

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

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

TO : Mr. A. H. Belmont

DATE: August 30, 1963

FROM : Mr. W. C. Sullivan

SUBJECT: COMMUNIST PARTY, USA
NEGRO QUESTION
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Reference is made to the enclosed material on which the Director has written: "This memo reminds me vividly of those I received when Castro took over Cuba. You contended then that Castro and his cohorts were not Communists and not influenced by Communists. Time alone proved you wrong. I for one can't ignore the memos re King, et al as having only an infinitesimal effect on the efforts to exploit the American Negro by the Communists."

The Director is correct. We were completely wrong about believing the evidence was not sufficient to determine some years ago that Fidel Castro was not a communist or under communist influence. On investigating and writing about communism and the American Negro, we had better remember this and profit by the lesson it should teach us.

I do think that much of the difficulty relating to the memorandum rightly questioned by the Director is to be found centered in the word "influence." We do not have, and no Government agency or private organization has, any yardstick which can accurately measure "influence" in this particular context, even when we know it does exist such as in the case of the obvious influence of over Martin Luther King and King's influence over other Negro leaders. Personally, I believe in the light of King's powerful magocic speech yesterday he stands head and shoulders over all other Negro leaders put together when it comes to influencing great masses of Negroes. We must mark him now, if we have not done so before, as the most dangerous Negro of the future in this Nation from the standpoint of communism, the Negro and national security.

On determining membership of Negroes in the Communist Party, we are not confronted with the same problem. We do have here accurate yardsticks for establishing membership. Of course, our standards are very exacting. This means there are many Negroes who are fellow-travellers, sympathizers or who aid the Party, knowingly or unknowingly, but do not qualify as members. These we must not ignore. The old communist principle still holds: "Communism must be built with non-communist hands." Therefore, it may be unrealistic to limit ourselves as we have been doing to legalistic proof or definitely conclusive evidence.

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Memorandum for Mr. Belmont
RE: COMMUNIST PARTY, USA
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100-3-75

that would stand up in testimony in court or before Congressional committees that the Communist Party, USA, does wield substantial influence over Negroes which one day could become decisive.

The memorandum which the Director penetratively questioned, while showing in the details the communist impact on Negroes, did suffer from such limitations. These limitations we will make every effort to lift in the future. The great amount of attention this Division is giving to communist activities directed toward the Negro should enable us to do this.

For example, here at the Seat of Government, the Negro - communist question takes up as a whole the time of one supervisor and during the past few weeks four men have been so occupied. Additionally: (1) specialized instructions are regularly given the field on communist infiltration of the Negro; (2) monographs have been written on the subject and widely disseminated; (3) regularly disseminated are memoranda and reports; (4) August 21, 1963, we devoted the entire Current Intelligence Analysis to the communist plans for the Negro March of August 28, 1963, (149 copies of this Analysis were disseminated to 44 agencies of the Government); (5) much material on the issue is given to Agents at In-Service; and (6) an SAC Letter is under preparation in this Division now giving the field the benefit of what we learned from the Negro March on Washington and issuing instructions for increased coverage of communist influence on the Negro.

As the memorandum pointed out, "this Nation is involved in a form of racial revolution and the time has never been so right for exploitation of the Negroes by communist propagandists." Nineteen million Negroes constitute the greatest single racial target of the Communist Party, USA. This is a sombre reality we must never lose sight of. We will do everything possible in the troubled future to develop for the Director all available facts relating to Negro membership in the Communist Party, plus the more complex and difficult to ascertain influence of communist organizations and officials over the leaders and masses of Negroes.

We regret greatly that the memorandum did not measure up to what the Director has a right to expect from our analysis.

RECOMMENDATION:

For the information of the Director.