

- 1 - Mr. J. Adams
- 1 - Mr. D. W. Moore, Jr.
- 1 - Mr. R. J. Gallagher
(Attn: H. N. Helterhoff)
- 1 - Mr. T. W. Leavitt
- 1 - Mr. J. G. Deegan
- 1 - Mr. J. D. Powell

March 4, 1976

The Attorney General

Director, FBI

15

"NEWSDAY" ARTICLE CONCERNING INVADERS AND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., DATED FEBRUARY 1, 1976.

An article appears in the February 1, 1976, issue of "Newsday" captioned "FBI Tied to King's Return to Memphis" written by Les Payne (copy attached).

This article alleges that the FBI and the Memphis, Tennessee, Police Department infiltrated the Invaders, a Memphis organization of young blacks. The Invaders allegedly were responsible for violence during a march in Memphis on March 28, 1968. The late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a participant in this march. It is alleged that because of the violence associated with this march Dr. King found it imperative to return to Memphis in April, 1968, at which time he was assassinated. It is inferred that inasmuch as there were FBI and police informants in the Invaders, the FBI and the police were thereby possibly responsible for Dr. King's assassination based on the possibility that the March 28, 1968, violence was part of a conspiracy to compel Dr. King to return to Memphis and his death. It is alleged that the FBI informants and a Memphis Police Department undercover officer infiltrated the Invaders and were actively responsible for the violence associated with the Invaders.

A review of files at FBI Headquarters and at the Memphis Field Office of the FBI has determined the following:

An umbrella black group was formed in Memphis in 1967 known primarily as the Black Organizing Project (BOP). One of its cells was the Invaders composed of young blacks. The Invaders were particularly militant. Leaders of the Invaders made inflammatory statements to the effect that it would be desirable for the city to burn.

157-8460

- Assoc. Dir. _____
- Dep. AD Adm. _____
- Dep. AD Inv. _____
- Asst. Dir.:
- Admin. _____
- Comp. Syst. _____
- Ext. Affairs _____
- Files & Com. _____
- Gen. Inv. _____
- Ident. _____
- Inspection _____
- Intell. _____
- Laboratory _____
- Legal Coun. _____
- Plan. & Eval. _____
- Spec. Inv. _____
- Training _____
- Telephone Rm. _____
- Director Sec'y _____

JDP:lek lek

(9)

ENCLOSURE

SEE NOTE PAGE 3

MAIL ROOM

TELETYPE UNIT

MAILED 15
MAR 8 1976
FBI

mm

32-17460-53

MAR 9 1976

G/AVI

JSP/BA

JSP/gom

mm

TWL

mm

The Attorney General

On February 12, 1968, Memphis sanitation workers began a strike. Many rallies and marches were held in their support and the strike became a black cause. Dr. King and his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, supported this strike. On March 28, 1968, a mass demonstration was held in Memphis with Dr. King as a participant. The leaders of the Invaders actively urged students to skip school on that date and to participate in the march.

Shortly after the beginning of this march, with Dr. King at the head, young blacks toward the rear began breaking windows and looting. Dr. King immediately left the scene. Widespread looting occurred, three young blacks were shot, one fatally, approximately 60 were injured, five policemen received significant injuries and there were approximately 300 arrests. The National Guard was mobilized. The presence of a large number of uncontrolled youths, combined with the agitation of BOP/Invaders leaders, was considered the primary cause of the violence.

This violence was particularly distressing to Dr. King inasmuch as it was felt by him and his associates that this incident might be construed as an indication he could no longer effectively lead mass demonstrations without violence.

The FBI did have informant coverage of the Invaders. There were five informants of the Memphis Office providing some degree of coverage of the Invaders or its leaders. One informant did become a member of the Invaders shortly after the March 28, 1968, violence. He was present during the demonstration and reported on the activities of the leaders of the Invaders before and during the demonstration. Another informant was well acquainted with the BOP/Invaders leaders. He was also present during the demonstration and reported thereon.

Our files do not indicate that any of the FBI informants were involved in planning, inciting or participating in the violence. None were in any level of policy or leadership in the BOP or the Invaders.

The Attorney General

The Memphis Police Department did have an undercover officer who had infiltrated the Invaders. He regularly reported on the activities of the Invaders. Information was exchanged between the Memphis Police Department and the FBI concerning the Invaders. There is no indication in our files that the Memphis police officer was involved in the planning, instigating or performance of violence. This man has been publicly disclosed and he is no longer a member of the Memphis Police Department.

This is being provided for your information.

Enclosure

NOTE:

See memorandum J. G. Deegan to Mr. T. W. Leavitt, dated 3/2/76, prepared by JDP:lek.