



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Memphis, Tennessee  
November 23, 1968

Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

RE: BLACK ORGANIZING PROJECT;  
RACIAL MATTERS

On November 21, 1968, a first and second source advised that LeMoyne-Owen College, 825 Walker Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee, a Negro institution, has approximately 625 students. This is a private school and that prior to November 21, 1968, there had been no student disturbances at the school during the 1968-69 school year.

Sources advised that during the week ending November 15, 1968, LeMoyne had "Inquiry Week" bringing in a series of outside speakers to discuss current issues of the day and that on November 15, 1968, Colby Vernon Smith, one of the original founders of the Black Organizing Project (BOP), Memphis, Tennessee, a characterization of which is attached hereto, told the students they were not doing enough and that they should initiate some action to assert their independence of the school administration.

Beginning during the week commencing November 18, 1968, some of the older students had presented a series of demands to President Hollis F. Price, Owen-LeMoyne College, seeking better food in the school cafeteria, cheaper food prices, more off campus activities to be permitted on campus, and a greater student participation in the overall operation of the school.

These sources advised that beginning November 21, 1968, some of the students began a mild protest whereby they would take turns sitting in the halls of Brownlee Hall, the main administration building, and that many of them would come in and sit in the unoccupied chairs of the reception room of Dr. Price's office. No physical interference or disruptive tactics transpired on November 21, 1968, until in the early afternoon thereof, Lance "Sweet Willie Wine" Watson, current leader of the Invaders, a cell of the BOP, came to the campus in an effort to inject the Invaders into the student unrest.

On November 22, 1968, sources one and two as well as sources three and four all advised that they had

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since learned that on November 21, 1968, that Watson called a meeting of the students and that some of the students saw fit to meet with him and that when one of the students, since identified as Robert Carter, commented that he did not want to hear that "crazy" Watson talk that one of Watson's Invader associates, identity not known, described as wearing a beret and a gold ear ring, pulled a pistol on Carter threatening him with physical injury if he did not attend the meeting.

Sources advised that this information later got to Dr. Hollis F. Price and that the lad with the Invaders who pulled the pistol bragged to Dr. Price that he had been the one who pointed the pistol at one of Dr. Price's students.

All four sources advised that no charges have been placed against this person and that, thus far, the LeMoyne officials feel that they can handle the situation without calling in the assistance of the Memphis Police Department.

On November 22, 1968, a fifth source advised that it had been reliably learned that the Invader who pulled the pistol on Robert Carter was Robert Lee Wilson, also known as "Corn Bread," born August 7, 1949, Memphis, Tennessee; parent, R. L. Wilson; residence, 139 West Fields, Memphis.

On November 22, 1968, Professor R. B. Thompson, Carver High School, Memphis, Tennessee, advised that Robert Lee Wilson had entered Carver on August 30, 1962, and had been dismissed from school during the school year of 1965-66 due to the fact that he kicked a teacher in the groin.

Later on November 22, 1968, source five advised that he had learned that Lance Watson and some of his Invader associates were going back to LeMoyne to create a disturbance.

On the afternoon of November 22, 1968, sources one and five advised that Watson and some of his followers had gone to LeMoyne, some having wooden sticks or billyclubs

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in their possession, to the student center stating that they were seeking Robert Carter and were going to "whip" him because he had dared "finger" "Corn Bread" to Dr. Price. Source five and source one later advised that nothing transpired as a result of this visit by Watson and his group.

On first learning of this information, it was immediately disseminated to Lt. E. H. Arkin, Intelligence Bureau, Memphis Police Department, who later on the afternoon of November 22, 1968, advised that he had checked the area upon receiving the information and had seen Watson and one of his associates leaving the general area of the LeMoyne campus and that to date no calls for assistance had been received by the Memphis Police Department on behalf of any of the LeMoyne personnel.

On November 22, 1968, source four advised that a meeting of the LeMoyne-Owen Alumni was to be held on the night of November 22, 1968, and that some of the LeMoyne students planned to picket this meeting and after the termination of the meeting wanted to meet with the alumni to present some of their demands hoping that the influence of the alumni would prevail upon the administration to accede thereto. This information was also furnished to Lt. Arkin upon receipt.

Also this information was disseminated to William Bray of the 111th Military Intelligence Group, Third Army, Memphis, Tennessee.



BLACK ORGANIZING PROJECT (BOP),  
Also known as Black Organizing Power,  
Afro-American Brotherhood,  
Black Student Association,  
Invaders,  
LeMoyné Intercollegiate Chapter of the  
National Association for the Advancement  
of Colored People (NAACP),  
City Organizers

On April 18, 1968, a first source advised that a black power group in Memphis which has been in existence for several months has until recently been known as Black Organizing Power. It is now known as Black Organizing Project (BOP), also known as Black Organizing Power, with five cells or parts, known as (1) Afro-American Brotherhood (AAB), primarily consisting of Owen College students; (2) Black Student Association (BSA), primarily consisting of Memphis State University (MSU) Negro students; (3) LeMoyné Intercollegiate Chapter of the NAACP, consisting of LeMoyné College students; (4) the Invaders, consisting mostly of high school dropouts; and (5) the City Organizers, comprised of young adults.

AAB has about 12 members; BSA has about 20 members; the Invaders has about 15 members; the LeMoyné group has about 20 members; and the City Organizers has about 20 members.

Source one advised that the BOP attempts to create pride in black identity, attempts to teach and promote the teaching of Negro history, and to promote black culture and obtain more employment for young Negroes.

The Executive Secretary of BOP is Charles Laverne Cabbage.

On February 16, 1968, Charles Laverne Cabbage personally acknowledged being leader of BOP, claiming he is the impetus of black power in Memphis, Tennessee, and that BOP's purpose is to stimulate in the young Negroes a sense of black identity, black pride, and black consciousness. He said his group follows the teachings of Student Nonviolent

Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leaders H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael but that BOP did not necessarily exist as a formal SNCC unit. CABBAGE further admitted he had made statements such as "Memphis should be burned" and "Memphis should have a good race riot," but claimed he did not mean these statements literally, merely endeavoring to shock the community into doing something to help the black race.

On February 27, 1968, a second source advised that at a public meeting on February 26, 1968, the BOP Chairman John Burrell Smith told a Negro audience, "We've got to do some fighting," and "You'd better get some guns. You're going to need them before this is over. You can't pray your way out."

On June 6, 1968, the second source advised that BOP primarily consists of about 30 to 35 young college and high school students and school dropouts, unemployed and not looking for work, who continually preach hatred of the white race and capitalistic economic system and advocating and predicting violence by blacks. The over-all plan of BOP, according to source two, is to scare the Memphis community leaders, both black and white, into fearing black militancy. The BOP leaders then hope to convince the community to fund them as a form of subtle blackmail whereby BOP can prevent racial violence. Source two said that BOP is more interested in publicity and money than in direct action, but is nevertheless preaching violence in an effort to scare the community.





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Title                   BLACK ORGANIZING PROJECT

Character               RACIAL MATTERS

Reference               Memorandum prepared at  
                          Memphis, Tennessee, on  
                          November 23, 1968,  
                          captioned as above.

All sources (except any listed below) whose identities  
are concealed in referenced communication have furnished reliable  
information in the past.