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EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE SUGAR WORKERS AND TO PROVOKE
A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN WORKERS AND THE STATE-
OPERATED SUGAR CORPORATION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WARNING: INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE.
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COUNTRY: JAMAICA
SUBJECT: WORKER'S PARTY OF JAMAICA EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE SUGAR WORKERS AND TO PROVOKE A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN WORKERS AND THE STATE-OPERATED SUGAR CORPORATION

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TEXT: 1. [redacted]

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ACTIVISTS OF THE COMMUNIST WORKER'S PARTY OF JAMAICA (WPJ) WERE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN A CAMPAIGN TO ORGANIZE SUGAR FIELD AND REFINERY WORKERS AND TO PROVOKE A NATION-WIDE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN SUGAR WORKERS AND THE STATE-OPERATED SUGAR CORPORATION.

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IN LATE 1984 WPJ CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER AND PRESIDENT OF THE WPJ-AFFILIATED UNIVERSITY AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION (UAWU) LAMBERT ((BROWN)) TRAVELLED TO HANOVER WITH SEVERAL WPJ ACTIVISTS TO ORGANIZE PARTY CELLS AND TO RECRUIT LOCAL SUGAR WORKERS INTO THE WPJ AND UAWU. FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF INDOCTRINATION, THE LOCAL RECRUITS WERE INSTRUCTED TO BEGIN ORGANIZING SUGAR CANE CUTTERS AND REFINERY FACTORY WORKERS INTO POLITICAL GROUPS TO PROTEST WAGE AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES OF THE STATE-RUN SUGAR CORPORATION. THE LOCAL ORGANIZERS WERE ALSO PROVIDED WPJ-SPONSORED HANDBILLS AND NEWSLETTERS DECRYING THE PLIGHT OF THE SUGAR WORKER IN AN ATTEMPT TO GENERATE SUPPORT FOR A HALT TO THE WINTER SUGAR CANE HARVEST PENDING GOVERNMENT WAGE AND EMPLOYMENT CONCESSIONS.

2. SIMILAR EFFORTS WERE UNDERTAKEN BY WPJ ACTIVISTS IN OTHER SUGAR-PRODUCING PARISHES, INCLUDING ST. JAMES, TRELAWNY, AND ST. THOMAS. IN TRELAWNY, WPJ PERSONNEL SUCCESSFULLY RECRUITED THE LOCAL NATIONAL WORKERS' UNION (NWU) CHIEF DELEGATE FOR THE SUGAR INDUSTRY, PERSUADING HIM TO AGREE TO ORGANIZE WORKERS ON BEHALF OF THE UAWU AND WPJ.

3. ON 3 DECEMBER THE UAWU SUBMITTED A LETTER TO THE MINISTRY OF LABOR CLAIMING THAT SUGAR WORKERS WERE NOT BEING ADEQUATELY REPRESENTED BY THE NWU AND THE BUSTAMENTE INDUSTRIAL TRADE UNION (BITU), THE TWO UNIONS DESIGNATED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO REPRESENT LABOR IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY. THE LETTER REQUESTED THE MINISTRY TO DESIGNATE THE UAWU AS OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR LABOR ON SEVERAL SUGAR ESTATES. THE LIFTER WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A PETITION, SIGNED BY SEVERAL HUNDRED SUGAR WORKERS, REQUESTING THAT THE UAWU REPRESENT THEIR INTERESTS IN DEALINGS WITH MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES. ON 27 DECEMBER, THE WPJ FORWARDED COPIES OF THE LETTER TO SELECTED JOURNALISTS WITH A NOTE EXPLAINING THAT THE MINISTRY OF LABOR HAD NOT SEEN FIT TO REPLY TO THE UAWU'S REQUEST AND REQUESTING NEWS COVERAGE OF THE ISSUE.

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COMMENT: THE NOTE DID NOT, HOWEVER, RECORD THE FACT THAT BIDS FOR REPRESENTATION OF SUGAR WORKERS HAD BEEN CLOSED SINCE OCTOBER 1984 NOR DID IT REPORT THAT A PREVIOUS UAWU BID TO OBTAIN REPRESENTATIONAL RIGHTS FOR SUGAR WORKERS WAS DENIED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN 1980.)

4. [redacted] COMMENT: [redacted]

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THE WPJ AND ITS AFFILIATED UAWU HAVE UNDERTAKEN A COORDINATED, AND HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN TO INSTIGATE A MAJOR CONFRONTATION BETWEEN SUGAR WORKERS AND THE GOVERNMENT-RUN SUGAR ESTATES. NWU AND BITU DELEGATES AND UNION REPRESENTATIVES ARE BEING INCREASINGLY REPUDIATED BY SUGAR WORKERS, WHO CLAIM THAT THE UNIONS ARE NOT EFFECTIVELY REPRESENTING WORKERS' INTERESTS TO MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES. [redacted] EXPRESSED THEIR DOUBTS THAT THEIR UNIONS WOULD BE ABLE TO REGAIN CONTROL OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY WORKERS AND SAID THAT THEY FEARED A WPJ-INSTIGATED CONFRONTATION IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN EARLY 1985.)

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WARNING: REPORT CLASS ~~SECRET~~--WARNING NOTICE-- INTELLIGENCE SOURCES OR METHODS INVOLVED--NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS [redacted]

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