

6/24/78

George Lardner  
Newsroom  
Washington Post  
1150 15 St., NW  
Wash. D.C. 20005

Dear George,

There was another job I had to finish before I could take time to go through the Church Report, Book III, and I had to get a copy of the Hoover O & C record you used in your Wilkins story. So you won't have to go digging a copy of the relevant church pages and of that particular record are both enclosed.

There may be some dispute about what took place at the meeting but there is no basis for any allegation that it was not Wilkins, as the Report makes clear (162).

There remains another question, there being little chance of reconciling the conflicting version and no chance of defending the accuracy of the FBI's self-serving paper. How far from Wilkins' expressed views is the FBI's representation of them?

My impression is that any distinction lacks meaning.

If you want to carry this farther, there having been an attack on you and on the Post, as I believe I suggested, have one of your researchers go over some of the King biographies. I believe that one called King, a Critical Biography, by a professor named Lewis, then at Morgan State, holds the expression of views similar to those set forth in the FBI's memo(s).

The "Establishmentarian" blacks all held pretty much that view.

Now that Hoover is safely dead and Nixon is no longer president some of these formerly yellow blacks have found voice about King's death and the present Lane campaign for a new trial, so called, for Ray. But there is not a one of them who would help when there was a court ordered hearing to determine whether Ray would get a trial. I mean without any exception. And from Mrs. King and Abernathy, I made direct and indirect efforts with all, as Bud did with Mrs. King and Wachtel. And as I did with Wachtel on several occasions. On the first I never got past the reception desk. Jim also sent him the briefs, I think after going to New York and speaking to him.

The committee may have let most of its investigators go but it is still "investigating." On 6/22 in the St. Louis area it questioned an old girl friend of Jerry Ray's along a line the FBI tried years ago, was he involved in bank robberies? And was she the wheel woman? There are I think two committee people, one named Waxman.

Amazing how broke the Rays were and are for all those bank jobs.

John did slug a marshal. Hearing probably week after next. Jim will know.

Sincerely,

Date: December 1, 1964  
To: Mr. W. C. Sullivan  
From: J. A. Sizoo  
Subject: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Mr. Conrad   | _____ |
| Mr. DeLoach  | _____ |
| Mr. Mohr     | _____ |
| Mr. Bishop   | _____ |
| Mr. Casper   | _____ |
| Mr. Callahan | _____ |
| Mr. Conrad   | _____ |
| Mr. Felt     | _____ |
| Mr. Gale     | _____ |
| Mr. Rosen    | _____ |
| Mr. Sullivan | _____ |
| Mr. Tavel    | _____ |
| Mr. Trotter  | _____ |
| Tele. Room   | _____ |
| Miss Holmes  | _____ |
| Miss Gandy   | _____ |

Reference is made to the attached memorandum DeLoach to Mohr dated 11/27/64 concerning DeLoach's interview with [redacted] and to your informal memo, also attached.

[redacted] stated to DeLoach that he was faced with the difficult problem of taking steps to remove King from the national picture. He indicates in his comments a lack of confidence that he, alone, could be successful. It is, therefore, suggested that consideration be given to the following course of action:

That DeLoach have a further discussion with [redacted] and offer to be helpful to [redacted] in connection with the problem of the removal of King from the national scene;

That DeLoach suggest that [redacted] might desire to call a meeting of Negro leaders in the country which might include, for instance, 2 or 3 top leaders in the civil rights movement such as James Farmer and A. Philip Randolph; 2 or 3 top Negro judges such as Judge Parsons and Judge Hasty; 2 or 3 top reputable ministers such as Robert Johnson, Moderator of the Washington City Presbytery; 2 or 3 other selected Negro officials from public life such as the Negro Attorney General from one of the New England states. These men could be called for the purpose of learning the facts as to the Bureau's performance in the fulfillment of its responsibilities under the Civil Rights statute, and this could well be done at such a meeting. In addition, the Bureau, on a highly confidential basis, could brief such a group on the security background of King [redacted]. ~~The use of a tape, such as contemplated in your memorandum, together with a transcript for convenience in following the tape, should be most convincing.~~

The inclusion of U.S. Government officials, such as Carl Rowan or Ralph Dunche, is not suggested as they might feel a duty to advise the White House of such a contemplated meeting. It is believed this would give us an opportunity to outline to a group of influential Negro leaders what our record in the enforcement of civil rights has been. It would also give them, on a confidential

jas/mls

enclosures

(CONTINUED - OVER)

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Memo to Mr. Sullivan  
RE: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

basis, information concerning King which would convince them of the danger of King to the over-all civil rights movement. [REDACTED] is already well aware of this. This group should include such leadership as would be capable of removing King from the scene if they, of their own volition, decided this was the thing to do after such a briefing. The group should include strong enough men to control a man like James Farmer and make him see the light of day. This might have the effect of increasing the stature of [REDACTED] who is a capable person and is ambitious.

There are refinements which, of course, could be added to the above which is set forth in outline form for possible consideration.

*wey*

*D. Roy Wilkins of NAACP meets with DeLoach to discuss allegations about Dr. King: November 27, 1964*

On November 24, 1964, Director Hoover gave a speech at Loyola University in Chicago in which he referred to moral laxness in civil rights group. On November 27, Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of NAACP, phoned DeLoach and requested a meeting. Wilkins told the Committee that he had been disturbed by Hoover's Loyola University speech a few days before, and that he had realized Hoover had been referring to Dr. King because of rumors then circulating that the FBI had developed "derogatory" material about Dr. King. Wilkins was spurred into meeting with DeLoach by pointed inquiries from several reporters about whether Director Hoover's remarks had been directed toward Dr. King. Wilkins described his motivation in requesting the meeting as "protecting the civil rights movement." He said that Dr. King did not learn of his meeting with DeLoach until over a week after it had occurred.<sup>357</sup>

DeLoach and Wilkins have given the Committee differing accounts of what was said at their meeting. DeLoach's version is summarized in a letter that he sent to President Johnson on November 30, 1964:

Wilkins said that . . . the ruination of King would spell the downfall of the entire civil rights movement . . . Wilkins indicated that [if allegations concerning King's personal conduct and supposed connections with communists were publicized], many of his Negro associates would rise to his defense. He felt, however, that many white people who believe in the civil rights movement and who yearly contribute from \$500 to \$50,000 to this movement would immediately cease their financial support. This loss, coupled with the loss of faith in King by millions of Americans, would halt any further progress of the civil rights movement.<sup>358</sup>

A memorandum by DeLoach written shortly after the meeting states:

I told him . . . that if King wanted war we certainly would give it to him. Wilkins shook his head and stated there was no doubt in his mind as to which side would lose if the FBI really came out with all its ammunition against King. I told him the ammunition was plentiful and that while we were not responsible for the many rumors being initiated against King, we had heard of these rumors and were certainly in a position to substantiate them.<sup>359</sup>

DeLoach's memorandum stated that the meeting had concluded with Wilkins' promise to "tell King that he can't win in a battle with the FBI and that the best thing for him to do is to retire from public life."<sup>360</sup> Wilkins told the Committee that DeLoach's description of the meeting was "self-serving and filled with inaccuracies" and denied DeLoach's description of his remarks as "pure invention."<sup>360</sup> Wilkins stated that he had expressed his concern that accusations about Dr. King would cripple the civil rights movement, noting that if charges

were publicly levied against Dr. King, the black community would side with Dr. King and the white community with Director Hoover. Wilkins said that he advised DeLoach that the FBI should not over-react to Dr. King's criticisms and that he considered Dr. King's criticism of the FBI's failure to vigorously enforce the civil rights laws to be totally justified. Wilkins told the Committee that although he had considered the meeting a "success" at the time, after reading DeLoach's memorandum he realized that he had failed to convey the impression that he had intended, since DeLoach had clearly misinterpreted his remarks.<sup>361</sup>

When DeLoach was asked by the Committee if the "ammunition" he had threatened to use against Dr. King was the tape recordings, DeLoach replied, "I don't know what I had in mind, frankly, it's been so long ago, I can't recall."<sup>362</sup> Wilkins did not remember DeLoach's use of the term "ammunition," but did recall that DeLoach frequently alluded to "derogatory information," although Wilkins was unclear whether DeLoach was referring to allegations about Dr. King's personal conduct or about Communist infiltration of the SCLC.<sup>363</sup>

The following day, an official of the Domestic Intelligence Division proposed to William Sullivan, head of the Division, that several leading members of the Black community should be briefed about Dr. King by the FBI "on a highly confidential basis." It was proposed that "the use of a tape, such as contemplated in your memorandum, together with a transcript for convenience in following the tape," should be used.

"The inclusion of U.S. Government officials, such as Carl Rowan or Ralph Bunch, is not suggested as they might feel a duty to advise the White House of such contemplated meeting. . . . This group should include such leadership as would be capable of removing King from the scene if they, of their own volition, decided this was the thing to do after such a briefing."<sup>364</sup>

*E. Dr. King and Director Hoover Meet: December 1, 1964*

According to one of Dr. King's legal counsels, Harry Wachtel, several prominent civil rights leaders told Dr. King of their concern that public controversy with Director Hoover would hurt the civil rights movement, but promised to support Dr. King should such a confrontation occur. Wachtel recalled that Dr. King and his staff pondered to defuse this and prevent it from becoming the principal focus of the struggle. Hoover versus King,<sup>365</sup> which "could only have lead to a division and thus a dilution of the growing strength of the civil rights movement." Wachtel testified:

Everything pointed toward the problem of how Hoover would respond if Dr. King said in effect, "you're a liar; prove your case. If you call me a liar, prove it." Every lawyer worth his salt knows this is the beginning of the Alger Hiss type of dilemma. Libel and slander litigation or public debate of

<sup>357</sup> Staff summary, Roy Wilkins interview, 11/23/75, p. 1.

<sup>358</sup> Letter, Hoover to President, 11/30/64.

<sup>359</sup> Memorandum from Cartha DeLoach to John Mohr, 11/27/64, p. 2.

<sup>360</sup> Wilkins staff summary, 11/23/75, p. 2.

<sup>361</sup> Wilkins (staff summary), 11/23/75, p. 2.

<sup>362</sup> Cartha DeLoach testimony, 11/25/75, p. 173.

<sup>363</sup> Wilkins (staff summary), 11/23/75, p. 2.

<sup>364</sup> Memorandum from J. A. Sizoo to W. C. Sullivan, 12/1/64.)