and presidents of historically black colleges and universities in the area. The congress garnered some support from that academic community; Morehouse College tentatively granted the use of its Atlanta University Center and gymnasium, Morris Browne College provided its athletic field and stadium, Spelman’s chapel was made available, and Clark granted other facilities.52

In early August, the FBI, still unsatisfied with the operations of its Atlanta’s office and feeling that CAP was not receiving the investigative action that it warranted, intensified its efforts. Since CAP was open to “All brothers,” an FBI phone call to its Atlanta office confirmed that the bureau wanted its Jackson, New Orleans, Miami, Tampa, and Memphis offices to have their “racial informants” cover the conference. These informants were to make wide contacts with conference attendees and were encouraged to use cameras and tape recorders to minimize security risks. The bureau hoped to obtain the registration cards of the 2,200 persons who officially attended CAP and create lists of those persons present.53

Informants were given specific targets and made special efforts to note the names, physical descriptions, and black “extremist” affiliations of all participants. Officials instructed them to obtain information about the character, personality, and weaknesses of participants, as well as their degree of dedication to revolution. They were to gather copies of all revolutionary publications, tapes, and films and to attend events that they deemed to be the most revolutionary or potentially violent. Agents were not to make statements calling for violence or to engage in illegal activities; however, if they needed to do such things, the Atlanta office was to be contacted immediately. The FBI found CAP to be a great opportunity to fully utilize its “ghetto informants.” These individuals were to be visibly present at CAP in case they needed to be called upon in any prosecutive actions. This would have allowed the bureau to maintain the secrecy of informants of “continuing value” by using “ghetto informants” in court as opposed to informants who actually gathered the information. Speeches of extremists were to be recording according to May 1969 FBI memo, captioned “Use of Concealed
Recording Devices in Covering Public Appearances by Black and New Left Extremists.”

The FBI pressed for information that could lead to the capture of Angela Davis, H. Rap Brown, and “other missing black extremist fugitives.” If necessary, informants were instructed to look at pictures in the field office’s photograph album of black nationalists. It was also aware of CAP’s international dimensions. Its agents sought to establish contacts with foreign attendees to gather data about their connection with “black extremists” in the United States. They hoped to establish “social and political rapport with foreign black extremists” at CAP and to create permanent relationships for additional exploitation. It noted that international participants included ten persons from Bermuda (including Kamarakafego) and others from Angola, Ghana, Nigeria, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Australia, Tanzania, Southwest Africa, Guinea, Ethiopia, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, and Kenya.

The Australian delegation’s activities at Atlanta’s “full-scale Black Power get together” were closely documented by ASIO. Maza’s ASIO file included an August 1970 interview about the upcoming trip. He refused to divulge any details about the other Aboriginal participants. When asked why he would not reveal their names, he said that they needed protection. His secrecy was also in response to threats that he had received during the black takeover of the AAL. Maza described how CAP was going to hold workshops on economic autonomy, political liberation, creativity, religion, education, history, law and justice, black technology, communications and system analysis, and social and community organizations. When asked if “violent extremists” would attend the conference, Maza responded brilliantly, pointing out that he would hardly call the Reverend Jesse Jackson a man of violence. Furthermore, nonviolent entertainers like Miriam Makeba, Nina Simone, and Ray Charles would also be there. When pressed again about extremists, Maza asserted that CAP was about black people getting together to solve their problems by working along with white people.

On August 21, 1970, Kamarakafego, as program director of CAP, formally invited McGuinness and the Australian delegation to the congress. In a written letter, he stated that the congress would reimburse the group upon their arrival at the talks. The congress also agreed to pay for their accommodations while in the United States.

At this time, ASIO believed that K. Walker and journalist John Newfong were part of the delegation. Its officials noted the financial challenges
that the group was having in raising funds for the trip. Their contacts at Qantas airline were poised to notify the agency as soon as their travel arrangements were made. The airline did its part; ASIO was informed that a check for $5,796 had been paid to Qantas for airfare. Most of the funds had come from an Aboriginal Scholarship Fund, while Korowa took out a loan. The organization noted the passport applications of Maza and Korowa and documented their departure to Atlanta. With a team of three agents, ASIO undertook surveillance of the group and friends in the departure lounge of Tullamarine airport.\textsuperscript{58}

Australian and US officials corresponded about the delegation’s trip. The US consul in Perth, Western Australia, informed its Australian counterparts that it had received several complaints from Australians that Davis had been given a visa to the United States. Australian officials asked its Washington, DC, office about the outcome of CAP and the part played in it by the Australian delegation. Australia’s director of Aboriginal affairs, Barrie Dexter, was concerned with the contact between Aboriginals and Black Power organizations abroad. He felt that it would be distressful if the ideologies of global Black Power were “imported” into Australia. He noted that the Aboriginal delegation had visited the Panther office and Nation of Islam (NOI) headquarters in New York. Dexter, who believed the McGuinness was not accepted at CAP as an “authentic aborigine,” passed on Davis’s notes about the trip to ASIO.\textsuperscript{59}

The delegation compiled a report of the trip, published by Abschol as “Aborigines visit the US.” The report included a breakdown of CAP workshops—“Political Liberation,” “Economic Autonomy,” “Creativity and Arts,” “Religious Systems,” and sessions on education, history, law, technology, communications, social organization, and community organization. Most of these sessions were framed as being pan-African and referenced global black struggle.\textsuperscript{60}

McGuinness’s detailed account was written with political wit. He detailed the delegation’s journey to the United States, which included his dismay at not seeing indigenous Fijians in positions of authority in Fiji’s airport, anxiety of getting their boomerangs through the airport in San Francisco, and choosing between approaching a black or white customs officer. Kamarakafego met the group at Atlanta’s airport and arrived with three other persons armed with pistols for their protection. This challenged the misperceptions of America held by Australia—the delegation had been subjected to American news reports of “race riots, killing, burning, looting, plane
crashes, assassinations, and sabotage." They expected to see armed black people “snarling” at armed whites, and other black people huffing around with their eyes facing the ground muttering idioms—“yassah and nosah, dis and dat.” Hence, he was surprised when Kamarakafego introduced him to CAP’s welcoming committee, whose members were articulate academics and professionals. In one incident, McGuinness approached a policeman for directions; the latter grabbed for his gun and told him to take his hands out of his pockets. The lesson he learned was that on alien soil, take a cab and “never ask a cop anything.”

During the opening ceremony, the Aboriginal delegation was introduced to the conference. According to McGuinness, the reception was fantastic and the applause deafening. On one evening, Queen Mother Audley Moore introduced the women participants from overseas and delegates from Bermuda and Ethiopia. This included Korowa, whose assurance and confidence as a veteran organizer made her someone whom “everyone loved.” According to Korowa, the Aboriginal delegation was enamored with Moore, who had also been a notable force at the Bermuda conference. In a 1978 interview, Moore claimed that it was she who had given CAP its name. Having served on the organizing committee of CAP, she insisted that “the brothers” use African in the title as this implied a nationality. Otherwise, she asserted, they would have given the talks a name such as “black something,” but black did not refer to a national identity.

The Australian delegation interacted with the NOI, Black Panthers, Republic of New Afrika, and black reformist groups. This allowed them to directly engage firsthand a spectrum of black activism in the Americas; this was a unique opportunity. For example, McGuinness noted that the Australian press did not publicize the Panther’s Breakfast Program, which, in Harlem alone, was supplying five hundred free breakfasts to black children.

At CAP, the Australian delegation split up to attend separate workshops—Davis, community organization; Korowa, communications; McGuinness, literature; Maza, creativity; and Bellear, education. The congress moved them. McGuinness recalled meeting Baraka, who kept him spellbound during their conversation. Escort by his personal bodyguard of six well-armed Karate experts, he felt that Baraka was treated “like a god.”

Featured in the media, Maza, Davis, and McGuinness did a three-hour radio interview with Waymon Wright on Atlanta’s WRNG radio station. According to McGuinness, they fielded questions from racists, “Negroes, militant blacks, kindly old ladies, and antagonistic young ones.” Maza also
conducted an interview for Poisnett’s *Ebony* article. Gracing a photograph in the piece, he stated that a white person in Atlanta had informed him that whites were afraid of black people. He retorted that Australia was no different. Out of 140,000 Aborigines, only nine had university degrees. Not one of the former, Maza was nevertheless schooled in the writings of Malcolm X, Julius Lester, and Cleaver. For Maza, black Australia’s biggest problem was isolation; blacks in Australia were not thought of when people considered the black world. Maza attended the “Economic Autonomy” workshop to gain information on how to establish Aborigine-owned communications enterprises. He informed the congress that blacks in Australia were measuring their work by the yardstick of African Americans. It was “nation time!”

Indexed in the FBI’s reports, Maza was a visible presence at CAP. During the Saturday luncheon session, Maza spoke on behalf of the AAL. He discussed the history of Australia and the origins of Aboriginal peoples. Maza was reported to have stated that Aboriginal struggle was a long way behind African American political movements. His main aim at CAP was to gather ideas for programs of action that could be implemented in Australia. One idea was to make contact with African American soldiers on R & R leave from Vietnam and get them involved in the Aboriginal movement.

At the time of the trip, Korowa was president of Victoria’s AAL. Married with two daughters, the *Australian* asserted that she was on her way to CAP to learn how to start a thought revolution. Amina Baraka directed her session on social organization. Here, the gendered politics of the Black Power movement were on full display. Baraka’s paper was centered on Maulana Karenga’s ideas of black womanhood—“What makes a woman appealing is femininity and she cannot be feminine without being submissive.” For Baraka, this required being submissive to woman’s “natural roles”—inspiration, education, and social development of the nation. Mother Moore was also a part of this workshop; there, she called for women to form an underground movement to help “brothers” escape from the police.

Broken into two groups—one focused on the black family and the other on cooperative work—Canada’s Brenda Dash directed the latter session. Dash would later cofound Toronto’s National Black Liberation Action Committee at its Black People’s Conference in 1971. Along with Douglas, the Committee aimed to build a revolutionary pan-African movement in Canada.

Bellear was totally inspired by the intensity of CAP’s opening ceremonies. At nineteen years old, he was chair of the newly formed Aboriginal
Legal Service, but the congress was his first international experience. In preparation for the trip, he read about Marcus Garvey and the UNIA. He consumed Malcolm’s *Autobiography* during his stay in the United States. At CAP, he brought dashikis and Nehru-style garments and threw his Australian clothes away. By his second week in the United States, he realized CAP’s importance for the Global South and Oceania.69

Standing outside the “Political Liberation” workshop, McGuinness told Charlayne Hunter-Gault of the *New York Times* that he had come to CAP because Aborigines needed to make alliances with other people engaged in liberation struggles or face extinction. He compared the situation of Aborigines in Australia to that of American Indians, both of whom had been “placed on reservations, mission stations and settlements” and denied the right to think. McGuinness felt that CAP could help to apply pressure on the Australian government that could be used to help Aborigines develop economic independence. Otherwise, the Aboriginal race would either be exterminated or they would revolt and be killed.70

Amiri Baraka directed the “Political Liberation” workshop, a critical session that represented CAP’s international promises and transnational tensions—both personal and political. The workshop resolved to establish a World African Party—a local-international nationalist party capable of dealing with local and international African problems. It also called for the establishment of CAP centers across the United States and an international infrastructure that included Africa, the Americas, and Australasia. Baraka also argued that the local success of activists in Newark through voting mobilization should be studied and used as an example for political model across the United States.71 However, many international delegates felt that the workshop lacked the expected global pan-African focus and instead focused primarily on African American issues. Among the workshop’s critics were Surinam’s Karg and Dominica’s Douglas, who vocalized their concerns. Karg was president of an alleged three-thousand-member Black Power movement of Surinam, which had been formed that past July. He argued that black nations needed to build a Black United Nations, an economic plan for global black freedom, and a global communications network. In Surinam, he asserted, the Dutch had used every trick in the book to keep people of color divided. The congress was “the best thing that could happen to black people.” He also called for CAP to hold its next meeting in Surinam, remarking that if the government there gave them difficulties, they would “burn down their Goddamn capitol.” According to the CIA,
Karg’s group was patterned after the Republic of New Africa. Apparently he had been active in New York’s branch of the NAACP.

Douglas was considered by FBI agents to be the “most powerful individual” in the “Political Liberation” session. The FBI also found that he gave the most spirited talk during the Sunday sessions. Douglas had concerns about the immediacy of CAP’s agenda. He talked about the Black Power uprising in Trinidad and Tobago, where brothers were being shot, and sought funds for equipment (as in weapons) and legal assistance for the 108 brothers in prison facing the firing squad for treason. He passed out cups for donations.

Douglas felt that the contributions of Caribbean pan-Africanists such as Garvey and Henry Sylvester Williams, “an African born in Trinidad,” had been dismissed at CAP. This he felt was unfortunate because it was important to understand the roles that Africans in the Caribbean had played in the development of pan-Africanist thought and in the liberation of African people wherever they lived:

Today there are 130 million African people in the Americas. Let us understand that there are only 35 million Africans in America. Therefore, we have to move to unite 130 million African people in the United States, in Latin America, and the Caribbean and this can only be done if we are serious about realizing that we can only depend on ourselves; we cannot depend on liberals; . . . we cannot depend on Marxists.

He also stated that blacks were fighting not only against the United States but also against Europe, NATO, and, “when the time comes,” the Soviet Union.

For its part, the CIA felt that Douglas’s paper was one of CAP’s most significant presentations. It took his comments to mean that the success of revolution in the United States would depend on the success of West Indian revolutions for liberation. Douglas felt that this would not likely take place in Trinidad and Tobago, and he suggested that effort needed to be spent on the political takeover of another island.

According to the CIA, Kamarakafego complained that the conference was more “Afro-American than Pan-African” and that delegates had concentrated more on US domestic issues to the exclusion of foreign matters. Along similar lines, Kamarakafego proposed to this workshop that a permanent black political party be established in the Caribbean. Baraka rejected this idea, advocating that a single political party should be established and operated in all countries where black people resided.
Douglas and other international participants relayed to Kamarakafego that they were disappointed with the conference. They were particularly concerned with the “Politics” workshop and what they believed to be its exclusive focus on the problems of “Newark and New Jersey.” This prompted him to ask for all non-US delegates to meet with him; a handwritten note kept by Larry Neal suggests that they met at the Paschal’s Matador Room for a side meeting. International delegates collectively passed on a number of resolutions to the congress at its closure.\(^\text{78}\)

Kamarakafego had been quite busy. He moderated the opening session at the Morris Brown gymnasium, which was attended by about 1,700. There, he gave a short talk that introduced the Caribbean delegates. In one workshop session, Kamarakafego suggested that all those in attendance furnish their names and addresses so that he could stay in contact with them. He informed the group that he would be calling another Black Power conference and that other CAP conferences would continue.\(^\text{79}\) He hoped that these future talks would be decidedly international in practice, to avoid some of the issues of marginalization.

Kamarakafego was particularly concerned that CAP did not reimburse the Australian delegation for their expenses in traveling to the United States. He impressed Bellear with his knowledge about black political struggle in Australia, and he consistently checked on them to make sure they were okay. These issues bothered Kamarakafego tremendously. In addition, a serious rift developed between himself, Baraka, and what he would call the “Newark, New Jersey group.” This was part of the reason why he resigned from CAP later that year.\(^\text{80}\)

The black Australian delegation was also bitter about the issue. Bellear was clear that CAP was always supposed to be international. He felt that CAP’s international dynamics were marginalized because “people abuse history.” The Australian delegation found that most conference delegates knew very little about their experiences and raised unnecessary questions about their African identity. He witnessed internal jealousies at CAP and felt that a number of interviews by its participants gave the impression that it was just a localized affair. Their published report about CAP, “Aborigines Visit the US,” stated that they had been confronted with a “shattering new world of belligerent black solidarity.” It also reported—with some bitterness—that CAP had not honored its written promise to pay the delegation’s airfare.\(^\text{81}\) Still, their trip to the United States was not over.
What Is Harlem?

After CAP, the Aboriginal delegation traveled the eight-hundred-mile journey by bus to New York. Their trip was memorable. They swapped stories with black people all the way through Georgia, the Carolinas, Philadelphia, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and New York. Harlem captivated them—it was a place where blacks were regarded as “all Black.” For McGuinness, it was a site of black oppression and resistance—depressing, exciting, dirty, and beautiful. Harlem was a place where junkies rubbed shoulders with tourists, where “cops beat up kids and kids beat up cops,” where muggers and prostitutes were common, where Panthers fed kids and Muslims gave religious guidance, where “kids dodged dope pushers” among abandoned cars, bars, brothels, and pawnshops, where he could stand on the same corner at Lennox and 125th St. that King, Malcolm X, Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, and Queen Mother Moore had once stood. They ate soul food at Sylvia’s restaurant, devoured bean pies, and engrossed themselves in black culture.

“What then was Harlem?” asked McGuinness. Harlem was “Black and beautiful.” But the term’s main value lay in its ability to “pull Black people out of the depths and lift them into a once again proud and dignified race.” However, to really understand it one needed to “sit in an auditorium with 3,000 Blacks” and listen to Nina Simone singing “To Be Young, Gifted and Black.”

Ken and Betty Jenkins hosted the delegation across the state of New York. Hofstra professor of law David Kadane helped them present a petition at the United Nations. This statement called for relief from genocide, $6 billion of reparations for Aboriginal persons, and Aboriginal ownership of all lands that these communities occupied. The delegation traveled all across Long Island visiting educational institutions. They visited institutions such as the African-centered school Uhuru Sasa, Barbara Ann Teer’s National Black Theatre company, Moore’s Universal Association of Ethiopian Women, the Shinnecock Indian Reservation (whose nation included African Americans), and a birthday celebration for Richard B. Moore, veteran organizer of the African Blood Brotherhood.

The delegation’s Jack Davis enjoyed his time in “Africa-America.” The indigenous poet experienced Atlanta as a world of both black poverty and wealth. He felt that the colors, costumes, and jewelry of the “Back-to-Africa” movement were apparent in the dress of Atlanta’s black women. Davis felt
that Australia’s “black scene” for self-determination could benefit from the African American freedom struggle by pushing for an Aboriginal cultural renaissance, developing news media for propaganda, and increasing national solidarity through organizations such as the recently formed Tribal Council of Australia.\footnote{Davis enjoyed the good smells of food and sights of a half million well-dressed black folks amid the worn streets of Harlem and Spanish Harlem. The delegation visited Harlem’s tenements, an all-black church, and Roosevelt and Hempstead High School on Long Island, where they did boomerang exhibitions. Davis recalled meeting a number of popular African American poets and playwrights. From New York they flew to New Hampshire’s Dartmouth College, where they spoke before its students. They visited an automobile factory in Detroit and met with black and Native American students at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. They had a fascinating time with the latter, because, Davis argued, Native Americans had the same problems as Aboriginals in Australia. Davis felt that they needed to continue their cultural exchanges with black and indigenous Americans. He was told that a group of Native Americans and African Americans were going to stage a protest at the Australian consulate in protest of the White Australia policy and the denial of Aboriginal land rights.\footnote{Davis read poetry at a number of schools, and his work was well received. African Americans loved poetry, he wrote, and he felt that he could sell millions of his books in the United States. In New York, he played the didgeridoo at an urban education program. At the United Nations, the delegation sought support from delegates from Tanzania, Zambia, Guinea, Guyana, Chile, Fiji, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. The group met with Angola nationals, whom Davis felt compelled to help.\footnote{The veteran organizer felt that Black Power in Australia could gain international sympathy for Aboriginals by bringing attention to the fact that Australia had not signed the charter of human rights. Aboriginals were suffering in a land that had one of highest standards of living in the world. White Australian sacred places—such as statues and monuments—needed to be desecrated with red paint to signify the blood of murdered Aboriginals. All Australians needed to be educated about the crimes perpetuated against its indigenous peoples. Davis retold of these atrocities throughout his report.\footnote{Davis claimed that in Australia, Kamarakafego stated that Aboriginals were not ready for Black Power in the American sense. Because Aboriginals were still in a colonial situation, they needed more support and education before they could truly embrace Black Power.} }}
could not bring sufficient economic pressure to bear on the system, boycotts and marches could not work. Davis agreed—Black Power in Australia would require force. Aboriginals needed to be prepared to go to jail for breaking the law and be willing to be injured or be killed. Since the 1967 referendum, there had been a “return to Aboriginality,” so much so that even Aboriginals who could pass for being Europeans were claiming Aboriginal heritage. This significant change would bring intellectual growth to the Black Power movement, which needed to attack pseudo Australian pride—white Australians had no heritage of their own, and their claims for heritage were imagined narratives.89

Returning to Oceania

After the Australian delegation returned from CAP, ASIO intensified its surveillance of the group. It noted that Maza arrived back in Australia in late November 1970. Before his departure to CAP, Davis was reported to have said, “People who think four aboriginals are going away to bring black power back to Australia are stupid.” Still, his time in the United States emboldened his concern for Aboriginal land rights.90

The organization opened a file on Bellear, who later chaired Redfern’s Aboriginal Medical Service and served as minister of defense for the Australian Black Panther Party. In 1972, Maza formed the National Black Theatre and participated in the Aboriginal Tent Embassy protests that same year. Perhaps in relation to the incident with the alleged Panther, McGuinness reported that he initially felt out of place at CAP because of his skin complexion. However, the “brothers and sisters” soon showed him that he was like them, and now, “in the Black Bag,” he was accepted. Still, McGuinness left the trip early. The agency referenced this, reporting that his complexion prevented his becoming a confidant of the congress. It further claimed that upon his return, McGuinness expressed “trepidation” over the lengths that black militants in other countries were prepared to go for freedom. However, Maza and Korowa were completely embraced by the talks and were expected to become more militant as a result.91

Yet McGuinness’s subsequent reflections suggest that he did appreciate the talks. Nine months after CAP, he noted that the ability to study the African American experience in America was an indescribable experience. He was thoroughly convinced that culture was the key to Aboriginal advancement. He argued that if Australia’s white power structure was not threat-
ened by Australia’s 140,000 black citizens, then they needed to look to New Guinea and the Pacific islands for support.92

Korowa shared the same perception. She was elated to have met black people and organizations from across the Americas, Africa, and Asia. These included Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor, Louis Farrakhan, Queen Mother Moore, members of the National Black Theater, the Barakas, and the National Council of Negro Women. She also recalled Julius Nyerere’s arrival at New York’s JFK airport for a meeting at the United Nations.93

In the United States, Korowa was seen as Aboriginal. But although she had been born in Australia, Korowa was actually a proud South Sea Islander—a descendant of over sixty thousand Melanesians forcibly taken from Vanuatu to work on Australia’s sugar and cotton plantations in the mid-nineteenth century. After CAP, Korowa traveled to Vanuatu to visit her ancestral island home, “Tanna the Earth.” Arriving in October 1970, she stayed there for about two weeks. Korowa was ecstatic to be among Vanuatu’s black communities. While there, she happily fielded questions about Black Power, South Sea Islanders, and her meetings with African Americans.94

This was Korowa’s first trip to Vanuatu, a political condominium of France and Britain then known as the New Hebrides. Along with ASIO, British and French colonial administrators monitored her activities there with trepidation. Indeed, they were more than concerned about the concrete relationships between Black Power, pan-Africanism, and Melanesian nationalism in Vanuatu and Oceania. The French referred to Korowa as an associate of Kamarakafego who had attended CAP “pour l’émancipation de la race noire”; their British counterparts were informed that she discussed Black Power with Vanuatu’s English-speaking community, with Fijians, and with Tongans. In Tanna, she distributed some twenty red, black, and green Black Power badges, all items that she obtained during her trip to the United States. British officials could only conclude that, given Korowa’s “Afro-style” dress, her “bitterly anti-European” remarks, and comments that all black people originated from Africa (and that Jesus Christ was black), she was strongly influenced by Black Power. The British government deemed her to be “undesirable” to New Hebrides, and prevented her from reentering the archipelago in 1971 and 1977.95

Kamarakafego soon followed Korowa’s footsteps to Vanuatu, with dramatic consequences. The French were aware that during the month of Korowa’s visit, Jimmy Stephens and Susan Moses of the Na Griamel movement had corresponded with Kamarakafego about land struggle in Vanuatu.
Stephens informed Kamarakafego that Na Griamel was 22,000 members strong. Yet French and British merchants had stolen their land, and, since 1955, their complaints to the colonial officials had gone unheeded. They were in desperate need of overseas help to get the land of their “mother’s home” back. They needed highly educated teachers, Peace Corps members, and help for the “naked” children of New Hebrides. As farmers, they did not want for food, but they sought connections with overseas liners to export their crops of taro, pumpkin, lettuce, sandalwood, peanuts, pineapples, and paw paw. Stephens was ready to travel and meet Kamarakafego. In return, Kamarakafego expressed his sympathy for Na Griamel and sought further political contacts in Fiji. As a result of his visibility through Bermuda’s Black Power conference and CAP, Kamarakafego’s black political connections were fast expanding over Oceania. These concrete relationships would intensify as he proceeded to organize for 6PAC.