The Caribbean has made a significant contribution to the development of Pan-African thought and activism. The Pan-Africanists have fought long and hard for the dignity and humanity of the African descendants in the Caribbean, Africans on the continent, and all areas where African people were oppressed. Caribbean Pan-Africanists have always had a deep interest with developments on the African continent. They have always sought to give solidarity and assist concretely in the struggle against enslavement, colonialism, neo-colonialism, and racial apartheid. This paper seeks to trace the evolution and development of Pan-Africanism inside the Caribbean from the period of enslavement to the present moment.

Early Pan-Africanism

Tony Martin, correctly stated that “Pan-Africanism became inevitable with the inception of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.”\(^1\) The Africans, who were taken from their homeland and brought to the Caribbean longed to re-connect with their land of origin, this feeling was handed down to their descendants who continued to harbour thoughts of a physical return to their ancestral land, and if that was not possible, of connecting to Africa spiritually and psychologically. The desire to be reunited with Africa helped the enslaved Africans to resist and survive the savage system of chattel slavery. The enslaved Africans recognized that they faced similar problems: enslavement, denial of their humanity, racial discrimination, brutal exploitation, and oppression. Therefore, they were forced to come together and combine their forces for their own survival and the advancement of their social, economic, political, and psychological circumstance. Africans from different ethnic nationalities united and combined with Africans born in the Caribbean to fight against their white oppressors and the system of slavery and colonialism. This was manifested in the hundreds of revolts by the enslaved and other forms of resistance.

The successful Haitian Revolution (1891–1804) was a significant development to Pan-Africanism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The enslaved in Haiti were able to defeat the French, British, and Spanish imperialists and take their independence. Haiti became a safe haven for all Caribbean enslaved people who sought refuge and it provided inspiration for the enslaved to continue to struggle against their enslavement.
The enslaved Africans who escaped their enslavement and formed independent maroon communities in the mountainous forested terrain of the Caribbean sought to recreate “the African environment through language, through religion, through architecture, through social organization in any way they could.” These communities kept the consciousness of Africa embedded in the psyche of the citizens their communities.

19th century repatriationists

After the abolition of enslavement, the desire to connect physically with African was still prevalent in the thought process of a number of persons from the Caribbean. Liberia, which became independent in 1847, was promoted as the promised land for Africans in the Diaspora. They felt that they would be able to make a contribution to the development of the African continent. Some of them in the missionary tradition of the colonialists felt that they had a duty to go and save the souls of their brothers and sisters and bring civilization to them. A section of them thought about embarking on some form of commercial venture with the continent. Whatever motivated their thinking the idea of repatriating to Africa persisted. Edward Wilmot Blyden was arguably the leading Caribbean advocate of repatriating to Africa. He was born in the Danish West Indian island of St Thomas in 1832. Blyden migrated to Liberia in 1851, where he became an outstanding scholar who engaged and challenged many of the lies and distortions that were being propagated about Africans at this time. He firmly argued that Africa and Africans had a great civilization – the origins of the sciences and the great religions originated in Africa. Blyden believed that Liberia had the potential to become the centre of a great West African empire and he envisioned that the skills of Africans on the continent and those outside would be utilized to construct this great nation that would be the guardian for all African people. He recognized the powerlessness and marginality of Africans around the globe both politically and economically, but he believed that this development could be reversed if they would unite. Blyden felt that if Africans remained dispersed and separated, they would be subjugated by other races. For Blyden a strong African state was indispensable in order for the African people to be respected. He advocated the creation of one vast West African nation. Blyden championed the idea of an African Nationality and felt that he was duty bound to preserve the cultural characteristics of the African race. Although Blyden made a significant error in giving support to British imperialism which he felt was going to be of a short duration, he is still seen as “the ideological father of the idea of West African unity and the cultural nationalism that accompanied it.”

Robert Campbell, a Jamaican, who had been the Director of the Scientific Department of the Institute for Coloured Youth in Philadelphia, accompanied Martin Delany, the African American Pan-Africanist on his exploratory Niger Valley Exploration Mission to the Niger Valley in 1859–60. Campbell described his trip in his book *A Pilgrimage to my Motherland: An Account of a Journey among the Egbos and Yoruba’s of Central Africa in 1859–60*. Campbell and Delany signed a treaty with the African authorities at Abeokuta which gave Africans living in North America the right and privilege “of settling in common with the Egba people, or any part of the territory belonging to Aboekuta not otherwise occupied.” Delany and Campbell agreed to bring settlers who were intelligent and educated with some knowledge of the arts and sciences, agriculture, and other mechanical and industrial occupations, which they would put into immediate operation by improving the lands and in other useful vocations. The mission failed to realize its objectives because the British were establishing themselves in Nigeria and the African-Americans became
sidelined because of the American Civil War and reforms that came with Reconstruction. However, Campbell settled in Lagos, Nigeria and became a respected member of his community.

Benito Sylvanus was born in Haiti but moved to France and then settled in Ethiopia. He was made a diplomat by the Emperor Menelik. Theophilus Scholes, a Jamaican migrated to the Congo where he served as a missionary in 1886 for half of a decade. He went to New Calabar in 1894 and stayed for two years. Like Blyden, Scholes in his writings refuted the idea of African inferiority and pointed out that the great Egyptian civilization was established by blacks. He argued that the “Egyptians were the founders of mathematics, along with the people of India and the mathematics, astronomy, trigonometry and geometry upon which modern European science was based came originally from the much-maligned black race of Egypt.” Scholes was very critical of the colonialism of the British Empire and felt that racism was a tool to ensure the “domination of the white property owners over their labourers.”

Albert Thorne, a Barbadian who migrated to Jamaica formed the African Colonial Enterprise with a view of taking Africans from the diaspora to settle in British Central. Thorne was unable to bring to fruition his objective. In 1865, 346 Barbadians left Barbados and relocated to Liberia.

The Pan-African association

Henry Sylvester Williams was born in Barbados, but migrated to Trinidad and Tobago as an infant. Williams journeyed to Canada and Britain in pursuit of higher education. He was instrumental in the formation of the African Association in London in 1897. The African Association was concerned with the numerous injustices taking place in Britain’s colonies in Africa and the Caribbean. Williams and the African Association called the first Pan-African Conference in 1900; where about 30 delegates emanated from North America, the Caribbean and Africa. A third of the delegates came from the Caribbean – Jamaica, Antigua, Trinidad, St Lucia, Dominica, Cuba, and Haiti. This conference was called as i) a forum of protest against the white colonizers and ii) to combat the aggressive policies of British imperialism. The European imperial project was still savaging the African continent with its wars of conquest. This conference reinforced the idea of a shared experience and a common ideal; it sought to buttress the bonds of unity in the struggle and provided a model for calling and hosting Pan-African Conferences.

The African Association was transformed into the Pan African Association (PAA) in 1900. The main objective of this organization was “to secure civil and political rights for Africans and their descendants throughout the world.” A branch of the PAA was founded in Jamaica in 1900, by a number of middle class blacks. However, this branch was short-lived and it was reconstituted as the Anglo-African Association with many of the members and the same objectives. A number of PAA branches were also created in Trinidad and Tobago. Like in Jamaica, the branches were composed of the black middle class and quickly died out. However, the PAA branches represented the first efforts at organizing Pan-Africanism in the region.

The universal Negro improvement association

The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) was founded in Jamaica in 1914 by Marcus Garvey. After travelling throughout Central America, South America, and Europe,
Garvey recognized that African descendants had no political power and were at the bottom of the economic ladder, and faced severe racial discrimination. Therefore, he decided to create the UNIA in order to work for the betterment of the African diaspora. After the First World War the UNIA movement began to grow at an exponential rate throughout the Caribbean: Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, British Guiana (Guyana), St. Vincent, St Lucia, Grenada, Honduras (Belize), Bahamas, St Thomas, Nevis, Haiti, Bermuda, Antigua, Dominican Republic, and Cuba. The UNIA branches were comprised of a male president and female president. The male president dominated the organization, although the majority of the members who attended UNIA meetings and participated in their activities were females. A number of females played key roles in the organization: Amy Ashwood Garvey, Amy Jacques Garvey, Henrietta Vinton Davis, Mamie De Mena, and Alexandrina Gibbs. Gibbs, a lady president in Barbados, was one of the leading ideologues of the UNIA in Barbados in the early 1930s. The Black Cross Nurses, made up of women, performed social welfare activities and served as role models to the young black women.

Garvey’s ideas resonated with the masses of Caribbean people who were poor and powerless who were exploited by the racist colonial system. The UNIA gave them a new, positive, conception of themselves by seeking to stress black pride and dignity. They were taught that they were equal to any white man and not inferior to them as was taught for centuries. This raised the self-esteem and self-confidence in them and also led them to be more assertive in demanding their human rights.

The UNIA in the tradition of the earlier Pan-Africanists had a strong African orientation, with its slogan “Africa for the Africans.” Garvey viewed Africa as the ancestral residence of the black man, a space where black people could commence a successful parity with the other races and nations. He wanted to relocate his headquarters to Liberia in the early 1920s but this project was derailed when the Liberia government refused to grant Garvey the permission. In the early 1920s’ REM Jack, the Vincentian Garveyitte sought to recruit individuals from the Caribbean to work inside of Liberia. Notwithstanding the failure of Garvey’s mission of repatriating to Africa, this idea continued to be a constant in the minds of the Garveyites. In the early 1930s, a debate ensued in Barbados about emigration to British Guiana to ease the level of unemployment on the island. The UNIA members were clear that they wanted to go to Liberia and not British Guiana and they sought to mobilise their members to agitate and organize to migrate to Liberia. They were counselled to go to Liberia and Ethiopia and “establish bases to spread further propaganda to create a united and liberated Africa.”

The UNIA acted as a quasi-labour organization in some of the territories where trade unions were illegal, by advising its members and other blacks to seek a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work. Many of them were very active in the labour ferment that took place in the Caribbean in the early 1920s. The UNIA also sought to organize their middle class members who met the qualifications to vote, to cast their vote for a black candidate if one was available so as to get representatives in the legislature to represent their interests.

From inception, the authorities in the various Caribbean territories were very concerned about the growth and the activities of the UNIA and they sought to stymie its growth by using various forms of repression. The Negro World, the organ of the UNIA was banned in Honduras in 1919; it was prohibited in British Guiana (1919), proscribed in St Vincent (1919) and banned in Trinidad (1921). Although the paper was not banned in Barbados, the government introduced a seditious publication ordinance in 1920. Sections of this paper were read at the weekly UNIA meetings and it was felt that the radical content of the paper might radicalize the Garveyites and make life uncomfortable for the authorities. The
members of the UNIA were constantly harassed and shadowed by the police, their meetings were closely monitored, and some members lost their jobs or were threatened that if they attended UNIA meetings they would be fired. In 1927, when it was rumoured that Garvey was going to visit Barbados and Trinidad, the authorities passed the Expulsion of Desirable Persons Act to prevent Garvey from visiting those islands. The Garveyites in these islands were eagerly looking forward to his visit and were initiating plans to welcome him. By the late 1930s, many of the UNIA branches were not as strong as they were a decade before, many of the branches were no longer active although Garvey was still able to assembled 25 000 Garveyites in Kingston in 1929, at his 6th International Convention of Negro Peoples of the World. However, the members of the UNIA played major roles in the labour rebellions that rocked the Caribbean in the mid- to late 1930s as leaders and participants.

The Rastafarian movement

The Rastafarian movement was formed in Jamaica in the early 1930s, among the black working and under-classes, a few years after the coronation of Haile Selassie I on November 2nd 1930. Many of the early converts were Garveyites or were influenced by Garvey’s teaching. The Rastafarians believed that Emperor Haile Selassie I was the true and the living God. They asserted the right of repatriation to Ethiopia, which represented a shift from the earlier Pan-Africanists who championed Liberia as their promised land. The Rastafarians attacked the colonial system and sought to promote African consciousness. They faced repression from the Jamaican state because their members were viewed by large sections of the middle class “as a dangerous sect,” and as a result they were subjected to imprisonment for smoking cannabis, and placed “in the lunatic asylum for public utterances deemed seditious.”

The visit of the Emperor Selassie to Jamaica in 1966 gave the Rastafarians a lot of publicity in Jamaica and in the other Caribbean territories. Indeed, the movement spread throughout the Caribbean where it was firstly embraced by the working class youths. However, the Rastafarians faced similar levels of repression for the use of marijuana and the perception that they were a dangerous sect. The most repressive piece of legislation against the Rastafarians was evident inside of Dominica, with the passage of the Dread Act in 1974, which gave “every citizen the right to shoot, without fear of retribution, any individual suspected of being a Dread who entered the property of the said citizen.” In addition, the law gave the “police the power to arrest any person who resembled a Rastafarian; and a Dread could be given eighteen months in the gaol for wearing locks.” Notwithstanding the level of repression against the Rastafarians, the movement continue to grow numerically throughout the region and it has become more respected and accepted.

Solidarity with Abyssinia/Ethiopia

In October 1935 when Italy invaded Ethiopia the people in the Caribbean like their counterparts across global Africa rallied to the defence of the Ethiopians in a manifestation of Pan-African solidarity. Ethiopia held a special place in the hearts of Caribbeans because it was mentioned in the bible and it was one of two independent African nations on the continent known for having defeated the imperialist ambitions of the Italians in 1896 at the famous battle of Adowa. The UNIA movement in the region had stimulated a lot of interest in developments on the African continent and at UNIA meetings members would sing “Ode to Ethiopia.” One of the main objectives was to win back the glories of Ethiopia. The embryonic Rastafarian movement view the Ethiopian Emperor as their god.
Throughout the region the newspapers provided extensive coverage about the war which was keenly followed by the people. Many of them were outraged by the newspaper reports of the savagery of the Italians and sought to render some assistance to the peoples of Ethiopia. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Negro Welfare Cultural and Social Association (NWCSA) led by Elma Francois and Jim Barrette played a major role in raising the consciousness of the people about the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. In October 1935, the NWSCA held a massive meeting in Port of Spain where the speakers excoriated Great Britain for refusing to sell arms to the Ethiopians and called on African-Trinidadians to boycott French and Italian goods. It also asked the stevedores not to unpack Italian ships. The meeting also passed a resolution where it condemned the “shooting of defenceless men, women and children for the purpose of glorifying Italian Fascist Imperialism.”

Throughout Trinidad the country witnessed the flowering of several Pan-African groups occasioned by the invasion: the Daughter of Ethiopia, the Afro-West Youth Welfare League, Brotherhood and African Progeny and the African National High School.

In Barbados, there was a series of prayer vigils on behalf of the Ethiopians; money was collected for the Ethiopian Red Cross. In 1936, when the Barbadian people heard that the British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden was going to take the lead at Geneva for calling for the removal of sanctions on Italy, a public meeting was held where over 3000 people attended and passed a resolution calling on Britain to maintain the sanctions on Italy. A petition was signed in Guyana in October 1935, seeking permission from King George V to go and fight on behalf of Ethiopia. A similar petition was signed by over 1400 people in Jamaica requesting approval from the King to enlist in the Ethiopian army “to fight to preserve the glories of our ancient and beloved Empire.” Many Rastafarians wanted to go and fight in Ethiopia. In St Lucia a resolution was also passed requesting authorization to “volunteer for service in Ethiopia.” The Citizens Committee of Trinidad wanted the law changed so that they could go and fight on behalf of Ethiopia. Section 4 of the Foreign Enlistment Act, 1870, opposed the acceptance of engagements in the military or naval service with any foreign state at peace with His Majesty. Moreover, Article 25 of the Ethiopian Order in Council (1934) prohibited British subjects in Ethiopia from engaging in any operation of war either for or against the Emperor. In Grenada, the people collected money for the Ethiopian Ambulance Fund. The people in the Caribbean enthusiastically rendered solidarity and sought to concretely support the peoples of Ethiopia.

Black Power movement

The Black Power movement, which originated in the United States in the mid-1960s, quickly spread to the Caribbean. By 1970 there were several Black Power formations scattered across the region, the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement (Antigua), the Peoples Progressive Movement (Barbados), the United Black Association for Development (Belize), the Black Beret Cadre (Bermuda), the United Black Socialists (Dominica), the African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa and Ratoon (Guyana), Abeng (Jamaica), the Forum Group, (St Lucia, St Vincent, Grenada), the National Joint Action Committee, the National Union of Freedom Fighters and the United Movement for Reconstruction of Black Dignity (Trinidad and Tobago). The Black Power message resonated with a large section of the population that recognised that although people of African descent comprised the majority of the population they had little economic power. The commanding heights of the economies were still owned by foreign whites or by local whites. The territories that had received independence had not undergone the kind of social and economic transformation
they had hoped for. They recognized that although they were being ruled by Black men nothing fundamentally had changed. The governments in the region contended that the Black Power movement was not relevant to the Caribbean because the blacks were in the majority and the political directorate was composed largely of Blacks. Walter Rodney pointed out that “a black man ruling a dependent State within the imperialist system has no power. He is simply an agent of the whites in the metropolis, with an army and a police force designed to maintain the imperialist way of things” in that territory. Rodney, further explained that Black Power in the Caribbean means: i) the break with imperialism which is historically white and racist, ii) the assumption of power by the black masses on the islands and iii) the cultural reconstruction of the society in the image of blacks. Rodney, a Guyanese lecturer at the University of the West Indies, sought to spread the Black Power message with the Rastafarians and the working people in Jamaica. He travelled to Canada to attend a Black Writers Conference and was prohibited from returning to Jamaica by the Hugh Shearer government. Prime Minister Shearer justified his action on the grounds of Rodney’s “destructive anti-Jamaican activities in Kingston, St Andrew, Clarendon and St James.” On hearing this news the students from the University of the West organized a protest march which was joined by the members of the working class that resulted in the “Rodney Riots” of October 1968.

Between February and April 1970, Trinidad and Tobago was shaken by a sequence of Black Power marches that were led by the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC). One of the early marches that grabbed the attention of Trinidadians was a solidarity march in Port of Spain with the students who were charged for protesting against the racist professor at the Sir George Williams University in February 1969. On April 20th, the government declared a state of emergency and arrested the leaders of the Black Power movement.

A Regional Black Power conference was held in Bermuda in 1969, where over 1000 people attended. This conference marked a significant milestone in the development of Black Power in the Caribbean and helped to strengthen the Black Power organizations in the Caribbean and develop links with the similar organizations in the United States. The gathering passed resolutions on a number of issues including: black nationhood, solidarity with Black Power globally and African liberation struggles and the West Indian student-led Black Power protests at Sir George Williams University.

The government of Barbados cancelled the Second Regional Conference from taking place in Barbados in July 1970. The Errol Barrow government that was viewed as less repressive than most of the governments in the Caribbean had been steadily becoming more oppressive and had literally declared war on Black Power advocates on the island. The government had prohibited Geddes Granger and Clive Nunez from NJAC coming to Barbados in April 1970. It passed a Public Order Act in May 1970 and barred Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) from speaking in Barbados while placing him virtually under house arrest during his brief stay on the island. The government also proscribed Rosie Douglas from speaking in Barbados. While the banning of the conference was mainly the result of pressure coming from the Dutch, British, French, and the United States, it was also part of the war that the Barrow government was waging against the Black Power Activists.

Black Power was also manifested in cultural Black Nationalism as seen in the wearing of dashikis, and Afros, calls for the teaching of Caribbean and African history in the schools, the Africanization of names, calls to make emancipation day a public holiday, the removal of the imperialists statues and the re-naming of the roads that carried imperialists names, calls for revolutionary fighters against enslavement to be made national heroes.
6th Pan-African Congress

The first step taken towards organizing a 6th Pan-African Congress took place at the Regional Black Power Conference in Bermuda in 1969. During the conference, a message was read from Kwame Nkrumah, the deposed president of Ghana, which called for a meeting of black people to be held on the African continent. The previous Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester in 1945, due to George Padmore, the Trinidadian Pan-Africanist and the Pan-African Federation. Over 30 delegates from the Caribbean attended this conference and all of them were members of trade unions. In April 1971, Roosevelt Brown (Pauulu Kamarakafego) held a meeting in Bermuda to discuss the possibility of holding a sixth Pan-African Congress with some of the leading Pan-Africanists from the region. It was agreed to hold the Congress in Tanzania.

The first Caribbean and South American planning conference took place in February 1973 in Jamaica. At this meeting CLR James and Dr Fletcher Robertson took on the task to author the “Call” for the 6th Pan-African Congress. A follow up conference took place inside of Guyana in December, where some of the leading Pan-Africanists from the Caribbean were critical of the policies being pursued by the governments in the region. The Forbes Burnham government one of the sponsors of the conference took offence at the comments of the Pan-Africanists and wrote a letter of complaint to the Tanzanian government, expressing their displeasure about the tone and content of the conference. A few months before the conference, the Caribbean governments told President Nyerere that if the progressive Pan-Africanists from the Caribbean were allowed to speak at the Congress and embarrass their governments, they would stay away from the conference. A few weeks before the congress, the Caribbean Steering Committee was informed that “only governments and ruling parties would be invited to this historic congress as delegates.”

To register their disapproval at this decision the Caribbean Steering Committee took the principle position of boycotting the conference. CLR James, the veteran Pan-Africanist who had played a key role in promoting the conference refused to attend the meeting in solidarity with the Caribbean Pan-Africanists. Representatives from the governments of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada attended the conference. It was a travesty and a major contradiction that Eric Gairy, arguably the most repressive leader of a Caribbean state (Grenada), attended the conference and the progressive Caribbean Pan-Africanists did not. In 1970, Gairy had introduced the Emergency Powers Act and made it clear that they have “to wet our house … in order to prevent the (Black Power) fire from spreading to Grenada.”

The 6th Pan-African Congress was robbed of the contributions of the Caribbean Pan-Africanists who had spent much time, energy, and money preparing for the gathering.

Anti-apartheid activity

While the Italian-Ethiopian struggle represented the best manifestation of Pan-African solidarity in the first half of the twentieth century, the battle against apartheid in South Africa was the best demonstration of unity in the struggle of African people in the second half of the twentieth century. Throughout the Caribbean a number of anti-apartheid groups were created in solidarity with the oppressed black people in South Africa to educate the people about developments in South Africa and to provide moral and material support to their oppressed brothers and sisters. The Afro–Caribbean Liberation Movement in Antigua under the leadership of Tim Hector used the Outlet newspaper and “consistently called for the boycott of South African goods and carried numerous articles exposing the apartheid regime.”
Like most of the anti-apartheid groups in the region they spent a lot of time seeking to educate the people about the horrors of the apartheid system.

One other anti-apartheid group that stood out was the Southern African Liberation Committee (SALC), which was formed in Barbados in 1977, to “render material and moral support with the oppressed of South Africa.” In 1977, Joshua Nkomo, the leader of the Zimbabwe African People’s Union, revealed that a “South African ship had left New York and passed through Antigua with tons of munitions, including machine guns and mortars.” This announcement led the SALC and the ACLM to call for the closure of the Space Research Corporation branches in Barbados and Antigua. The SALC published a small pamphlet “How a Transnational-Munitions Co. Used A West Indies Government to Test Artillery Shells for the South African Armed Forces,” to inform their readers about how the High Altitude Research Project came to Barbados in the early 1960s to carry out experiments that would have benefitted the world but ended up providing technology and weapons for the racist South African government. The Trinidadian Oilfield Workers Trade Union told the Antigua government that if it did not take action against the Space Research Corporation, “then the union would place a ban on all goods coming out of Antigua.” The Space Research Corporation was finally closed down in Barbados and Antigua in 1978.

**Cricket and anti-apartheid**

Caribbean people are very passionate about cricket – this sport is very popular among a large section of the population. However, cricket was more than entertainment as CLR argued in *Beyond a Boundary*, it had social and political overtones that impacted on the wider society. As part of its independence celebrations, Barbados was supposed to play a Rest of the World cricket team in March 1967. Peter Pollock and Grame Pollock from South Africa and Colin Bland from Rhodesia were selected to be part of the Rest of World team. At this time both Rhodesia and South Africa were being censored because of their racists and oppressive policies. The Peoples Progressive Movement (PPM) held several meetings throughout the island where they attacked the racist apartheid system and condemned the inclusion of the Southern African cricketers. The invitation was subsequently withdrawn in January 1967, after the South African said that Basil D’Olliveria, a coloured cricketer would not be welcome in South Africa. The PPM were credited for their contribution in preventing the cricketers from playing in Barbados.

In 1981, the Forbes Burnham government expelled the English cricketer Robin Jackman from Guyana because he had played cricket and coached in South Africa. This action led to the cancellation of the Second Test match. The SALC supported the action taken by Burnham and insisted that the Caribbean governments should have followed Guyana’s example. They felt that given that the Organization of African Unity, the primary Pan-African body in Africa had supported Burnham’s position as “eloquent testimony of solidarity with the oppressed people in South Africa and Namibia.” The Barbados Workers Union the largest trade union on the island called for the tour to be discontinued because the cricketers involved had demonstrated: i) a blatant disregard for international feelings against apartheid; ii) the plight of black people in South Africa and iii) the Gleneagles Accord signed by Commonwealth Prime Ministers in 1977. The foreign ministers of Barbados, Antigua, Jamaica, and Montserrat met in Barbados and decided that the tour would continue and stressed that it is the “obligation of the governments under the agreement to discourage such contacts by their nationals and we expect national sportsmen to lend their support.”
The SALC was critical of the position taken by the foreign ministers and suggested that by selecting Robin Jackman and any others who have played cricket in the racist Republic of South Africa since the passage of the Gleneagles Accord, the English breached both the spirit and the letter of the agreement. The SALC led a small but vocal demonstration in Barbados to protest against the inclusion of Robin Jackman in the English side. In Jamaica there was also a small protest against Robin Jackman and the English cricket team.

In 1983, the Caribbean people were devastated when a rebel West Indian cricket team decided to go and play cricket in South Africa. This was seen as the ultimate betrayal by the Pan-Africanists, the anti-apartheid groupings and a section of the population. The United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid had called for a total boycott of sport exchanges with South Africa. As part of a wider struggle to “isolate South Africa economically” and “undermine white moral and keep the question of racial rule on the international agenda.” Therefore, the cricketers by their actions had undermined the policy of isolating South Africa from sport. The West Indies Group of University Teachers at the Cave Hill Campus strongly dismissed the argument of financial benefits to the cricketers as the main reason for going to South Africa and suggested that the “dignity of the black race” should have taken priority. Maurice Bishop the Grenadian Prime Minister, felt that “the money earned by those touring South Africa should be confiscated and turned over to the African liberation fighters.” The Pan-Africanists called for and supported the life ban placed on the cricketers from representing the West Indies team or their territorial teams.

In 1986, the English cricket team teamed toured the West Indies with four cricketers who had played in South Africa during the English rebel tour of South Africa in 1982. While the tour had the support of the governments it did not have the blessings of the anti-apartheid groups who did not forgive the English cricketers for playing in South Africa. Before the arrival of the English team the anti-apartheid groups had signalled their intention to make the English feel unwelcomed. The English landed in Barbados where they were met by the SALC and other anti-apartheid protesters. This protest set the tone for how the English were going to be treated during the tour. During the test match in Barbados there was a protest led by the Guild of Undergraduates from the University of the West Indies. In Trinidad, the Airport and Allied Workers Union instructed its members not to handle the aircraft bringing the English team to Piarco Airport. The Public Service Association advised the immigration and customs officials not to process the players. There were demonstrations every day of the test match in Trinidad. Protests against the tour also took place in St Vincent, Antigua, and Jamaica and the spectators did not patronize the tour matches as was hoped although the test matches had sizeable crowds.

In 1992, the South African cricket team toured the West Indies after being re-admitted to playing test cricket (last played in 1968). The tour was given the blessings of the Caribbean governments, and Nelson Mandela – the leader of the African National Congress. However, a section of Pan-Africanists in Barbados felt that this cricket match was premature since South African had not yet held multi-racial elections. The South African cricket team was met by protestors at the airport, who expressed their displeasure at seeing a South African cricket team in Barbados while black South Africans could not vote. The test match was played under a cloud of controversy and the spectators boycotted the match to send a message to the selectors. However, a section of the people stayed away from the game in solidarity with the black people of South Africa.
7th Pan-African Congress

In October 1988, Naiwu Osahon, the Nigerian Pan-Africanist, issued the “Call” for Africans to organize themselves into Pan-African organizations with a view of convening a 7th Pan-African Congress in a progressive African state. Many Pan-Africanists across the Caribbean heeded the Call, and created Pan-African Movements. Roosevelt Brown (Pauulu Kamarkafego) who played a major role in the Caribbean Steering Committee in organizing for the 6th Pan-African Congress was selected as the regional coordinator for the Americas.

A regional preparatory meeting was held in Barbados in 1991, with delegates from the: African Friendship Association of Dominica, the Pan-African Movement of St. Lucia, the All African People’s Revolutionary Party of St Croix, the Universal African Improvement Association of Trinidad and Tobago, the 7th Pan-African Congress Committee of Trinidad and Tobago and the Pan-African Movement of Barbados. The conference passed several resolutions namely: the removal of the United States embargo against Cuba, the commitment of the Pan-African Movement to a campaign against the forthcoming celebrations of the Columbus myth in 1992, to re-orient the Pan-African Movement around a non-elitist, mass based, grass roots philosophy and programme and the positive role of the Caribbean Rastafarian Movement as an integral part of the Pan-African struggle. The conference supported the call for “repatriation of Africans desirous of returning to their racial motherland,” and the “right of all Africans to be paid reparations arising out of slavery.”

By the late 1990, the initiative to prepare for the Congress was taken from Osahon and his Lagos group by the Kampala 7th Pan-African Congress initiative. Colonel Kahinda Otafire, a member of the National Resistance Army/Movement was able to secure the backing of the Uganda government to hold the conference. The conference took place in Uganda and the Caribbean was represented by governmental officials and Pan-Africanists like David Comissiong, Bobby Clarke, Rosie Douglas, Joycelynne Loncke and Felipe Noguera.

The Caribbean case for reparations

The demand for reparations, for Caribbean peoples, has been consistently championed by the Pan-African groups in the region. At the 1st Regional Planning meeting in Jamaica for the 6th Pan-African Congress in the Report on Repatriation and Reparations it was recommended:

- That the matter of Repatriation and Reparations be placed on the agenda of the 6th Pan-African Congress as an important question.
- That the 6th Pan-African Congress declare all Africans had the right to repatriate.
- That the question of repatriation be raised with all governments of Africa individually; and that it be raised collectively through the Organization of African Unity with the view to having them declare themselves favourably on this question.
- That a permanent secretariat be set up to deal with the matter of repatriation.
- That the permanent secretariat demand of the imperial powers reparations commensurate with the harm that has been done to Africans all over the world.

The question of reparations was not taken up by the 6th Pan-African Congress. However, in the preparatory meetings for the 7th Pan-African Congress in 1991 resolutions were passed in support of reparations. In 1992 the Organization of African Unity selected a 12-member Group of Eminent Persons to pursue the goal of reparations for Africa. In 1993 the
first Pan-African conference on reparations was held in Abuja, Nigeria. The 7th Pan-African Congress resolution 13 on the Caribbean stated that “reparations for the African holocaust be paid with interest and that pressure be exerted on all quarters to ensure this.”

The Caribbean governments joined with the Pan-Africanists and sought to take the issue to another stage, the Jamaican government established a Task Force on Reparations in 2009. The issue of reparations for “Native Genocide and Slavery,” was examined at the 34th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of CARICOM in July 2013 in Trinidad and Tobago. At this meeting Ralph Gonsalves, the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines suggested that Caricom should “engage the United Kingdom and other formal colonial nations on the matter.” Between 2013 and 2014 most of the territories that are part of Caricom had set up Reparations Task Forces/Committees; “to document the effects of European genocide against the indigenous inhabitants of the region, the slave trade in and the enslavement of Africans, and colonization.”

The heads of these bodies are members of the Caricom Reparations Commission which was established in 2013 by the Caribbean Heads of Governments. This body was mandated to prepare the case for reparatory justice for the region’s indigenous and African descendant communities who are the victims of Crimes against Humanity in the forms of genocide, slavery, slave trading, and racial apartheid. The first Regional Reparations Conference was held in September 2013 in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Caribbean governments are seeking reparations from the governments of Britain, France, and Holland. The Caribbean Reparations Commission notes that the European governments: i) were owners and traders of enslaved Africans, ii) instructed genocidal actions upon indigenous communities, iii) created the legal, financial, and fiscal policies necessary for the enslavement of Africans, iv) defined and enforced African enslavement and native genocide as in their national interests v) refused compensation to the enslaved with the ending of their enslavement, vi) compensated slave owners at emancipation for the loss of legal property rights in enslaved Africans vi) imposed a further 100 years of racial apartheid upon the emancipated, vi) and have refused to acknowledge such crimes or to compensate victims and their descendants.

The Caricom Reparations Commission has presented the governments of Caricom with a ten point action plan that includes: i) full formal apology, ii) repatriation, iii) indigenous people’s development program, iv) cultural institutions, v) public health crisis, vi) illiteracy eradication, vii) African knowledge programs, viii) psychological rehabilitation, ix) technological transfers and x) debt cancellation.

Pan-Africanism in the Caribbean from the period of enslavement to the present moment has been concerned with improving the economic, social, and political condition of African descendants in the Caribbean and their brothers and sisters on the African continent and elsewhere in the world. The Pan-Africanists recognized the value of uniting and building solidarity as they struggle to realize a better world for their children than the one they found. Many of them made great sacrifices in trying to insure the creation of this world. There can be no doubt that the Caribbean Pan-Africanists made an invaluable contribution to Pan-Africanism.

Notes

2 Ibid, 4.
10 Ibid., 55.
11 Ibid., 56.
14 Sherwood, 91.
15 Ibid., 123.
18 Ibid., 113.
19 Ibid., 137.
26 Campbell, Rasta and Resistance, 159.
28 Ibid., 20.
30 CO318/421/5.
31 Weisborg.
32 Ibid.
34 Weisborg, 38.
35 CO318/421/5.
37 Ibid. 28.
43 Ibid, 231.
44 Ibid, 233.
47 Kamarakafego, 193.
48 Kadalie, 323–324.
49 Horace Campbell, Pan-Africanism: The Struggle Against Imperialism and Neo-Colonialism, Documents of the Sixth Pan-African Congress (Toronto, 1974), 155
50 W. Richard Jacobs & Ian Jacobs, Grenada the Route to Revolution (Havana: Casa de las Americas, 1980), 95.
51 Anthony Bogues, “We are an African People’ Anti-Colonial internationalism and black internationalism: Caribbean and Africa solidarities,” Road to Democracy Vol 5 2013, 144–145.
54 Bogues, 146.
58 Ibid, 9.
59 Ibid.
63 “Group raps SA Tour,” Advocate, 13 January 1983.
67 Ibid. 18–21.
70 Ibid.
71 Kadalie, 298.


75 Ibid.