

CONFIDENTIAL.

3 February, 1919.

From: Governor, Virgin Islands.
To : Secretary of the Navy.
Via : Director of Naval Intelligence.

Subject: Inquiry regarding certain actions of military forces.

Reference: (a) Letter of Director of Naval Intelligence
No. 21076-7317/A-5HFK:MB, dated January 16,
1919.

Enclosures: (9). Marked "a" to "i" inclusive.

1. In accordance with the request contained in reference (a), I have to report that Christmas Eve in St. Thomas has always been a very lively night. From about six o'clock p.m. until after midnight the streets are crowded with people, some shopping and others taking part in the amusements incidental to such an occasion. During such times the people throw confetti and flour at each other and burn fireworks. The worst element of the colored population is always out and the Policemaster reports that on Christmas Eve each year there are several, more or less, serious street fights. The negroes seem to prefer this night for the settlement of all their old disagreements.

2. During last Christmas Eve street fights took place between some of the marines stationed at St. Thomas with sailors from the U.S.S. Baltimore on one side and some of the colored population on the other. The affair was considered of very little importance as the only person that received more than a bruise was a negro who, upon attempting to assault the Magistrate of the Civil Government, was badly beaten up by native policemen, which necessitated his being taken to the local hospital. Much to the surprise of the officials here, fighting again took place on Christmas Night, and stones were thrown by both enlisted personnel and natives. As soon as this was brought to the attention of the commanding officers they immediately took steps to prevent a recurrence and there has been no trouble of this nature since that time. Statements have been made that the marines and sailors planned the assault upon the negroes, but investigation fails to substantiate these statements and they are believed to be untrue. Generally speaking the St. Thomas negro is a very peaceable citizen but it does not take much to arouse him if he feels that he has been wronged,

and unfortunately there are agitators constantly at work trying to make him dissatisfied with his position.

3. At the same time that the open letter referred to in reference (a) was delivered at the Government House, it was also sent to the news papers in the Virgin Islands, to Porto Rico, and to the United States for publication. This Government has taken every step possible to safeguard the interests of the inhabitants of these islands, and there has been no further disturbance of any kind, nevertheless, copies of the letter are still being distributed as is shown in enclosure (a).

4. The open letter was of such a character, so uncalled for and unwarranted, that I did not reply to it.

5. I have had an investigation made of the character and reputation of those who signed this letter which is summarized as follows:-

5a. Rothschild Francis is a sort of half-witted negro who is president of the "Eureka Orchestra Club" and the vice president of what is known as the "American Historical Research Circle of the Virgin Islands". He was originally a shoemaker but now does no work at that trade and is apparently without an occupation. He is a negro politician and is constantly causing agitation amongst the ignorant class of inhabitants, but is not taken seriously by others. About a year ago he was fined in the police court for writing libelous remarks on a blackboard and exposing same outside of his shop. Enclosure (b) gives a copy of some of his writings. An example of the character of the person can be seen from enclosure (c), which is a copy of a letter that has recently been received by the Postmaster from Wheaton College, in which Rothschild Francis misrepresents himself in order to get publications free of charge.

5b. Octavius C. Granady is a negro who arrived at St. Thomas shortly before these islands were taken over by the United States. He obtained a license from the Government to practice law, but in December, 1917, this license was cancelled at the request of the Court because he had in many cases defrauded the native population and was taking exhorbi-

tant fees for his legal advice. In May, 1918, an anonymous letter (see enclosure "d") was forwarded to this Government by the Director of Naval Intelligence. Upon investigation it was found that this letter was written by (Miss A. C. Burnet) a young colored girl who acted as Granady's clerk, and who in July, 1918, gave birth to a child, of which he is the father. Before the letter was received, she had left the island. Many things indicate that Granady was the real author of the letter and an investigation was commenced against him, but because the testimony of the girl could not be had, it was not possible to prove his authorship. During this investigation the court arrived at the opinion that Granady was demented and caused him to be examined by the Chief Municipal Physician, a copy of whose statement is attached as enclosure (e). Enclosures (f) and (g) are copies of other letters which he has sent to persons in the United States. Since the license to practice law was taken away from Granady he has had no visible means of support. At the present time he is living with a black girl in a room for which he pays \$2.00 per month. The Policemaster reports that he has considerable and bad influence with the lower classes of the colored population and has succeeded in making them believe that the United States Government is not treating him and them fairly. He preaches antagonism between the whites and blacks, although the color question was practically unknown before the transfer of these islands to the United States, and in this way has succeeded in working up a strong feeling amongst the negro population. It seems to be the general opinion that Granady was the person who drafted the open letter.

5c. Charles A. Emanuel is a negro employed in the printing office of the "Bulletin", a local news paper. He is a very young man but has, for several years, been writing poetry and political articles for said paper. He is reported to have been dissatisfied with the Danish Government and seems now to have the same feeling against the Government of the United States. He has twice been reported to the police office for obtaining money under false pretenses, but managed, on both occasions, to pay back the money and have the complaints withdrawn.

5d. Randolph A. Innis is a negro without occupation, and is always with Rothschild Francis. He was formerly employed as an extra mail carrier during Christmas times and occasionally as a hotel waiter.

6. There are other agitators here that are far more troublesome than those who signed the open letter addressed to me, but until the Armistice was signed they were rather careful not to go too far. Since then, however, they have become more bold and in St. Thomas are now causing much dissatisfaction by agitating the question of their citizenship status and the rights of the native born to govern themselves. In this they are injecting the race question but carefully refrain from writing anything on the subject. Amongst these are James C. Roberts, the negro editor of the "Bulletin", a news paper published in St. Thomas, and one of his backers, a negro by the name of August Burnet. Both are members of the Colonial Council of the Municipality of St. Thomas and St. John and both are consistently against the Government in every constructive measure that is presented to that body for its consideration.

6a. James C. Roberts is one of the very few natives who retained Danish Citizenship. He was originally a school teacher and until about four years ago was headmaster of the "St. Thomas High School". The Government helped this school in many ways, but Roberts neglected it and finally had to give it up when all of his pupils left him. Since that time and until about the first of January, when he became editor of the "Bulletin" he has worked only now and then acting as an unauthorized lawyer, writing out complaints and petitions for ignorant natives. He was a member of the Commission which the Colonial Council sent to Denmark in 1916 regarding the sale question, and he worked strongly for the sale. The Socialist Party in Denmark made much of him, taking him out to lunches, dinners, and meetings of all kinds. This has evidently gone to his head and it seems that he was quite certain that the American Government would at once offer him an easy and lucrative position. He has not, as yet, recovered from his disappointment at not receiving the consideration to which he felt entitled. The Policemaster informs me that about twelve or fourteen years ago Roberts had an affair with a minor girl at the school where he was teaching and narrowly escaped

being placed on trial for rape. He is now married to a respectable woman, but is living in open concubinage with another woman, a prostitute, by the name of Consuela Hassel. Enclosures (h) and (i) contain copies of a police case filed against him and of a complaint received by the police office concerning the above named prostitute.

6b. August Burnet is reported to have been violent in his opposition to the Danish Government in the same way in which he now opposes this Government. Until a few years ago he was the Honorary Consul of Santo Domingo, and it was rumored that he lost his position because he charged consular fees for his own benefit which he had no right to take. In a recent investigation by the Government Secretary regarding certain loans, it was found that Burnet, acting as an unlicensed attorney, had been guilty of sharp practice and was preying upon the old and feeble.

7. It seems to be the opinion of some of the local officials that the attacks upon the Government should be taken as preparations for the general elections which take place in April to elect members of the Colonial Council, at which time the blacks hope to eliminate all white men.

8. In the Island of St. Croix trouble is again brewing between the laborers and the planters. It has been rumored that a strike will be called soon, but the Government Officials still take an optimistic view of the situation. Most of the trouble on that island is caused by a negro named D. Hamilton Jackson, who has since forming a labor union been instrumental in causing a great deal of unrest amongst the natives. In a recent investigation of a bank which he started in connection with the Labor Union, it was found to be insolvent, whereupon it was immediately closed, and Jackson should have been prosecuted, but this could not be done according to local law without someone making a complaint. This his followers refused to do, preferring to stand by him in his crookedness.

9. It has been the policy of this Government carefully to avoid any action that would antagonize the natives in any way. However, in spite of this, statements are now being made that are detrimental to the United States, but whether or not these are actionable can only be determined by considerable research into the Danish laws. In this connection I refer you to recommendations contained in my

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letter of November 15, 1918, for until this Government is able to obtain a legally trained official or money for the employment of a civilian as Government Attorney on St. Thomas, it will be sadly handicapped and unable to handle such conditions satisfactorily. While there are officers on this station who have studied law, they are so occupied with other duties they are not available for this work.

10. It must be borne in mind that these islands, like the Isthmus of Panama, are a nest and focus of intrigue and although it has not been possible, up to this time, to connect any of the disturbances that have occurred with German propaganda, it is considered not unlikely that they have such connection. Furthermore, up to this time, no copies of sedition or other laws enacted by Congress since war was declared to protect the interests of the United States have been received, and there is no official here familiar with their contents.

11. I, therefore, earnestly recommend that this matter be taken up with the Attorney General and he be requested to send a capable, trusted, and energetic representative here who is familiar with Federal laws, who would be qualified to carry on prosecutions, and who would act directly under the Federal Department.

Governor.