

King assassination records appeals Harold Weisberg 4/26/80
Withholding by not searching proper files and by not filing by subject
"Crime Records" Division - files not searched; function
law enforcement purpose - there was none
continued FBI stonewalling, assisted by failure to act on timely appeals

Attached are three records not provided in C.A. 75-1996. They pertain to the Memphis sanitation workers strike, which is a specific item of my requests, and to the FBI's campaign against Dr. King.

These were provided by the FBI under date of 10/16/78 (letter attached), which led to an appeal by a copy of my response of 10/22/78 to the FBI (copy attached).

There was confusion in my C.A. 75-1996 requests pertaining to political files, so to resolve that I filed a separate request. The FBI acknowledges this in its second paragraph, "...processing your request for the security(sic) files on Dr. King." My second paragraph includes the appeal.

That request still has not been complied with. I have appealed this repeatedly, without response. There is no claimed backlog of more than three years. This is plain stonewalling.

One of the items of my C.A. 75-1996 requests is for the results of re-investigations. The last paragraph on page one of my appeal refers to one such reinvestigation. It again requests those results. These records still have not been provided and the appeal has not been acted upon. Again, this is stonewalling.

For FOIA exemptions to be applicable there must be a law enforcement purpose or a legitimate national security investigation. The attached records are among the proofs that there were no such purposes, although the FBI, particularly the Director, pretended there was a national security interest in Dr. King. There is no claim to any law enforcement purpose.

Although the FBI did not inform me of the source of these records, they appear to have come from Hoover's personal files. They bear regular file numbers and could also be retrieved by means of these regular numbers.

The sanitation strike record, rather than having been filed by that title and

number, was captioned "COMMUNIST INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM; BLACK NATIONALIST HATE GROUPS; RACIAL INTELLIGENCE (MARTIN LUTHER KING)." It is a Comintelpro proposal but it is without reference to any black nationalism, which the strike was not in any event, and it neither holds nor pertains to any information relating to "racial intelligence." It is, simply, a proposal to embarrass Dr. King by false propaganda, by the FBI putting out an untruthful story about him and the strike. Obviously, there is no law enforcement purpose in this, nor any effort to obtain legitimate national security information.

The proposal establishes, as I have alleged over and over again, the function of "Crime Records" as it pertains to my request for information provided to other writers. The dishonest and inaccurate attached "blind memorandum" is to "be furnished a cooperative news media source by the Crime Records Division for an item showing King is a hypocrite. This will be done on a highly confidential basis." (100-448006-93)

The opening statement in 100-3-116-684 is "In view of the influence the Communist Party, USA (CPUSA) is exerting/en the racial situation, particularly through Martin Luther King..." Whether or not the FBI had any honest or rational reason for believing this at the time Sullivan prepared this record, 12/24/63, it has since been proven, by the FBI's own records and by other means, to be false. Sullivan himself said it was false, in his book and in memos to which Hoover refers in the note added to the third record, 77-56944-19. As of the time of the processing of these records and for years before then this was known as an untruthful representation. (This is from the third record.) There clearly was no legitimate national security investigation. This is explicit in the first sentence remaining after the opening excisions for which (b)(1) is claimed: "When the facts concerning his activities are presented, such should be enough, if handled properly, to take him off his pedestal and to reduce him completely in influence ...and ~~will~~ no longer will be deceiving and misleading the Negro people."

The first record reports a conference at "the Seat of Government" between Sullivan and his honchos and two Atlanta SAs who were working on Dr. King. (The withheld names are public domain.)

What "the men from the field outlined in detail" is none of the FBI's business, has nothing to do with law enforcement or national security and is "the operation of the SCLC in Atlanta and the manner in which it is managed by King."

The six points of "Additional information" Sullivan said "we need to develop" likewise include no law enforcement or national security matters. The FBI is to "check out all of the employees of the SCLC," to "locate and monitor the funds of the SCLC" and "identify and check out the sources who contribute to the SCLC" so that "at the proper time when it can be done without embarrassment to the Bureau, expose King as an immoral opportunist who is not a sincere person but is exploiting the racial situation for personal gain." The FBI also "must continue to keep close watch on King's personal activities" and "explore the possibility of utilizing additional specialized investigative techniques at the SCLC office."

While it claims that "Our technical coverage on King and the SCLC is producing excellent information," it does not claim that the information is of national security or law enforcement nature and, rather than being "excellent" as he saw it, the Attorney General found the opposite and refused to extend permission to continue the wire tapping. (The FBI was bugging without asking or getting authority.)

Whatever "ACTION" Hoover approved is withheld under (b)(1) claim. Assuming it is not public domain, it is not within the exemption because there was neither of the required purposes.

There is no such purpose in the third record, either. It is the one in which, fearing getting his head chopped off, Sullivan ate crow. It is his proposal for the FBI's selection of a "black messiah" to replace King.

After the bit about knocking King off the pedestal Sullivan admitted that while "On first blush I know it can be said that it is not the concern of the Bureau what happens to the Negroes when Martin Luther King has been discredited," this "is a very shortsighted view." (He feared some might be attracted to the Muslims.) So, "It would be most helpful to have a man (obliterated) leading the Negroes ^{to whom} ~~whom~~ we could go, if necessary..."

Having its own "black messiah" would be "a great help to the FBI" and "a fine thing/for the country at large," Sullivan said.

The addendum is entirely withheld under (7)(C) claim. However, if the FBI wants to withhold the name of its candidate for black messiah, that does not mean that the rest is not reasonably segregable. This is important information. There is considerable public interest in it.

The addendum need not pertain to the black messiah candidate, however, because it follows the recommendation that Sullivan be permitted to "explore this whole matter."

It is followed by Hoover's note, "I'm glad to see that 'light' has finally, though dimly(?), delayed, come to the Domestic Int. Div. ..."

The subject is obliterated under (7)(C) claim. From what is not obliterated, which means from most of the memo, it is apparent that the subject is not appropriate for the number, 77-56944. "77.*" represents "Applicants. (Special Inquiry, Departmental and Other Government Agencies...)" The * represents "Applicant-related Classification."

Perhaps, without my knowing it, there is, amidst all those government job classification, one for "black messiah." However, the record makes clear that (obliterated) is not a candidate. He is no more than the FBI's nominee.

Nor do I know of a job classification for knocking King "off his pedestal and to reduce him completely in influence..." (Strange the FBI did not think of 67, for its own "Personnel Matters" where it has even Jim Garrison records squirreled away.)

The record states it has an attachment, a biography of the non-candidate/nominee. Sullivan wrote on it, "See biography outline enclosed." Nothing is enclosed or attached, and no claim to exemption is made for it. It is merely withheld.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
Memorandum

TO : Mr. A. N. Belmont

DATE: December 24, 1963

FROM : Mr. W. C. Sullivan *wcs*

- 1-Mr. Belmont
- 1-Mr. Sullivan
- 1-Mr. Baumgardner
- 1- [redacted]
- 1- [redacted]

SUBJECT: COMMUNIST PARTY, USA
NEGRO QUESTION
COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN RACIAL MATTERS
INTERNAL SECURITY - COMMUNIST

Tolson _____
 Belmont _____
 Mohr _____
 Casper _____
 Callahan _____
 Conrad _____
 DeLoach _____
 Evans _____
 Gale _____
 Rosen _____
 Sullivan _____
 Tavel _____
 Trotter _____
 Tele. Room _____
 Holmes _____
 Gandy _____

In view of the influence the Communist Party, USA (CPUSA), is exerting on the racial situation, particularly through Martin Luther King, head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Director approved a conference be held between representatives of our Atlanta Office and Seat of Government personnel.

Recognizing the delicacy of this entire situation because of the prominence of King, the primary purpose of the conference was to explore how best to carry on our investigation to produce the desired results without embarrassment to the Bureau. Included in our discussion was a complete analysis of the avenues of approach aimed at neutralizing King as an effective Negro leader and developing evidence concerning King's continued dependence on communists for guidance and direction.

The conference was held at the Seat of Government on 12-23-63. It was attended by Security Supervisor [redacted] and SA [redacted] from our Atlanta Office. The Seat of Government representatives were Assistant Director W. C. Sullivan, Inspector Joseph A. Sizoo, Section Chief F. J. Baumgardner and Supervisors [redacted] and [redacted]. The conference lasted from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Assistant Director Sullivan briefed the conference on the task at hand. He pointed out the necessity for good judgment and discreetness in conducting any investigation concerning this matter. He made it clear it was necessary for us to continue obtaining evidence of the CPUSA's influence on King and, through King, influence on the Negro people. Mr. Sullivan also stressed the fact that, although King is a minister, we have already developed information concerning weaknesses in his character which are of such a nature as to make him unfit to serve as a minister of the gospel.

Mr. Sullivan pointed out that the field should continue to gather information concerning King's personal activities, [redacted]

1 xerox copy given to OPR 8/9/76 JTA/mk

UNRECORDED COPY FILED IN 100-3-116-684

100-3-116
 FJB:skv
 (6)
 Classified by 6010
 Exempt from G. Category
 Date of declassification 11/15/90
 XEROX REC-39

100-3-116-684

57 JAN 13 1964 JAN 8 1964

22 JAN 8 1964

[Handwritten signatures and initials]

Memorandum to Mr. Belmont
RE: COMMUNIST PARTY, USA
NEGRO QUESTION
COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN RACIAL MATTERS
100-3-116

[REDACTED]

(U) b7c

During the discussion which followed, the men from the field outlined in detail the operation of the SCLC in Atlanta and the manner in which it is managed by King. (U)

Our discreet approach to this case has been necessitated by King's prominence and the delicate situation which surrounds the entire racial movement. A wrong move could well result in extreme embarrassment to the Bureau. As a result of the conference, it was decided we need to develop additional information in the following areas: (U)

- (1) We must determine and check out all of the employees of the SCLC.
- (2) We must locate and monitor the funds of the SCLC.
- (3) We must identify and check out the sources who contribute to the SCLC.
- (4) We must continue to keep close watch on King's personal activities.
- (5) We will, at the proper time when it can be done without embarrassment to the Bureau, expose King as an immoral opportunist who is not a sincere person but is exploiting the racial situation for personal gain.
- (6) We will explore the possibility of utilizing additional specialized investigative techniques at the SCLC office.

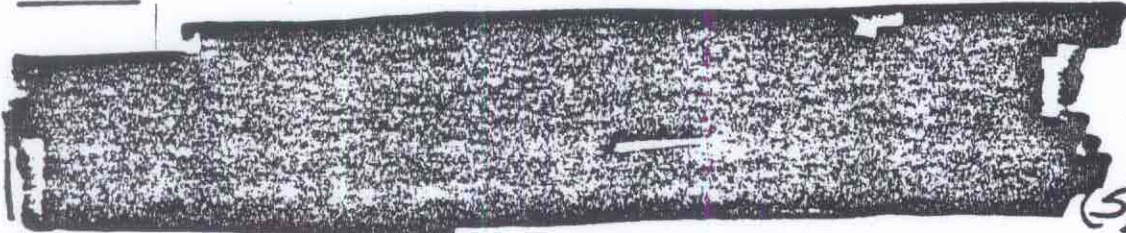
Our technical coverage on King and the SCLC is producing excellent information. It was decided that, in view of this fact and since we could not engage in active investigation at this time without embarrassment to the Bureau, we would hold in abeyance open investigation as outlined above for another 90 days. During this time, we will utilize the information obtained from our technical coverage and conduct whatever investigation can be made discreetly. (U)

Memorandum to Mr. Belmont
RE: COMMUNIST PARTY, USA
NEGRO QUESTION
COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN RACIAL MATTERS
100-3-116

~~Secret~~

This conference proved to be most beneficial, and the men from the field expressed their appreciation for the opportunity of being brought into the Seat of Government for the purpose of exploring this entire matter. They were both enthusiastic about the case and stated the conference was of exceptional benefit to them and will be of assistance in setting the future course of the investigation. (u)

ACTION:



(S) b1

4013 J.P.S.
Jan
G.K. J.H. Web
[Signature]

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Tolson	_____
DeLoach	_____
Mohr	_____
Bishop	_____
Casper	_____
Callahan	_____
Conrad	_____
Felt	_____
Gale	_____
Rosen	_____
Sullivan	_____
Tavel	_____
Trotter	_____
Tele. Room	_____
Holmes	_____
Gandy	_____

TO : Mr. W. C. Sullivan *WCS*

DATE: March 29, 1968

FROM : G. C. Moore *gc*

SUBJECT: COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM
BLACK NATIONALIST - HATE GROUPS
RACIAL INTELLIGENCE
(MARTIN LUTHER KING)

John Lyfbaugh

PURPOSE:

To publicize hypocrisy on the part of Martin Luther King.

BACKGROUND:

Martin Luther King has urged Negroes in Memphis, Tennessee, to boycott white merchants in order to force compliance with Negro demands in the sanitation workers' strike in Memphis.

When violence broke out during the march King led in Memphis on 3-28-68, King disappeared. There is a first class Negro hotel in Memphis, the Hotel Lorraine, but King chose to hide out at the white owned and operated Holiday Inn Motel.

RECOMMENDATION:

The above facts have been included in the attached blind memorandum and it is recommended it be furnished a cooperative news media source by the Crime Records Division for an item showing King is a hypocrite. This will be done on a highly confidential basis.

Enclosure

TJD:ted
(7)

- 1 - Mr. C. D. DeLoach
- 1 - Mr. T. E. Bishop
- 1 - Mr. W. C. Sullivan
- 1 - Mr. G. C. Moore

1 - [REDACTED] *b7c*

REC-20

100-448006-93

PAGE 92

March 29, 1968

DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO

Martin Luther King, during the sanitation workers' strike in Memphis, Tennessee, has urged Negroes to boycott downtown white merchants to achieve Negro demands. On 3-29-68 King led a march for the sanitation workers. Like Judas leading lambs to slaughter King led the marchers to violence, and when the violence broke out, King disappeared. U

The fine Hotel Lorraine in Memphis is owned and patronized exclusively by Negroes but King didn't go there from his hasty exit. Instead King decided the plush Holiday Inn Motel, white owned, operated and almost exclusively white patronized, was the place to "cool it." There will be no boycott of white merchants for King, only for his followers. J

ENCLOSURE

93
PAGE 92

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. A. H. Belmont

DATE: January 8, 1964

FROM : Mr. W. C. Sullivan

SUBJECT:

[REDACTED]

b7c

- 1 - Mr. Belmont
- 1 - Mr. Mohr
- 1 - Mr. DeLoach
- 1 - Mr. Sullivan
- 1 - Mr. J.A. Sizoo
- 1 - Mr. D.E. Moore
- 1 - Mr. D.J. Brennan
- 1 - Mr. R.W. Smith

Handwritten routing slip:
 Tolson _____
 DeLoach _____
 Mohr _____
 Bishop _____
 Casper _____
 Callahan _____
 Conrad _____
 Felt _____
 Gale _____
 Rosen _____
 Sullivan _____
 Tavel _____
 Trotter _____
 Tele. Room _____
 Holmes _____
 Gandy _____

[REDACTED]

b1

[REDACTED]

When the true facts concerning his activities are presented, such should be enough, if handled properly, to take him off his pedestal and to reduce him completely in influence so that he will no longer be a security problem and no longer will be deceiving and misleading the Negro people.

When this is done, and it can be and will be done, obviously much confusion will reign, particularly among the Negro people. There will be embarrassment, frustration, confusion, resentment, et cetera. Because of this and the emotional reaction that will set in, it is not unlikely that movements like the Nation of Islam could benefit greatly. Further, other ridiculous developments similar to the Old Father Divine and Daddy Grace organizations may appear. The Negroes will be left without a national leader of sufficiently compelling personality to steer them in the proper direction. This is what could happen, but need not happen if the right kind of a national Negro leader could at this time be gradually developed so as to overshadow Dr. King and be in the position to assume the pole of the leadership of the Negro people when King has been completely discredited.

PAGE 77

REC 55 77-56944-19

JAN 22 1964

VCS:djw

ENCLOSURE

JAN 22 1964

100-3-116
CORDED COPY FILED

Memorandum for Mr. Belmont

RE: [REDACTED] b7C

For some months I have been thinking about this matter. One day I had an opportunity to explore this from a philosophical and sociological standpoint with [REDACTED] whom I have known for some years. As I previously reported, [REDACTED] is a very able fellow, [REDACTED] and one on whom I can rely. I asked [REDACTED] to give the matter some attention and if he knew any Negro of outstanding intelligence and ability let me know and we would have a discussion. [REDACTED] has submitted to me the name of the above-captioned person, [REDACTED] b7C + b7D

Enclosed with this memorandum is an outline of [REDACTED] biography [REDACTED]

On scanning this biography, it will be seen that [REDACTED] does have all the qualifications of the kind of a Negro I have in mind to advance to positions of national leadership. I won't go into all his accomplishments and qualifications in this memorandum, for it will only take a minute or two to scan the enclosed biography. b7C

On first blush I know it can be said it is not the concern of the Bureau what happens to the Negroes when Martin Luther King has been discredited. This can be said, but I think it is a very short-sighted view. It is our concern if large numbers of them go INTO the Nation of Islam and other extremist groups with which we are concerned as an investigative agency. It is our concern if the Communist Party would be able to capitalize upon this confusion. Further, from a positive and constructive standpoint it would be of great advantage to have leading the Negro people a truly brilliant, honorable and loyal Negro who would steer the 20 million Negroes AWAY from communism. I think in a very sound sense this necessarily must be of great interest to us. It would be most helpful to have a man [REDACTED] leading the Negroes to whom we could go, if necessary, and rely upon in sensitive matters over which this Bureau has jurisdiction. b7C

I want to make it clear at once that I don't propose that the FBI in any way become involved openly as the sponsor of a Negro leader to overshadow Martin Luther King. As far as I am concerned, this is not an issue at all. But I do propose that I be given permission to explore further this entire matter [REDACTED] and any other person known to both [REDACTED] and myself who could be helpful. If this thing can be set up properly without the Bureau in any way becoming directly involved, I think it would be not only a great help to the FBI but would be a fine thing for the country at large. While I am not specifying at this moment, there are various ways in which the FBI could give this entire matter b7C

Memorandum for Mr. Belmont

RE: [REDACTED] b7C

the proper direction and development. There are highly placed contacts of the FBI who might be very helpful to further such a step. These can be discussed in detail later when I have probed more fully into the possibilities.

RECOMMENDATION:

(1) For the information of the Director.

(2) That approval be given for me to explore this whole matter in greater detail, as set forth above.

O.K.
d

W.C.S.

See biography outline enclosed
WCS

NOT

ADDENDUM (1/9/64), WCS/csh:

[REDACTED]

b7C

W.C.Sullivan

I am glad to see that "light" has finally though ^{perhaps} delayed, come to the Domestic Int. Div. I struggled for months to get over the ~~idea~~ that the Communists were taking over the social movement but my efforts were couldn't or wouldn't see it.

|||